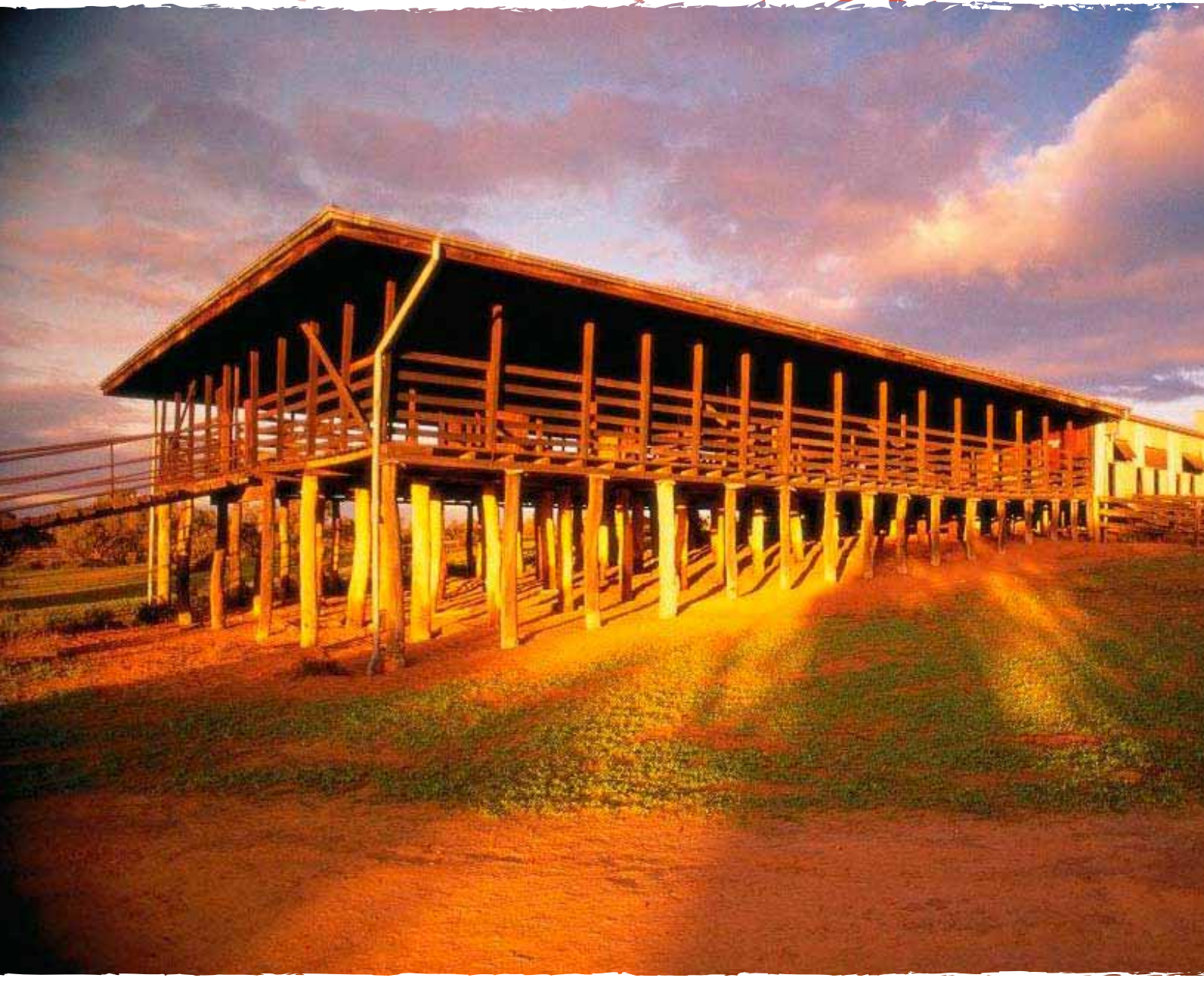
Challenges in the Landscape

Memories of conserving historic heritage in the NSW park system 1967–2000



Department of **Environment & Climate Change** NSW

This publication was written by Caroline Ford.

Aboriginal readers are warned that this publication contains the names and images of some Aboriginal people who are deceased.

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Acknowledgments

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Abbreviations, acronyms and definitions

AHC	Australian Heritage Commission
AHIMS	Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System
AIAS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (replaced by Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in 1989)
Burra Charter	Charter developed and adopted by Australia ICOMOS which establishes principles for the conservation of places of cultural significance. The charter was adopted in 1979 and revised in 1988 and 1999.
CHD	Cultural Heritage Division (NPWS from 2000), subsequently Culture and Heritage Division (DECC from 2007)
CHSD	Cultural Heritage Services Division (NPWS) 1995–99
conservation	Used in this publication to refer to all the processes of looking after an item so as to retain its cultural significance. It includes maintenance and may, according to circumstances, include preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation and will be commonly a combination of more than one of these.
CRA	Comprehensive Regional Assessment
DEC	Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW) 2003–2007
DECC	Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW from 2007
HAMP	Heritage Asset Maintenance Program
HARP	Heritage Asset Revitalisation Program (replaced HAMP, 2009)
HHIMS	Historic Heritage Information Management System
HHT	Historic Houses Trust
historic site	Reserve established under the National Parks and Wildlife Act to protect and promote cultural heritage. A site may contain both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage.
HRU	Historic Resources Unit (NPWS) 1984–94
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites. The Australian branch is known as Australia ICOMOS
KHA	Kosciuszko Huts Association
NPW Act	*National Parks and Wildlife Act 1967* and subsequently the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSW) – also referred to as 'the service' in this publication and often by interviewees as 'National Parks'. The NPWS ceased to exist as a separate agency in 2003 when it became part of the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC). In 2007 this department became the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC). The NPWS is still used as a public brand for on-park activities and management and is used in this publication to refer to the on-park activities and polices of DEC and DECC as well as the earlier separate agency.
park system	The collective of protected lands in NSW which are, or have been, managed by the NPWS, including national parks, state recreation areas, state conservation areas, nature reserves, marine parks, Aboriginal areas and historic sites. It includes, where relevant, some designations, such as state parks, which are no longer managed by the NPWS.
POM	Plan of management
RFA	Regional Forest Agreement
SHR	State Heritage Register

[While creating national parks] as natural things, the service ended up getting, ironically, a huge significant collection of a heritage that talks about the sadness, the loss, the joy, the ordinary history of Australia that's been picked up along the way coincidentally as part of creating national parks.

1 Geoff Ashley, interview with Jennifer Cornwall (Sydney: 18 November 2005)

Foreword

The landscapes of the park system of New South Wales are cultural landscapes. They have been walked over, occupied, cared for, cultivated, transformed and imagined by Aboriginal people for thousands of years, and by settler Australians since 1788. Some parts of the reserve landscape contain physical traces of their former uses, in the form of modified vegetation, clearings, roads, pathways and built structures. Cultural heritage and natural heritage are interconnected and the management of all landscapes requires an integrated approach. Cultural heritage dating from after 1788 is generally referred to as 'historic heritage'.

Challenges in the landscape brings to life the experiences, memories and observations of nine NPWS employees who worked on the conservation of historic heritage between 1967 and 2000. They were among the specialists who demanded and guided the protection of historic heritage places, and the rangers and senior managers charged with the allocation of resources and on-the-ground management of these places. The insights of these staff members reveal the complexities in managing landscapes for both their natural and cultural heritage values. For contemporary and, no doubt, future park staff their stories provide a fascinating picture not only of how historic heritage was managed in the past but also of the principles and beliefs that underwrite park management.

What follows does not attempt to be an authoritative history. Rather, it strives to recreate the atmosphere and challenges that formed the working environment of historic heritage staff in the first three decades of the agency's life. We would like to thank those individuals who shared their thoughts, memories and experiences with us. Their honesty has enhanced a publication which encourages us to think critically about past, present and future management practices of the historic heritage of the NSW park system.

Introduction

Michael Pearson was employed, straight out of university, by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS or 'the service')[2] as its first historical investigations officer in 1976 – nine years after the service was formed. His role incorporated many elements of historic heritage management, including advising park managers, writing policies, developing education programs, and general lobbying for the conservation of historic places across the NSW park system.[3] He left the service in 1985. In 2005, reflecting upon his career at NPWS, Pearson named the conservation of Roto House on the mid-north coast[4] as one of the more successful projects he had been involved in:

> It was a place which had significance: local significance, some architectural values – in a modest sort of way – but [it was] a place that deserved to be kept for the local community particularly, and that was successful in the long run.[5]

The conservation of Roto House, due to the combined efforts of Pearson, other NPWS specialists and local staff, was described by Pearson as 'a really nice example [of historic heritage conservation which] one could feel happy about'.[6]

Michael Pearson is one of nine current and former NPWS staff members whose individual stories form the basis of this history.[7] Some of those interviewed – Pearson, Sharon Sullivan, Geoff Ashley, Joan Kent and Denis Gojak – were heritage specialists extensively involved in shaping the service's management of its historic heritage places, and wrote many of the reports and policies which are cited throughout this publication. The remaining participants – Alistair Henchman, Eric Claussen, Ross McDonnell and Neville Burkett – were based in the field, and as rangers, regional staff and regional managers were charged with managing and coordinating the management of the parks landscape for both its natural and cultural heritage values.

A corporate knowledge approach to history

This publication examines the service's management of its historic heritage assets between 1967 and 2000. It is not a 'history' in the traditional sense – it does not provide an official view of the past from the perspective of the NPWS, and is not written from the outside looking in. Rather, it creates an opportunity for nine individuals to provide their own comment on the service's past. In examining the past through the perspectives of these people, this history provides unique insight into the experiences and views of the service's first heritage practitioners and the challenges they faced in doing their jobs. Through their accounts we learn first-hand what it felt like for NPWS staff members working in particular situations at particular moments in time.

Part of the value of this history therefore lies in its capacity to capture and disseminate the thoughts, experiences and 'corporate knowledge' of prominent staff members,

2 See Abbreviations, Acronyms and Definitions p4
3 See definitions of 'conservation' and the 'park system' as used in this publication in Abbreviations, Acronyms and Definitions p4
4 Roto House is in Macquarie Nature Reserve near Port Macquarie
5 Michael Pearson, interview with Jennifer Cornwall (Canberra: 30 August 2005)
6 Pearson interview
7 The interviews were conducted by Jennifer Cornwall, consultant historian, between August and November 2005

many of whom have since left the organisation. It is an opportunity to identify and articulate the knowledge which would otherwise be lost by the departure of influential historic heritage specialist employees. As the 'baby boomer' generation heads into retirement age, corporate understanding of the past will be increasingly lost, particularly within the NSW public sector where the workforce is approximately ten years older than the broader workforce.[8]

> The most valuable knowledge lives in the heads of employees – tacit knowledge such as lessons learned, successes, relationships and of course experience. This information does not sit in folders, business card holders or archive boxes and is rarely captured in knowledge management systems.[9]

It is this type of knowledge that this history attempts to capture. By reading about challenges NPWS employees faced in the past, and the methods they used to overcome the challenges, current and future staff in similar roles may be able to learn from these experiences. Such a reading of the past helps us understand how and why the organisation has reached its present position and it throws light on the present in the context of where we have come from. The picture of the organisation in its first decades is very different to the one which now manages the NSW park system.

The purpose of this history is therefore twofold. Firstly, to deliver on part of the responsibilities of the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) under the *Heritage Act 1977* to produce a corporate history of its historic heritage conservation activities. But it is also designed to serve a broader role within the agency. A close reading of the agency's past will enable it to understand how its role in historic heritage management has been conceived, conceptualised, carried out and influenced by political, social and economic trends. It will enable the agency to gain a better understanding of the ideas, influences and actions that have characterised historic heritage management by the NPWS for more than 30 years, through the eyes of those who experienced it.

Managing historic heritage: major issues

Collectively, the reflections of these nine individuals highlight a number of shared issues and experiences which are threaded throughout this history. One of the most common experiences relates to the challenges inherent in managing protected area landscapes for both their natural and cultural heritage values. Like a great many NPWS staff over the years, the heritage practitioners have tended to believe passionately in conservation. This meant that they sometimes felt anxiety or frustration as they tried to protect heritage places and attempted to convince their park management colleagues – charged with managing the entire landscape of specific parks – of the need to do so. It should be noted that most park management staff were themselves passionate believers in nature conservation, and many – in addition to those interviewed here – were strong supporters of cultural heritage conservation. Where tension existed between the requirements of nature conservation and that of historic heritage, it was often, especially in the early years, over a competition for limited resources.

In its first years, the service was criticised both by staff working with historic heritage and members of the public for the balance it struck between the needs of nature conservation and the need to manage historic heritage places contained within parks. This criticism

8 *Towards 2030: planning for our changing population* (NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet: Sydney, 2008), p30
9 Sage Centre: An initiative of the NSW Government to support work and retirement planning. http://www.sagecentre.nsw.gov.au/managers-toolkit/solutions/knowledge-loss, accessed 27 August 2008

centred on the occasions where park managers and rangers removed evidence of European land use (for example old huts) in an attempt to restore 'virgin bush and wilderness'.[10] In addition to their commitment to nature conservation, most park managers had a background in biological sciences with no professional training in cultural heritage until the 1980s – a situation common to most protected area management agencies in Australia, and many internationally.

One solution posed by cultural heritage staff was the incorporation of cultural heritage training into park manager education programs. Some field staff took immediate interest in this element of park management, while for others, the practical implementation of historic heritage management theory and policy remained a challenge for some time.

A lack of on-the-ground resources and dedicated funding for historic heritage also contributed to difficulties in adequately conserving and managing historic heritage places during the early period. The sheer cost of conserving large historic heritage sites in accordance with heritage guidelines has often made comprehensive conservation impossible, even for the most enthusiastic park manager.

Another recurrent thread of this study is the attempts made by historic heritage staff to develop and evolve a strategic approach to the service's acquisition of historic places. In the late 1970s, Michael Pearson developed a list of ten 'historic themes' which were designed to guide decisions about historic heritage acquisitions. The proposal was that the service's collection of historic heritage properties should adequately represent the major themes in the history of what had occurred – such as mining, timber getting or coastal defence – on the types of land in the park system.

Some 15 years later, staff of the service's Historic Resources Unit advocated a similar approach, arguing that 'priority should be given to under-represented themes' when future acquisitions were being decided.[11] Cultural heritage staff continue to advocate a thematic approach to acquisition to this day.[12] Hopefully this publication will help show how a succession of staff – both historical heritage specialists and park management staff – have made their individual contributions to shaping the organisation's particular approach to acquisition.

In addition to the continuities, this history also brings to life some important shifts during the history of the NPWS. The growth of the heritage sector and introduction of supporting legislation in the 1970s and 1980s provided broader support for the work of the service's heritage professionals in the later period of this study. Improved funding for historic heritage programs in the 1990s also enabled park managers to be more positive about the maintenance of historic heritage places.

Throughout the history of the NPWS, we therefore see improved mechanisms for conserving historic places located right across the park system, replacing an earlier emphasis on a handful of historic sites, which are a reserve category of their own.

10 Geoff Ashley, Denis Gojak, Carol Liston, *An outdoor museum: historic places in the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service estate* (NPWS: Sydney, 1991), p5

11 Ashley, Gojak, Liston (1991), p33

12 Cath Snelgrove and David Major, *Final draft criteria for the acquisition of places with cultural heritage significance under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPWS: unpublished 2002)

Establishing responsibility: historic heritage and the NPWS

The National Parks and Wildlife Service was formed in 1967 with the responsibility under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1967* (NPW Act) to conserve nature reserves and wildlife in New South Wales.[13] In addition to national parks, nature reserves and state parks, the NPWS was charged with preserving and protecting 'historic sites' – 'areas that are the sites of buildings, objects, monuments or events of national significance'.[14] Several years later, the Act would be amended to include the protection of Aboriginal 'relics' across the state – not just within the park system – further diversifying the service's responsibilities.

Since 1967 the role of the service in the conservation of historic heritage has expanded considerably. The number of gazetted historic sites in the park system has increased from six to 15 and, under the NSW *Heritage Act 1977*, the service has also expanded its understanding of historic heritage to incorporate all post-1788 archaeological and built-heritage remains within the park system – even though these remains are on areas initially protected for their natural values. The tangible historic heritage which the service is charged with protecting, conserving and managing ranges from prominent structures such as lighthouses, homesteads, woolsheds, gaols and the old townships of Hartley and Hill End, to much smaller and less obtrusive markers of past uses of the landscape such as graves, plaques and memorials, wells, orchards and clearings.

The responsibility for managing historic sites and historic places is held by individual protected area managers. From 1969, a growing number of staff at NPWS head office were employed to provide specialist heritage advice and support and planning in the conservation and management of these sites.[15] In 2000, a major restructure created the Cultural Heritage Division (CHD). This new division amalgamated the earlier Cultural Heritage Services Division, which included historic heritage specialists, with the Aboriginal Heritage Division.

In 2003, the NPWS was incorporated into the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) which in 2007 was then incorporated into the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC). Within DECC, CHD[16] is no longer part of the NPWS which is now functionally known as the Parks and Wildlife Group of the department. Park managers continue to have local accountability for conserving historic heritage in the park system and continue to call upon CHD for specialist technical and planning advice on heritage matters.

This history primarily examines the management of NPWS historic sites and historic heritage places prior to the creation of CHD – that is, between 1967 and 2000. It does not seek to cover the shifts that followed the creation of CHD, or the impacts of the new division on the service's approach to its historic heritage. However in some places we have extended the discussion to the period after 2000 to give a more complete picture. The case studies in part three therefore include any significant developments which affected the management of these places in the post-2000 period. Part two is based on interviews conducted in 2005, and therefore some discussion of events after 2000 is included where current DECC employees commented on the more immediate past.

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13 NPW Act (New South Wales: 1967)
14 NPW Act, p7. State parks are no longer listed under the Act.
15 To see the changing structures of heritage specialist staff, see Appendix
16 In 2007 the name of the division was changed to Culture and Heritage Division

Aboriginal heritage and the NPWS

This publication covers only the historic heritage within the NSW park system. Its scope is confined to those traces of human presence originating from the period following European settlement in 1788 located on lands reserved by the NPWS. Although the Aboriginal heritage of the post-contact period in NSW has formed a major component of NPWS responsibilities, this history does not encompass the service's management of it.

The distinction between non-Indigenous and Aboriginal heritage of the historic period reflects a broader distinction within NPWS management. For many years the service considered 'historic heritage' to be an area of study and practice distinct from 'Aboriginal heritage'.[17] Denis Byrne argued that this institutionalised separation of Aboriginal and non-Indigenous heritage denies the historical reality that Aboriginal and settler Australians lived in the same landscape for most of the last two centuries, often worked together in the same industries (for example, pastoralism) and lived in the same towns.[18] While this view now has broad acceptance, the present study's pre-2000 focus means we deal with the historic heritage field as it was perceived in those days – as comprising non-Indigenous heritage only.

The protection and management of Aboriginal heritage was not specifically listed in the original 1967 NPW Act as a responsibility of the NPWS, although one of the first six historic sites, Mootwingee (now Mutawintji), was reserved largely for its rich Aboriginal heritage.

Soon after the NPWS was established, an advisory committee on Aboriginal relics was created to advise the Minister on 'the preservation and protection of Aboriginal relics and archaeological sites'.[19] Two years later as the service employed its first full-time archaeologist/historian in Sharon Sullivan, an amendment to the Act vested the 'protection for Aboriginal relics and archaeological sites in New South Wales' in the then director, ensuring that from then onwards the management of the state's Aboriginal heritage would become a key role of the service.[20]

A significant moment in the history of the service's management of Aboriginal heritage was the 1973 employment of anthropologist Harry Creamer and Ray Kelly, a Dunghutti man from the NSW mid-north coast, to undertake what became the *NSW sites of significance survey*. Ray and Harry were funded by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies and, together with other team members who joined them throughout the 1970s, they recorded places of particular significance to the state's contemporary Aboriginal people.[21] The records they created were the first examples of places which have social

17 Steve Brown, Rodney Harrison and Cath Snelgrove, 'Archaeology and Heritage Practices: NSW NPWS approaches to achieving integrated conservation planning', *Land and Sea Conference* (Draft Paper: 2002). See also Maria Nugent, 'Mapping Memories: oral history for Aboriginal cultural heritage in New South Wales, Australia', in Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes (eds), *Oral history and public memories* (Temple University Press: Philadelphia, 2008), p48

18 Denis Byrne, 'The Ethos of Return: Erasure and Reinstatement of Aboriginal Visibility in the Australian Historical Landscape', *Historical Archaeology* (vol 37, no 1, 2003), p84

19 NPWS *Annual report*, 1969; Steve Brown, *Comprehensive coastal assessment: Aboriginal cultural heritage data audit* (Department of Environment and Conservation, NSW: Sydney, 2003), p26

20 NPWS *Annual report*, 1970, p6

21 Johanna Kijas, *Revival, renewal and return: Ray Kelly and the NSW sites of significance survey* (Department of Environment and Conservation: Sydney, 2005), pp4–5

value to Aboriginal people to be entered in the Aboriginal Sites Register.[22] Working almost entirely in the field, the team also helped train NPWS rangers in Aboriginal heritage conservation.[23]

By 1974, the NPWS *Annual report* confidently stated that 'increasing attention and importance' was being given to the 'preservation and protection of Aboriginal relics in the state'. Major amendments to the NPW Act in that year gave the service further powers and responsibility regarding Aboriginal heritage, enabling it 'specifically to protect sites and areas of particular *traditional significance to Aborigines* [sic] by gazetting them as Aboriginal Places.'[24]

Prior to the 1970s, Aboriginal heritage sites in New South Wales had effectively been the preserve of archaeologists who valued them for what they revealed about the past culture and life of Aboriginal people. By the 1970s, a growing number of Aboriginal people asserted their concerns about ownership of their own heritage following many decades of control of their lives by non-Indigenous people. In responding to this, the service's Historic Resources Section began working closely with Aboriginal communities in the identification, preservation and management of Aboriginal sites, primarily through community Aboriginal Sites Schools being run by the team working on the *NSW sites of significance survey*.[25]

By the early 1980s, according to NPWS annual reports, not only was the service giving 'high priority to liaising with Aboriginal communities regarding the threat of development to Aboriginal sites', but it was employing increasing numbers of Aboriginal staff in order to ensure Aboriginal people played a 'meaningful role in site management'.[26] Eventually, some of these staff members would move into management, senior management and executive roles.

Writing historic heritage: approach and sources

This history draws its strength from the candid nature in which the nine current and former staff members recall their experiences at NPWS. Their willingness to talk frankly about the challenges they faced and the issues they struggled with gives a level of insight into the inner working of the organisation that would not be possible through documentary research. But oral history is not a perfect science, and the perspective it provides into the past can be problematic. Critics note the unreliability of memory as evidence of the past, arguing that memory can be clouded by the context in which it is remembered, such as the interview process or timing. And just as people interpret events and moments in time differently, so do they remember these events differently. As Sharon Veale notes, 'oral history relies on memory, which is a highly individualised and personal construction of our past'.[27] Perhaps more significantly, people can forget some elements of the past, meaning they might not tell the 'whole' story of their lived experiences. Further, Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes argue that oral history, 'driven by the passion for the personal story', also tends to exclude 'the social and cultural processes that have shaped subjectivity'.[28]

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22 The index to the Aboriginal Sites Register was computerised in 1986. In 2001 the site records were transferred to the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS), which in mid-2008 held more than 57,000 records; Brown (2003), pp28–9

23 Kijas (2005), p6

24 NPWS *Annual report*, 1975, p14

25 NPWS *Annual report*, 1975, p14; 1978; Kijas, p6

26 NPWS *Annual report*, 1982; 1983 p43

27 Sharon Veale and Kathleen Schilling, *Talking history: oral history guidelines* (NPWS: Sydney, 2002) p3

28 Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes (eds), *Oral history and public memories* (Temple University Press: Philadelphia, 2008), pxi

While acknowledging the limitations which can be posed by relying on oral testimonies as evidence of past events, this publication recognises the value which is gained through the personal insights that are revealed in this context. However the document does not rely entirely on the memories of former NPWS staff members. The discussion is enhanced by a consideration of archival and documentary sources which helps explain the context of the recollections.

One of the most prominent reports consulted for this study is *An outdoor museum,* produced in 1991 by NPWS conservation architect Geoff Ashley, historical archaeologist Denis Gojak, and professional historian Carol Liston. Borrowing its idea from *The open air museum* by Denis Jeans and Peter Spearritt, which argues that the 'cultural landscape of NSW contains much of historical value that must be preserved,'[29] the report aimed to clarify the NPWS role in historic heritage conservation by auditing the spread of historic heritage places across the park system and highlighting their landscape context.[30] It argued that the service needed to 'recognise and clearly define its unique role in the conservation of the historic heritage of NSW and to seize the opportunity to promote this unique role' and suggested that a way of doing this was to improve the allocation of three key resources to historic heritage: staff, expert skills and funding.[31]

A decade later, Gabrielle Werksman (nee Zilber) produced *Heritage in the wings*, an unpublished report which was the first stage of the preparation of the NPWS response to the requirements of the Heritage Act that a corporate history be produced.

Part I of the Werksman report provided a context for the service's history of historic heritage management through a thematic history of the NPWS and case studies of the management of three specific historic places.[32] It drew from extensive research into the service and other government archives held at State Records.

Part II provided an overview of the NPWS Historic Places Register (now known as the Historic Heritage Information Management System, or HHIMS), which provided 'a preliminary indication of the trends and issues facing the service in relation to historic sites since its inception in 1967'.[33] This publication draws extensively from both parts of *Heritage in the wings*, most notably in the discussion of four case studies in part three.

In addition to the above studies commissioned by the service, we have drawn from other NPWS publications which explore specific places or heritage collections more directly. These include plans of management, conservation management plans, heritage action statements and Geoff Ashley's studies of the NPWS alpine and coastal huts. Again, these sources are relied on most heavily in part three of this history.

Organisation of this publication

This document is divided into three parts. The first provides an overview of historic heritage in the NPWS park system, and the agency's approach to the management of this heritage. It examines the heritage policies and practices of the service over time and in the context of broader Australian heritage practice. It considers the role of service staff in developing key heritage documents such as the Burra Charter. It also discusses some of the

29 D N Jeans and Peter Spearritt, *The open air museum: the cultural landscape of New South Wales* (George Allen & Unwin: Sydney, 1980), pix
30 Ashley, Gojak, Liston (1991), p4
31 Ashley, Gojak, Liston (1991), p3
32 Zilber, Gabrielle, *Heritage in the wings: stage 1: thematic history report* (NPWS: unpublished, 2001), p4
33 Werksman, Gabrielle, *Heritage in the wings: stage 2: survey of the historic places register* (NPWS: unpublished, 2002)

major and recurring challenges faced by NPWS staff in the protection and conservation of heritage places, and how these have been met. Some of these challenges were the constraints provided by limited funding and an inclination by some park managers to give priority to the management of the natural heritage over the cultural heritage of parks where there is insufficient funding and resources to adequately manage both.

The second part contains biographical chapters on each of the staff interviewed for this history. These chapters bring a personal perspective to the issues discussed in part one, demonstrating the influence of individual staff members on historic heritage management through specific examples and personal observations.

Part three seeks to analyse the service's changing approach to historic heritage through four case studies:

- Hill End, a historic mining town which was one of the first NPWS historic sites
- the huts in Royal National Park which were constructed primarily for private recreational use
- the Quarantine Station, inherited by the service in the early 1980s in a relatively poor condition and later developed for adaptive re-use, and
- the huts in Kosciuszko National Park which represent the pastoral and later recreational history of the alpine region of southern NSW.

These case studies provide a detailed look at how the service has managed major heritage issues in specific circumstances. They usefully indicate some of the changes in heritage practice over the four-decade history of the NPWS, how the service has managed complex community relations in different circumstances, and the extent to which heritage conservation practice in the service has been guided by heritage charters and protocols such as the Burra Charter. These case studies illustrate on-ground responses to the issues discussed in a more general context in part one.

PART ONE: Overview

Yuranighs Grave Historic Site (DECC)

1.1 Origins: the NPWS and heritage principles

When the NPWS was formed in 1967, the cultural heritage profession in Australia was still in its infancy. At that time there was no legislative protection for historic heritage places in New South Wales, and there were no government agencies dedicated to the conservation of the state's heritage places.

Furthermore, the role of managing historic sites was not part of the traditional nature conservation role of the bodies the NPWS replaced. Historic sites were included in the NPW Act for two reasons.

Firstly, it was a political response to increasing public pressure for greater protection of the state's historic heritage.[34]

Secondly, the inclusion of historic heritage management as a key role of the new body was a reflection of the strong American influence on the establishment of the service in New South Wales. The United States National Park Service, which had been responsible for 'protecting and interpreting the history of man' in North America since 1935, was used as a model for the formation of the NPWS in 1967.[35] The new agency's responsibility for historic sites was just one manifestation of this US influence, also present in the naming of field staff as 'rangers'.[36]

This chapter examines the service's approach to its historic sites and the heritage items located in other protected areas in the context of broader Australian and state heritage practices, principles and legislation. As the primary manager of historic heritage sites in New South Wales, the NPWS was at the forefront of the development of heritage principles in this country in the 1970s and early 1980s. The chapter establishes the context for a more detailed analysis of the service's management of its historic heritage in chapter 1.2, and the case studies discussed in part three.

Employing heritage professionals

One useful way of gauging the service's commitment to its historic heritage over the years – although certainly not the only measurable one– is an examination of the numbers and qualifications of staff employed in this area.[37] The NPWS employed its first archaeologist/historian, Sharon Sullivan, in 1969. Most of Sullivan's time, however, was spent working on Aboriginal rather than historic heritage, especially after the 1970 amendments to the NPW Act which increased the service's responsibilities for Aboriginal sites. It was not until 1976, with the employment of historian Michael Pearson, that the NPWS created the first position dedicated entirely to *historic heritage*.[38] According to the 1976 *Annual report*, Pearson's role included:

> investigating proposed historic sites and advising on the management and curation of historic sites and relics within service areas generally. In particular he will oversee important research work at Hill End.[39]

34 This issue is discussed further in chapter 1.1
35 See Sharon Veale, *NPWS corporate history: draft* (NPWS: unpublished, 2002) pp21–23
36 Veale (2002), pp15–16
37 See appendix
38 See chapter 2.2
39 NPWS *Annual report*, 1976, p14. For more about Michael Pearson's role and experiences at NPWS, see chapter 2.2

An NPWS seminar in 1976, shortly after Pearson's arrival, highlighted 'the poor state of historic heritage policy' within the service at that time, and recommended 'the development of an identification and acquisition framework'.[40] This became a key project for Pearson. By 1979 he had produced policy guidelines for the acquisition of historic sites. These defined 'national significance' – the threshold for the acquisition of historic sites – as 'aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value'. At the same time, 'the degree of historical significance' was to be foremost in the selection of sites to be conserved under the policy, determined largely by reference to a thematic list to 'ensure that as many different aspects of Australian history as possible are represented in the historic sites system'.[41]

Pearson argued that:

> Using this thematic list as a guide, it is hoped that the National Parks and Wildlife Service can sample the various aspects of the state's pool of historic places, in the same way as it samples the state's natural areas.[42]

This thematic list contained ten categories, most of which are still used by heritage agencies today. These were:

- Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal/European contact
- discovery and exploration
- pastoral and agricultural development
- mining
- immigration, settlement and expansion
- industry and commerce
- political and military affairs
- Australian arts and cultural growth
- Australian society, and
- recreation.[43]

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, Sullivan and Pearson were instrumental in the development of NPWS policies, practices and training relating to the conservation of historic heritage. Their task was made more difficult by the lack of equivalent staff in other government agencies, and by the consequent lack of guidelines or existing policies about the management of historic heritage elsewhere in Australia, as Pearson recalls:

> When I started out [at NPWS], there were really no ground rules for how you did this stuff. There was nobody else doing it! There was Jane [Lennon] in Victoria and really that's about it. There were others doing things in other areas but within that sort of national parks context there was nobody to mentor you, there was nothing to really draw on to say 'we'll do it like they did it'. Except for that overseas stuff and that really was more generally relevant than specifically relevant.[44]

As Sullivan and Pearson developed strategies and guidelines for NPWS historic places, they also helped shape the intellectual basis of the emerging heritage sector in Australia more generally, particularly as it related to cultural heritage. Their influence was therefore not confined to the NPWS. A training course in cultural resource management developed

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40 Michael Pearson, 'Notes for Cultural Heritage Division Workshop', Valla Beach, (24 June 2003: unpublished)

41 Michael Pearson, 'The National Parks and Wildlife Service's approach to the acquisition and interpretation of historic sites in NSW', in *Industrial and historical archaeology: papers from a seminar titled 'Archaeological sites in Australia – their significance, identification, recording and assessment'* (The National Trust of Australia: Sydney, 1981), p9

42 Pearson (1981), p9

43 Pearson (1981), p12

44 Pearson interview

by Sullivan and Pearson for Charles Sturt University in the late 1970s – part of a program aimed at giving rangers tertiary qualifications – was subsequently picked up by the Heritage Commission and later turned into a widely used textbook called *Looking after heritage places*.[45]

Sullivan recalls that the service welcomed cultural heritage training as part of new ranger qualifications:

> We just said that from now on we want rangers to have qualifications in the natural environment but we also need them to have qualifications in the cultural heritage. But the thing you have to remember is there weren't any courses for that so we had to go and write the courses. Because if you sent them off to do history, they'd get a background in history but they wouldn't get a background in anything else … Cultural heritage management courses were not around at all. I think the one that Mike and I wrote was one of the first ones.[46]

Sullivan and Pearson were also instrumental in the development of the Burra Charter by the Australian branch of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (Australia ICOMOS). The NPWS had a huge influence on Australian heritage practice during the 1970s and 80s – perhaps even greater than the influence of the external heritage industry on the service itself.

Heritage and the community

When the NPWS was formed in 1967, the NSW National Trust was the only major heritage organisation in the state, but it was a voluntary body with no statutory power to acquire or protect historic buildings. In 1967, the trust was 20 years old, and an Australian Council of National Trusts had been established two years earlier. The trust had been formed in a period Graeme Davison described as a 'postwar upsurge of preservationism' which 'followed similar developments in Europe and the United States', and was testament to the growing awareness of the value of heritage buildings and places in NSW.[47]

Davison suggests that this growing appreciation for heritage sites was especially concentrated in urban environments – inner suburbs whose terrace houses were being occupied by a new generation of intellectuals interested in architectural heritage.[48] But by the early 1970s the concept of significant heritage places was shifting. A sense of the importance of preserving open spaces emerged as demonstrated by the 'green bans'.[49]

Anna Wong suggests that the early 1970s, 'characterised by massive public protests to save historic buildings and precincts', witnessed 'a dramatic transitional period in the heritage movement':[50]

> The green bans were not isolated events. Nor were they solely related to the protection of heritage places. They were symptomatic of widespread unease towards unregulated urban and regional development, the perceived apathy of the government towards the environment, and its disregard for the social and cultural wellbeing of the community. Public dissatisfaction had been snowballing in the two decades leading up to the 1970s.[51]

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45 Pearson interview. See Michael Pearson and Sharon Sullivan, *Looking after heritage places: the basics of heritage planning for managers, landowners and administrators* (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne 1995)
46 Sharon Sullivan interview with Jennifer Cornwall (Nymboida: 15 November 2005)
47 Graeme Davison, 'A brief history of the Australian heritage movement' in Graeme Davison and Chris McConville (editors), *A heritage handbook* (Allen & Unwin: Sydney 1991), p17
48 Davison (1991), p20
49 Davison (1991), p21
50 Anna Wong, *Keeping house for different masters: history, heritage and house museums in Australia* (PhD Dissertation: University of Sydney, 2007), p155
51 Wong (2007), pp175–6

Driven partly by increased public scrutiny, and coinciding with a heightened interest among academics in social and cultural histories, the priorities of heritage practitioners continued to shift during the 1970s. In the immediate post-war period the national trust bodies in Australia had been highly selective, choosing only to protect and preserve 'the best' buildings from the past, and classifying those buildings according to aesthetic and stylistic values, rather than technological or historical values.[52] But by the late 1970s, according to Davison, the heritage movement was beginning to value a broader range of buildings:

> From an early preoccupation with stately homes and historic ruins, it began to turn a more sympathetic eye upon humbler sites and structures – working class cottages, slab huts, mining sites, shearing sheds and factories were now as likely to attract the conservationist's attention. Buildings were increasingly seen as elements of a larger whole – the historic environment – rather than as individual specimens. They were judged by broader criteria or amenity as well as simply architectural or historic significance.[53]

This shift of emphasis towards valuing 'humbler sites and structures' had the potential to transform the way the service understood its historic heritage. It enabled the service to look beyond the few prominent places listed as historic sites and to recognise the value in conserving the thousands of other heritage places situated in the park system. However, as will be discussed in chapter 1.2, the service's heritage professionals saw the service itself as slow to adopt these general heritage principles.

Heritage legislation

In addition to shifting heritage values, the Australian heritage movement was boosted in the second half of the 1970s by the introduction of state and federal heritage legislation – responses, suggests Wong, to 'public calls for greater government protection of heritage places'.[54]

The first in this raft of legislation was the establishment of the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) by the federal Whitlam government in 1975.[55] One of the principal functions of the AHC was to establish and maintain a Register of the National Estate, an inventory of 'those places, being components of the natural environment of Australia or the cultural environment of Australia, that have aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance or other special value for future generations as well as for the present community'.[56] This broad concept of the 'national estate' meant that places did not need to be solely of 'national significance' to be listed.

The Register of the National Estate enjoyed strong community support, but was legislatively weak in the protection of sites, with a direct protective role only in relation to the actions of the Commonwealth government. Pearson and Sullivan outlined the limitations of its powers in *Looking after heritage places*:

> The Commission has no power to direct private owners or state or local governments with respect to their actions that might affect a place in the Register, and does not acquire property entered in the Register. The entry of a place in the Register does not have the effect of granting public access to it.[57]

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52 Davison (1991), p19
53 Davison (1991), p23
54 Wong (2007), p205
55 Davison (1991), p23
56 Subsection 4(1), *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1976*, cited in Jennifer Cornwall, 'Sharon Sullivan biographical chapter' (unpublished draft, 2006)
57 Pearson and Sullivan (1995), p48

Nonetheless, the creation of the AHC did assist the heritage management practices of the NPWS. Because of both the political imperative to compile a register as soon as possible, and the commission's limited capacity to carry out the necessary survey and identification work to do so, the AHC initially invited nominations from federal and state government agencies, the national trusts and other major conservation bodies.[58] The NPWS was one agency which was able to both provide valuable information to the AHC, and benefit from its support. Sharon Sullivan recalled that the support from the AHC had 'quite a strong impact' on her group's work:

> One of the first things the Heritage Commission did was to try to get lists together of places and they wanted, to put all the national parks etc on the list … our remit and their remit was the same in that we did look after historic as well as natural places. So a lot of the stuff that we wrote for the early National Estate listings included historic values as well as natural values for the parks etc, which was really important because it was a recognition at a federal level that these places had historic values as well as natural values. And in a way it was easier for us to do it because not many of the national parks services in Australia had that historic bit and the Aboriginal bit.[59]

Two years later, the NSW Government passed its own heritage legislation. The *Heritage Act 1977* was the first piece of state heritage legislation and remains 'the primary legislation protecting the non-Aboriginal historical heritage in New South Wales.'[60] It facilitated the establishment of the Heritage Council of New South Wales which, unlike the AHC, was empowered to protect items which represent the 'environmental heritage' of the state:

> The Heritage Council is established to protect these items, being empowered to make recommendations to the Minister in relation to the conservation and display of, access to, and information about items of the environmental heritage, and to conduct research and organise conferences. The Council also advises on the allocation of National Estate funds in New South Wales, advises on nominations to the World Heritage List, and keeps a register of places subject to conservation instruments or other orders served under the Act.[61]

The creation of the AHC and the Heritage Council represented the first recognition by federal or state governments of the importance of providing measures for the conservation of Australia's heritage places – historic or otherwise. But aside from providing frameworks and reference points for the service's management of its historic places, the legislation setting up these bodies left responsibility for managing historic sites in NSW with the NPWS. As the 1991 review of NPWS historic places pointed out:

> These Acts provided a federal and state framework for potential protection of any heritage places, whether in government ownership or not, through moral pressure via the Register of the National Estate and legislative control through the planning process … Neither the Australian Heritage Commission nor the Heritage Council of NSW have a statutory duty to manage and maintain specific heritage sites, simply to procure their preservation from specified or general risks.[62]

However the new legislation did remove, according to Pearson, 'much of the pressure felt in former years for the NPWS to acquire historic sites as a purely protective measure.'[63]

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58 *Heritage Newsletter*, vol 1, no 1, nd, np. On 30 March 1977 the first Interim List for the Register of the National Estate containing 4000 places was published in all major newspapers in Australia. Cited in Cornwall
59 Sullivan interview
60 Pearson and Sullivan (1995), p57
61 Pearson and Sullivan (1995), p57
62 Ashley, Gojak, Liston (1991), p10
63 Pearson (1981), p9

He suggests that the service subsequently shifted its focus so that its policies became 'directed at the use of historic sites as tools to illustrate Australian history to visitors, rather than the blanket protection of all sites of historic significance'.[64]

Turning points: the Burra Charter and Historic Houses Trust

By the close of the 1970s, there had been substantial shifts in both the service's management of its own historic heritage and the attitudes of the heritage sector more generally. Internally the focus was shifting from an emphasis on a handful of 'nationally significant' sites to an attempt to document and manage the vast collection of historic places found within parks which had primarily been reserved for their natural or scientific value. Michael Pearson, the service's historian, was in the process of developing important policies which would guide the management and preservation of these sites by field staff and managers, and relied on valuable funding from the National Estate Grants Program to conduct much of his field work.[65]

The establishment of the Australian Heritage Commission had been the first commitment by an Australian government to heritage of the historic period, and as we have seen, it provided an important resource for the service's heritage staff. The federal and state Heritage Acts of the mid-1970s reflected a growing sense of the importance of conserving heritage places in the general community.

> Up until the 1970s, the heritage movement had evolved slowly and was represented by a small sector of the community. From the 1970s, efforts to conserve Australia's heritage became a mainstream concern, and involved a broader range of people.[66]

In 1979, two years after passage of the NSW Heritage Act, Australian conservation practitioners developed the most extensive and relevant guidelines for the management of heritage sites.

In that year the Australian branch of ICOMOS adopted the Burra Charter, a document which 'defines the principles, processes, and practices accepted as proper for professionals working in conservation in Australia'.[67]

The Burra Charter charter identified the retention of cultural significance as the primary purpose of conservation of a place, and set out clear guidelines for identifying and reporting that significance:

> *Conservation* means all the processes of looking after a *place* so as to retain its *cultural significance*. It includes *maintenance*, and may according to circumstance include *preservation, restoration, reconstruction* and *adaptation* and will be commonly a combination of more than one of these.[68]

As Pearson recalls, it was an adaptation of existing international ICOMOS charters to Australian conditions:

> It was based on the existing ICOMOS/Venice Charter, which is very much a European oriented object. It was really hard to *apply* it in Australia because of the terminology used and the concepts about memorials and monuments and this sort of stuff. So the Burra Charter was a way of translating those … largely European conservation principles into an Australian

64 Pearson (1981), p9. Original emphasis
65 Sullivan interview
66 Wong (2007), p203
67 Anne Bickford, 'The Australia ICOMOS Charter (the Burra Charter) and its application to the site of First Government House, Sydney' in Graeme Davison and Chris McConville (editors), *A heritage handbook* (Allen & Unwin: Sydney 1991), p39
68 *The Australia ICOMOS charter for the conservation of places of cultural significance (The Burra Charter),* Revisions adopted 23 April 1988. Original emphasis. For the full Burra Charter, see http://www.icomos.org/australia/burra.html

> idiom and into an Australian context in terms of the sorts of places that one would want to apply them to. So you took concepts which were applied to Greek Temples as philosophies. They were just as valid to outback woolsheds, but the terminology wasn't. So you changed the terminology, tweaked the concepts to make them valid in relation to what you are dealing with and then adopt it as the Burra Charter.[69]

Archaeologist Anne Bickford saw the Burra Charter as successful in guiding conservation management in Australia. Since it was adopted, she argued:

> … it has gained wide acceptance, and most government departments concerned with heritage stipulate the work by their staff and consultants must be in accordance with the Burra Charter and its associated documents … The widespread acceptance of the Burra Charter and its guidelines has had an enormous effect on the conservation profession in Australia, particularly the architects.[70]

Michal Pearson agrees:

> One of the runaway successes of the Burra Charter was that it filled a gap at a critical point in time. It was adopted very rapidly by a range of leading organisations, either formally adopted or tacitly adopted. And because of that it sort of built up a 'kudos', which was quite out of proportion to the size of the organisation that produced it … in some ways it does now have a legislative mandate, in that it's often specifically required in planning approvals as one of the guidelines, standards for works. But it's never been formalised through legislation. Some people, in fact, still try to use that in legal defence to say, 'this is a standard which isn't a standard because it is not legislated for, therefore I can happily ignore it'. But yeah, the Burra Charter was influential and the service got on board with ICOMOS quite early in the piece.[71]

The NPWS adopted the principles of the Burra Charter, which informed, and continue to inform, the guidelines for heritage practices throughout the park system. The extent to which park managers have successfully adopted these principles will be discussed in further detail in chapter 1.2, and part three.

In 1980, in another important development for historic heritage management in New South Wales, the State Government created the Historic Houses Trust (HHT). This body was established to 'manage and maintain as house museums' important historical buildings.[72] Initially, the HHT managed Elizabeth Bay House and Vaucluse House, with responsibility for the latter being transferred from the NPWS. According to Wong, the creation of the Historic Houses Trust was primarily an attempt to ensure the state's historic house museums were managed by heritage professionals:

> The use of heritage professionals and empirical methods, and an emphasis on public access were the central components of the [existing] Elizabeth Bay House Trust Act, and these were transferred to the Historic Houses Bill. The Heritage Act offered legal protection of heritage places, but the Historic Houses Act legislated who was permitted to conserve these places and how this was to be undertaken.[73]

The removal of Vaucluse House from the park system had a relatively minor impact on the NPWS, particularly because the house had been managed by a trust rather than directly by NPWS employees. For the service's heritage specialists, the significance of the HHT lay in its contribution to the professionalisation of the heritage industry in the state, specifically through its employment of heritage specialists. It rivalled NPWS as 'an authoritative body in the heritage and museum fields by producing technical heritage reports and providing

69 Pearson interview
70 Bickford (1991), p39
71 Pearson interview
72 *Historic Houses Act 1980*, cited in Wong (2007), p232
73 Wong (2007), pp224–5

education and public programs to "instruct" other organisations and individuals on heritage practices.'[74] But in doing so, it contributed to the growing network of historic heritage professionals in New South Wales.

Growth in the 1980s

During the 1980s the service grew in understanding of its role as caretaker of a large proportion of the state's historic heritage. And this led to greater commitment to the role.

In 1984, in recognition that 'the historic resources management function of the service is an area which is gaining an increasingly high profile,' a specialist Historic Resources Unit (HRU) was established.[75] The unit began with Michael Pearson, architect David Earle and historian Jane Fulcher. It was suggested that 'the coordinated research of the archaeologist, architect and historian [would provide] a sound basis for conservation and management decisions' made by the NPWS.[76]

The first major project undertaken by the HRU was a regional review of historic heritage sites. This aimed to build a detailed inventory of the historic heritage in the park system and provide a process for the management of these sites. Over a four-year period, all the regions were reviewed in the same process.

> After filing information in a computerised register, the unit produces regional reports analysing the range of sites and setting priorities for research, conservation and interpretation, funding and emergency works.[77]

The HRU was also involved in the acquisition of new historic sites, including Davidson Whaling Station in 1986, bringing the total number of historic sites in the NPWS park system to 13 by 1988.[78]

The kitchen hut at Davidson Whaling Station (Geoff Ashley, DECC)

74 Wong (2007), p237
75 NPWS *Annual report*, 1984, p44; see chapter on the Historic Resources Unit, p84
76 NPWS *Annual report*, 1984, p44
77 NPWS *Annual report*, 1985, p36
78 NPWS *Annual report*, 1985, p37. This does not include three of the original historic sites which were incorporated into Botany Bay National Park in 1987–8. For the full list of NPWS historic sites and dates of their acquisition, see chapter 1.3

The creation of a team of historic heritage professionals at NPWS head office substantially increased the service's ability to properly manage this heritage. In particular, HRU staff played a crucial role in advising field staff and managers about best practice for managing and conserving historic heritage sites in their areas, in addition to the important research they conducted. They worked closely together, used each others expertise in providing a coordinated approach to heritage issues in the field, and developed policies and guidelines for the identification and management of historic places.

An outdoor museum

In the early 1990s, the staff of the HRU produced a report *An outdoor museum* which echoed Pearson's earlier calls for a more measured and thematic approach to historic heritage acquisitions:

> In the past, historic places have been likened to natural species, suggesting a Noah's Ark rescue role – a shopping list of cultural heritage sites that the service should acquire to ensure that one of each was preserved for future generations. This approach was ambitious. By establishing an all embracing list of themes, categorising sites within each theme and then actively seeking new specimens for unrepresented themes, it proposed that NPWS was the state agency which should collect a total library of historic places. Though this approach was put forward, it appears to have been neither accepted nor rejected.
>
> This report suggests that future acquisitions where possible should reinforce the role the service would like to take in historical conservation. Priority should be given to under-represented themes, especially where the examples are unlikely to survive off park … In all cases emphasis should be on sites where obsolete, abandoned or superseded technological processes are represented.[79]

The report, by architect Geoff Ashley, archaeologist Denis Gojak and consultant historian Carol Liston, contained the first statewide review of the historic heritage of the entire park system. The report also made some instrumental recommendations for remodelling the legislation guiding the NPWS and the service itself. It listed examples of all landscapes and environments throughout the state the service was responsible for, and demonstrated that many aspects of the history of Australian life – including exploration, settlement, transport, mining, industry and agriculture – were reflected within these.[80]

Funded by a series of National Estate Grants, the report provided the historical context for evaluating each historic place and discussed the role of the service in conserving the state's heritage.[81] However *An outdoor museum* was never endorsed as an official NPWS policy document.

HRU staff historian Joan Kent recalls that *An outdoor museum* 'wasn't very popular' within the NPWS, and that the unit itself was just as unpopular following its release. She believes it was not circulated as widely as it should have been, and that it 'just upset too many people', with regional and district managers feeling threatened by the recommendations for improved management of historic heritage.[82] But Ashley and Gojak are more positive about the outcomes. According to Gojak:

> I think one of the good things within the service is that there was always a lot of space for constructive criticism. Certainly among the natural scientists there were really strong advocates for different types of management, who were really critical of what the service

79 Ashley, Gojak, Liston (1991), p28
80 NPWS *Annual report*, 1990, p42
81 NPWS *Annual report*, 1990, p 42
82 Joan Kent, interview with Jennifer Cornwall (Little Hartley: 23 September 2005)

> ended up doing. There were people from, I guess, a sort of hard-line, zealot, Green perspective arguing from their own perspectives as well as other people who were arguing from slightly different, maybe [a] more scientific sort of basis for 'biodiversity', before that became a fashionable word. They were sort of arguing … the basic concepts of managing habitat and managing for biodiversity when we were still fixated on managing for areas of acquired land and didn't give a stuff what happened outside the borders. So it probably didn't cause that many ripples. Maybe it did at other levels of the service but I think people were sort of happy that it had taken place. It gave a tangible sense of the service being an important steward of important stuff. It wasn't just [the] show-pony type Hill End/Captain Cooks Landing Place type of stuff. We had this role throughout greater New South Wales in capturing the material culture of [past] life and very often we were the only ones who were doing that sort of stuff. So people found that surprising and informative. But the actual criticism – I think most people could see that it was probably reasonable … we weren't saying 'kill the Queen and pull down the statues' and stuff. We weren't advocating radical change, just chronicling what everyone probably perceived to be fairly obvious shortcomings.
>
> I think [the recommendations] were all taken up, slowly. I think in a way … this is more or less a catalogue of our own experiences and our understanding of the deficiencies. Over the course of the '90s I guess we were working to fix those sorts of issues up as much as possible, as much as we could, within the roles that we had … So I guess … rather than being a series of recommendations that we'd seek to implement and then tick off, it's more or less a road map of where we … proceeded from there to push our efforts. I think we probably made some gains in all of those areas.[83]

Ashley agrees:

> We argued that there was a value in defining the role … There's a lot of colonial sandstone buildings around Sydney but there's also that rural vernacular as well, so it reflects the reality of what they've actually got. So we weren't trying to say 'go and create a new image out of nowhere'. It was actually reflecting what we thought they actually had. We still felt that, funnily enough, there was a role to create, to acquire sites, if you shape a role on retaining a sample of the historic processes of New South Wales … The Historic Houses Trust have a role to acquire house museums, National Parks could have a similar role to reflect the history of New South Wales in a broad sense. But it obviously hasn't done that; it's really continued to acquire sites through natural heritage reasons, and some fantastic sites have been acquired, particularly Aboriginal heritage sites … We argued that the role could be more specific. But it's never really gone that way. Cultural landscape is the key thing. I think that the unifying thing that National Parks has are landscapes which have natural and cultural values and it's the landscape that unifies those two values.[84]

A 1994 review of historic heritage asset management was also critical of a number of 'deficiencies' in the service's system of historic heritage management, and again argued for the value in applying a thematic approach to historic heritage assessment across the park system.[85]

Written by an external consultant, the review cited both internal and external factors hampering the service's historic heritage management efforts. Internally, it argued that a lack of consistent process within the management system had made 'crisis management' the principal form of management.[86] Externally, it criticised the tendency of other public

83 Denis Gojak, interview with Jennifer Cornwall (Sydney: 6 September 2005)
84 Geoff Ashley, interview with Jennifer Cornwall (Sydney: 18 November 2005)
85 Graham Wilson, *Historic heritage asset management status review* (NPWS: unpublished, 1994), section 4.0
86 Wilson, section 7.0

agencies, both state and federal, to regard the NPWS as 'a convenient graveyard for its white elephants', which left the service struggling to manage sites that in some cases had been subjected to decades of neglect.[87]

The review was not entirely critical however, and noted some positive shifts in historic heritage management in the late 1980s and early 1990s:

> General patterns to emerge from this investigation suggest that planning documents up until the mid-1980s failed to take historic heritage assets into account unless they were so prominent they could not be ignored or they were located on specifically designated historic sites. A further area in which historic heritage was considered was when external pressure was applied to the service, such as with the Kosciuszko huts.
>
> Since the late-1980s a greater awareness of historic heritage has led to the conservation of assets which may have otherwise disappeared or been irreversibly modified for service use.[88]

Primary among the review's recommendations was that a thematic list be drawn on in order to determine the 'cultural significance' of historic heritage places, informing the prioritisation of conservation actions and the allocation of funds.[89] The review also recommended that a number of 'management actions' be implemented to improve the service's management of its historic heritage assets, including a greater clarity in where responsibility for historic heritage lay within the organisation as a whole. Furthermore, it recommended that:

> Where a threat is service-generated, such as that associated with the desire to remove an asset, a strategy that might be employed is to consider that the asset is of significance and proofs to the contrary should be formally sought from those wishing to remove it. This is the reverse of the existing situation where an asset has to be proven to be significant to justify its survival. In this situation CHD [Cultural Heritage Division] should be the arbiter, not those wishing to remove the asset.[90]

Amendments to the NSW Heritage Act

By the mid-1980s then, the NPWS was taking a more active role in conserving historic heritage within the whole park system as opposed to simply managing historic sites. This process was enhanced by amendments to the Heritage Act in 1987 and 1998 which placed even further responsibility on the service for the management of all its historic heritage assets.

Gabrielle Zilber suggested that in the 1990s, 'the NPWS initiated a process of qualifying its role and management responsibilities in relation to historic heritage'. She cited the 1987 amendments to the Heritage Act, and the introduction of section 170 which required all government agencies which owned or managed historic heritage to prepare and maintain a list of their heritage assets, as a key factor driving the NPWS at this time. Throughout the 1990s, Zilber argued, the agency's response to the section 170 requirements was an 'ongoing priority' for the service.[91]

Further amendments to the Heritage Act which came into force in 1999 enhanced the service's section 170 responsibilities even more. Under section 170A, all government agencies became responsible for the care and maintenance of historic heritage assets

87 Wilson, section 4.0
88 Wilson, section 7.0
89 Wilson, section 4.0
90 Wilson, section 4.0
91 Zilber (2001), p33

listed on their section 170 heritage and conservation registers. Far more than simply listing items, the service was now required to manage its historic heritage assets according to state government guidelines, and to report annually on the condition of these assets.[92] The extension of these requirements across all government agencies, and the establishment of the State Heritage Register lessened the service's burden of acquiring sites from other government agencies in order to ensure their conservation.

In *An outdoor museum*, Ashley, Gojak, and Liston wrote that:

> The NPWS is the only land management agency specifically given responsibility in its Act for historic places on its land and a role to acquire historic places. It has a role to protect places that are not adequately protected by other agencies and is able to conserve places within their existing setting.[93]

By the close of the 1990s, this was no longer the case, and the NPWS was equally as responsible for its own historic heritage sites as were other government agencies. No longer was the service considered a repository for other agencies' 'white elephants'.

Sullivan and Pearson note other shifts in the broader practice of heritage conservation during the late 1980s and early 1990s which also informed the service's management of its historic places. In particular, they argued that heritage in Australia had been strengthened by legislation in all states and 'an exponential expansion in the level of popular interest in cultural heritage conservation issues, especially at the local level', and that 'the understanding of heritage values has matured considerably, and it is still developing.' They cited the growing awareness of the multifaceted nature of heritage values throughout the community, rather than fabric-based values, as evidence of this maturing view.[94]

Conclusions

There are similarities in the ways in which different staff members and consultants thought about the issue of historic heritage acquisitions and management approaches at different times. However it is apparent that the views of NPWS cultural heritage staff did not always reflect the priorities of the agency.

The urgency of the service's legislative commitment to reserving nationally significant historic heritage in the form of historic sites had been diminished by the 1977 NSW Heritage Act. With the establishment of bodies such as the Heritage Council of NSW, the Historic Houses Trust and the Australian Heritage Commission between 1975 and 1980, the NPWS was no longer the only government agency charged with specific responsibility for historic heritage sites in New South Wales.

However the question of whether the NPWS should try to capture a sample of all historic heritage or simply focus on getting historic heritage representation for those landscapes which are in the park system remained unresolved. Only two historic sites have been reserved since *An outdoor museum* was written in 1991, and the NPWS has continued to acquire many historic places incidentally in the process of creating a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of ecologically viable protected areas.

92 *Heritage Amendment Act 1998*, no.138, pp44–45
93 Ashley, Gojak, Liston (1991), p13
94 Pearson and Sullivan (1995), p309

The question of deliberate acquisition of historic places has remained a contentious issue for staff working in the heritage area of the service, and it reflects one of the continuities in the experiences and attitudes of NPWS historic heritage staff.

Chapter 1.2 considers how effectively heritage principles have been applied to the management of NPWS historic places, and chapter 1.3 will outline the diversity of historic sites contained in the NPWS estate.

1.2 Management: the NPWS approach to historic heritage

Historically, the service has attracted criticism for its management approach to some of the historic heritage contained in the NSW park system. Of particular concern to critics have been the allocation of resources and the attitudes of some park managers.

This chapter explores the perceived shortcomings in the context of the competing demands for the service's limited resources, and the increasing professionalisation of its workforce. It argues that despite occasions when historic heritage was damaged or destroyed, the strong commitment to conservation principles by some NPWS staff members ensured continual improvement of the service's management of its historic heritage. This has been aided by the education of park managers in cultural heritage from the 1980s, and a dedicated source of funding for historic heritage maintenance from the mid-1990s.

Managing historic sites and discovering historic places

The decision to bring historic sites under the umbrella of the NPWS at its creation in 1967 ensured protection for the small number of historic places which were deemed to be of national significance. However a streamlined and consistent process for managing and conserving these sites was not defined. Of the six historic sites gazetted in 1967, three – Bare Island, Hill End and Mootwingee (now Mutawintji) – were managed by service staff, while the remaining three – Captain Cooks Landing Place, Vaucluse House and the La Perouse Monuments – continued to be managed by existing trusts.

A school group visits Bare Island at La Perouse in the 1970s (Keith Gillett, DECC)

There was an expectation that all historic sites would be publicly accessible. Although public use of the sites potentially compromised their proper conservation, 'first and foremost', according to Zilber, 'the guiding NPWS policy was to reserve parklands and historic sites for the enjoyment of visitors'.[95]

Accordingly, the first works conducted at Hill End and Mootwingee historic sites were aimed at making the locations safe for visitors and providing visitor facilities. By 1969, the old hospital at Hill End had been restored and adapted as a visitor centre and ranger's quarters, and water supply provided. At Mootwingee, similar priorities were evident during the same period. A visitor information centre and amenities building were constructed, and a dam built to secure water supplies.[96]

Throughout the 1970s, the service continued to survey and write plans of management for historic sites, restore buildings, and provide visitor amenities in the form of kiosks, toilet facilities, roads and parking areas.[97] The employment of Michael Pearson in 1976 represented a new effort by the service to ensure a more dedicated commitment to managing historic sites, although it was unrealistic to expect a single individual to support the conservation and management of historic places across the state's park system, and his workload was tightly stretched.

Pearson's employment coincided with a lull in the acquisition of historic sites by the service, which he attributes to a lack of commitment to historic heritage by an organisation that at the time 'really saw national parks being natural things'.[98] The acquisition of Throsby Park Historic Site in 1975 had created the service's ninth historic site; it would be five years before another would be added. But although no new historic sites were acquired in the second half of the 1970s, work continued on identifying, recording, cataloguing and preserving historic places contained within national parks and other landscapes in the reserve system.

In its 1973 review of historic heritage, the NPWS uncovered a major flaw in its governing legislation, which effectively excluded European heritage from the protection of the service. Acknowledging the political stakes in historic heritage, the NPWS convened a committee to examine the policies and procedures regarding the management and administration of historic and archaeological sites. Following the development of policies to remedy this situation, smaller, less significant 'historic places' increasingly became a focus of attention for service staff.[99] The 1979 NPWS *Annual report* highlighted this new approach:

> Over the past year emphasis has been placed on recording and preserving historic areas within national parks. Gold and copper mining areas near Kiandra in Kosciuszko National Park and in several parks in the west of the State have been researched and recorded, in order to facilitate their preservation and interpretation. The history of Ben Boyd National Park is being studied and as a result many sites of historical significance are being located. In Kosciuszko National Park, research is continuing into the history of many of the huts in the Snowy Mountains.[100]

95 Zilber (2001), p28
96 NPWS *Annual report*, 1969, p14
97 NPWS annual reports, 1970–1979
98 Pearson interview
99 Zilber (2001), p23
100 NPWS *Annual report* 1979, p18

Rather than limiting historical investigation and conservation to historic sites, this commitment to historic places situated within the broader park system represented a major shift in the service's attitude towards the conservation of its historic heritage. It demonstrated a recognition that historic places which may not have held 'national significance', and therefore which were not eligible to be dedicated as historic sites, were nonetheless still significant in other ways and were worth preserving and properly managing.

One of the implications of this shift away from historic sites was an increased confidence by the service in acquiring important historic places to include in national parks and other protected areas rather than dedicating them as historic sites specifically. This occurred increasingly throughout the 1980s, and by the end of the decade a number of major historic places, which could be defined as holding national significance according to the definitions of the NPW Act, had been incorporated into national parks.

These places included the North Head Quarantine Station and a number of other sites in Sydney Harbour National Park, the Newnes shale-oil refinery in Wollemi National Park, and the Old Great North Road in Dharug National Park.[101] The decision in the late 1980s to incorporate Bare Island, Captain Cooks Landing Place and the La Perouse Monuments into Botany Bay National Park, thereby cancelling their status as historic sites, is further confirmation of the confidence of NPWS that the conservation and management of important historic places could be effectively incorporated into broader park management plans.

This shift away from managing historic places as historic sites can also be seen as an attempt to streamline management practices and, although perhaps not realised at the time, provided a greater opportunity to manage such places in their landscape context. It also highlights the effectiveness of the 1977 Heritage Act in protecting historic places outside the state's park system, meaning that they no longer had to be reserved as historic sites to guarantee conservation.

Managing cultural heritage in a nature-oriented organisation

The commitment of the NPWS to conserving and managing historic heritage places and items located in the broader park system created some major challenges for park managers. The first management and acquisitions policies, developed by Pearson in the late 1970s, emphasised the usefulness of historic themes as a way of categorising historic heritage. This had the effect of encouraging service staff to consider their parks in the context of the broader history of New South Wales. But the emphasis for most field and regional staff remained firmly on preserving – or reinstating – the natural values of their parks, often at the expense of historic heritage.

Some of the major challenges in the management and conservation of historic heritage in the park system therefore related to limited funding and resources, lack of heritage training among field staff, and a drive to direct those limited resources towards nature, rather than historic heritage, conservation.

There is an obvious logic in giving accountability for conservation of on-park historic heritage to the organisation that actually manages the parks. In practice, however, it almost inevitably leads to a conflict of interests.

101 Pearson and Sullivan (1995), p60

The Old Great North Road, built with convict labour, was one of the great engineering feats of the early colony. Here is one of the great buttresses with culvert and drain built from sandstone quarried on site. The road was incorporated into Dharug National Park rather than listed as a stand-alone historic site (DECC)

The national park ethos developed out of eighteenth-century European nature appreciation discourse that to a significant extent was a reaction against and antidote to the blighted urban landscapes that grew out of the Industrial Revolution. This emergent nature appreciation represented a flight from culture to nature and led to an idealising of those landscapes where the works of man were not in evidence. The national park ethos has been characterised by a will to preserve existing natural 'pristine' landscapes and to restore 'degraded' landscapes to a natural condition – an affection for nature endorsed by a science-based ecological approach which underpinned protected area acquisition and management from the 1960s. In this scenario, built heritage or cultural landscape elements like field systems and exotic plantings are generally seen as needing to be removed rather than restored.

In the 1970s a new field of conservation intruded into this ethos. Having initially focused on conserving historic mansions, churches or grand public buildings, the protagonists began to argue that the historic (as well as Aboriginal) heritage present in national parks was an integral part of the park landscape. The difficulty of implementing an integrated culture/nature approach to park management largely stems from the fact that the great majority of park rangers and managers not only have an educational background in the biological sciences, they are almost always personally committed to preserving natural landscapes.

When asked about the biggest challenges they faced in the conservation and management of historic heritage, most of those interviewed for this publication cited this dichotomy between the protection of 'natural' landscape and historic heritage. Ross McDonnell, currently manager of the Western Rivers Region (DECC), attributed the emphasis on natural values over historic heritage to the background of most staff who actually manage parks:

> I then, and still now, don't believe that historic heritage is given its equal footing within the department. I think that's a reflection of where most rangers and professional staff have their training and background in. I mean, the majority of them are in the natural heritage area … We know a lot about and a lot of people have an interest in that natural heritage. We don't have that same knowledge about the historic heritage elements of a park … When it comes down to it … it's a local Area prerogative to determine how they are going to spend their funds and how they spend their time and staff on the ground. So you do get to choose what you want to do but the inclination, I think, of most is towards the natural heritage.[102]

Denis Gojak agreed:

> The service has always had a strong recruitment of rangers and professional staff through natural science streams, which is not surprising, but it has often meant there has been antipathy at worst, or ignorance about the requirements [of] historic heritage and the implications of having historic places within parks.[103]

For heritage practitioners, the worst possible outcome of this conflict of interest was the destruction of historic places by service staff. According to McDonnell, in the 1970s and '80s especially, 'historic heritage was seen as a liability', with 'examples of buildings being bulldozed and burnt down and got rid of because it was a problem'.[104]

Those interviewed for this history acknowledged that some items and areas were damaged or destroyed, but they believed that in most cases it was not malicious. Rather it tended to reflect a lack of understanding of the significance of historic places, and a lack of training in this area. Sullivan argued that:

> I wouldn't say they were in any sense deliberately destructive and they looked after historic sites very well but they didn't understand that destroying old huts or … destroying a lot of the stuff around Kiandra was destroying historic values. They thought they were restoring the landscape. Which they were, in a way. They looked at what they thought was a landscape that had been wrecked by mining and they thought, 'we'll get rid of as much of this as we can and put it back' … it wasn't a question of hatred of historic sites. It was a question of [a] 'cleaning up' mentality and getting all of this stuff out of the way.[105]

McDonnell argues that by the early twenty-first century, such destruction of historic places rarely occurred anymore in the park system because 'the managers in place … have a better understanding of the importance of historic heritage in a conservation outcome'.[106]

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102 Ross McDonnell, interview with Jennifer Cornwall (Griffith: 19 September 2005)
103 Gojak interview
104 McDonnell interview
105 Sullivan interview
106 McDonnell interview

Yan's Store, Kiandra, before and after demolition. The building was an important connection with the Chinese history of the goldfields. Tommy Yan was described by a contemporary as 'one of nature's gentlemen, slightly built, graceful, artistic. His account books were kept in Chinese script, each character being delicately formed with a fine (hair) brush and his reckoning done on an abacus'. Parts of the structure that was removed by NPWS are currently stored at Yarangobilly Caves House. (G Groves, DECC; L Wren, DECC)

Overcoming challenges: education and cultural landscapes

Acknowledging that most NPWS staff came from a biological-science or natural-heritage background, historic heritage advocates in the 1970s and 1980s recognised the importance of training rangers and field staff in cultural heritage management and conservation. The course developed by Pearson and Sullivan in 1982 and discussed in chapter 1.1, led the way in cultural heritage training for NPWS staff and contributed to a better understanding of historic heritage among park managers and a more positive attitude towards it. As Pearson

observes, 'once you started getting people into training courses you started changing attitudes.'[107] Ross McDonnell, who was in the first group to graduate from the course, noted a disjuncture between what they were taught in the course, and the comparative neglect of cultural heritage management he observed when he got into the field:

> Even before starting as a ranger I had been through three-quarters of a university degree, which focused on combining natural [and] cultural heritage into the management of the national parks system. The way that the course was run was that they were *equally* weighted during the course, as course content. So it was curious to me … to see whether in fact there was an equal weighting between natural and cultural heritage in terms of how we do business. I suppose I'd been striving for that as an outcome. Whether it's been successful is another thing. So I've always felt that natural and cultural heritage were equal partners in what we should be trying to achieve.[108]

The tension between natural and historic heritage was also reflected in the move towards managing parks as 'cultural landscapes' – an adaptation of the 'whole of landscape' approach originating in biodiversity conservation.

The cultural landscape approach 'offers ways of breaking down the division between the natural and the cultural as a way of seeing, interpreting and understanding the world, seeking to replace these with more complex and holistic meanings'.[109] From the late 1980s, this concept began to be explored and promoted by NPWS heritage professionals who were active in Australia ICOMOS.

Michael Pearson was one of the first to try and encourage park managers to consider their reserves in the context of uses across the entire landscape by different Aboriginal and settler Australian groups. While the Historic Resources Unit adopted this approach in the late 1980s, the NPWS as a whole was slow to adopt it. In *An outdoor museum*, Ashley, Gojak and Liston criticised the service's traditional 'pursuit of virgin bush and wilderness', arguing that:

> The untouched wilderness is … a myth, as much a cultural and historical landscape, an evolving landscape, as the more obvious European intrusions.
>
> This philosophical, and psychological, position is at the heart of the problem the service has in dealing with its historic places. Until there is a wholehearted acceptance of the values of historic places within national parks, the treatment of those places will always be interpreted as a 'management problem' rather than a service opportunity.[110]

The idea of cultural landscapes as a conceptual tool for managing conservation reserves gained momentum in the mid-1990s, when there was a call for policy[111] and cultural landscape management guidelines for the Australian Alps were developed.[112] It was not until the close of the 1990s that the NPWS itself began to promote a cultural landscape approach, declaring in its 1999 annual report that:

> Conservation and management of historic heritage in NSW has continued to benefit from a growing recognition of the advantages of an integrated 'big-picture' landscape approach that considers cultural values of historic and Aboriginal heritage within their natural context.[113]

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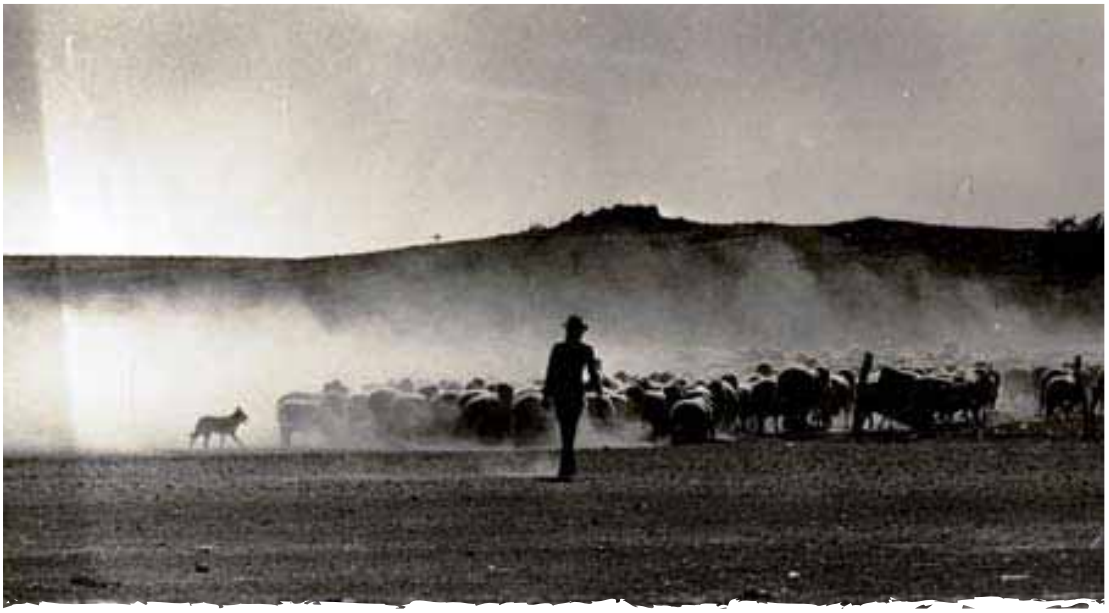
107 Pearson interview
108 McDonnell interview
109 Steve Brown, 'Landscaping heritage: toward an operational cultural landscape approach for protected areas in New South Wales', *Australian Historical Archaeology* (vol 25, 2007) p35
110 Ashley, Gojak, Liston (1991), p5
111 Nethery, W.H. 'Managing for public benefit conservation, maintenance and preservation of history cultural landscapes' (NPWS: unpublished, 1996)
112 Jane Lennon and S Mathews, *Cultural landscape management: guidelines for identifying, assessing and managing cultural landscapes in the Australian Alps National Parks* (Australian Alps Liaison Committee, 1996) Available at http://www.australianalps.environment.gov.au/publications/research-reports/cultural-landscape-management-guidelines.html
113 NPWS *Annual report* 1999, p22



Sheep herding in western NSW in 1974. The NPWS aquired a number of pastoral properties in the west of the state mainly for their important remnant ecosytems. Through these acquisitions the service also became manager of a number of historically significant homesteads, woolsheds, shearers' quarters, cook houses, ground tanks and stockyards (G Steer)

However, according to Steve Brown 'there was no take-up of the concept' until the 2002–3 NPWS corporate plan 'reinvigorated the call for landscape conservation.'[114]

Funding historic heritage projects

The limited funding available to park managers created further challenges for the conservation of historic heritage. A central theme of the interviews with NPWS staff involved in the management of parks – most notably Eric Claussen, Ross McDonnell and Neville Burkett – was the extent to which park management generally was underfunded throughout the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s.[115]

McDonnell talks of not being able to make long-distance phone calls from the Western Region office, and not having enough fuel to drive the cars.[116] Burkett describes the capital works budget when he joined the NPWS in 1986 as 'a disaster'.[117] The limited money available had to cover all on-park capital works, and since most historic heritage was judged not to be a priority and tended to be comparatively very expensive, it was rarely funded.

This lack of funding and resources for parks generally was therefore exacerbated in relation to historic heritage specifically. According to Burkett, 'the rangers and the managers couldn't see why they should spend any of that money – very, very meagre money – on historic heritage, when the visitor facilities were falling apart'.[118]

Michael Pearson pointed out that:

> Maintenance was never good at many of the sites. So [at] a lot of the western New South Wales sites, some of the rangers were quite sympathetic towards the homesteads and that sort of thing but there [were] never any real resources other than doing emergency work or

114 Brown (2007), p37
115 Funding received a boost in the 1990s, especially in the Sydney Metropolitan Region in the lead up to the Sydney Olympics
116 McDonnell interview
117 Neville Burkett, interview with Jennifer Cornwall (Sydney: 12 October 2005)
118 Burkett interview

> doing specific upgrade work to make them livable. There wasn't the resources there to do the required cyclic maintenance at those sorts of places. Now the rangers themselves were very aware of that and some of them were very sensitive to that but they were not in a position where they could do anything about it.
>
> In the case like Sydney Harbour National Park, the rangers there were well aware of the problem of what is called 'concrete cancer', as the fortifications are all built of mass concrete with iron in them, iron that rusts and expands and starts to crack open concrete. That's a *massive, massive* problem and it was happening before their eyes. There just wasn't the resources to do anything about it.[119]

The turning point in historic heritage funding across the state's park system was the introduction of the Historic Asset Maintenance Program (HAMP) in 1995.

HAMP, an annual allocation of $2 million for the maintenance and conservation of historic heritage within the park system, was the NSW Government's response to the findings of the Historic Heritage Maintenance Survey which surveyed and recorded a large proportion of the service's 4000 historic places to identify their requirements for continuing maintenance, conservation and stabilisation works.[120]

The survey was designed by Denis Gojak, Neville Burkett, then Acting Manager Cultural Heritage Services Division, Miriam Stacey, Acting Research Architect, and Deborah Edward, Acting Research Historian. It provided the basis for estimating the amount of supplementary funding needed, determining the priorities for future funding allocations, and scheduling conservation and maintenance works. On the basis of the survey, a supplementary funding bid by NPWS for $4 million was approved by the government in 1996–7.[121]

Gojak recalls the impact of the HAMP funds on the Historic Resources Unit and its projects:

> Even though we showed that for a five-year program of conserving historic heritage that we had then would cost, I think, $68 million, and then something like $8 million recurrent year after year after that, we were able to go to Treasury and receive $2 million per annum, which made an *enormous* difference to the way we were working, because I think that was easily more than a tenfold increase in the amount of money that was available specifically for historic heritage [previously]. It allowed large-scale engineering type solutions to happen. So places like the Old Great North Road within Dharug National Park received a lot of money [as did] Trial Bay Goal up in Arakoon (a State Recreation area), [plus] smaller amounts of money for things like Kosciuszko huts and forts around Sydney Harbour and various homesteads and mining sites. All around the place we managed to tap into that.[122]

By creating a source of funding dedicated entirely to historic heritage, and tying heritage conservation to that funding through a strict list of criteria, HAMP overcame the traditional emphasis in NPWS on 'natural' over 'cultural'; that is, it ensured that some funds would be spent on historic heritage, and could not be redirected towards the natural landscapes of parks. Furthermore, since 1999, it has ensured all historic heritage maintenance works funded by the program have been directly linked to conservation management plans.[123]

An additional benefit of the implementation of HAMP has been a greater willingness by local NPWS staff to engage in historic heritage conservation works. Neville Burkett argued the introduction of HAMP 'brought about a very, very major change in the way the service

119 Pearson interview
120 NPWS *Annual report*, 1995, p22.
121 NPWS *Annual report*, 1996, p25
122 Gojak interview
123 Steve Brown, *An evaluation of the Heritage Assets Maintenance Program* (HAMP) (NPWS: unpublished, 2003), pp22–25

managers looked at historic heritage', both because it encouraged them to properly manage these sites, and because once they did so, they realised how important these places were to the public.[124]

Ross McDonnell agrees:

> HAMP's been wonderful from the point of view that it's provided an opportunity for Area staff to put up proposals for historic heritage restorations. So we've got rangers now who are thinking about it in relation to the reserves they manage … It makes rangers think about historic heritage and it makes them follow a planning process to determine what needs to be done and how is the best way to do it … So it becomes a deliberate planning process for them. Whereas pre-HAMP there wasn't a lot of incentive to consider historic heritage because there were no dollars there … to do it.[125]

Nonetheless, the program was not a 'cure-all' for the service's historic heritage problems in the 1990s. There remained a discrepancy between available HAMP funding and the requirements of the service's historic heritage assets, and the strict criteria of the funding emphasised places of state significance. By 1998, just three years after the introduction of HAMP funding, 'the discrepancy between the maintenance costs of the NPWS-managed historic places and the allocated funds,' according to McDonnell, was so large that it was 'inevitable that many places will decay and be more costly to restore if that becomes financially feasible.'[126]

Conclusions

Since 1967 there have been gradual improvements in the way the service has managed its historic heritage. The number of staff dedicated to historic heritage has increased, educational programs have been developed, and a dedicated funding system introduced to ensure the most significant or threatened historical places can be conserved.

Together with this improved commitment to historic heritage came improvements in the way heritage principles were applied to the management of the service's historic places. Although some park managers may have continued to value the natural landscape over historic heritage, they were bound by the principles of the Burra Charter to carefully consider the implications of any decisions regarding historic heritage removal or destruction. They also became familiar with tools such as heritage impact statements and conservation management plans, and acquired a greater potential to fund historic heritage maintenance works.

Part three of the publication will examine the history of management of four different historic places, providing a better understanding of the ways these heritage principles have been applied throughout the park system. But the sheer volume of significant historic places the NPWS continues to manage is testament to the success of its heritage practice over recent decades. Although many important sites have been lost, the NSW park system remains studded with tens of thousands of places of historic significance incorporated into park management plans. Chapter 1.3 will outline the historic heritage collection managed by the NPWS.

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124 Burkett interview
125 McDonnell interview
126 Workshop 7, *Visions for the new millennium* (1998), p80

1.3 Collection: historic heritage in the park system

In June 2009 more than 11,000 historic places were listed on DECC's register of historic heritage known as the Historic Heritage Information Management System (HHIMS). However the true extent of this collection across the NSW park system, is estimated to be around twice that figure.

The places in the register range from the homesteads and associated buildings of acquired pastoral stations in western New South Wales, to ten of the 13 major historic lighthouses on the state's east coast, from transport infrastructure such as tram tracks, convict roads and bridges, to markers of human life and events such as graves and monuments. Some of them are in near-original condition, having been continuously cared for, occupied or professionally restored; some are in ruin, while others may only contain scattered archaeological evidence. In some cases, historic places may have no physical remains, but can be identified through a clearing of vegetation, or the presence of exotic plants or animals.

This chapter provides an overview of the NPWS historic heritage collection. It is not exhaustive, but attempts to illustrate the types of items found in the park system. It examines this collection from three different perspectives.

Firstly, it lists NPWS historic sites. Secondly, it identifies those historic places in the NSW park system listed on the State Heritage Register and National Heritage List for their historic significance.

However, the overwhelming majority of NPWS historic heritage places, some of which hold local, state or national significance, are not gazetted historic sites or listed on the state or national registers. The third section of the chapter seeks to give some idea of the scope and range of the rich diversity of these places in the NSW park system, listing them according to the historic themes they represent.

Historic sites

As outlined earlier, before the creation of the Historic Houses Trust in 1980, the NPWS was the only public agency charged specifically with the preservation and management of significant historic heritage sites in the state.[127] During the late 1960s and '70s the incorporation of such sites into the parks system was the only way of ensuring they would be preserved.

The first six historic sites represented diverse elements of NSW history. The La Perouse Monuments and Captain Cooks Landing Place were deemed significant because of their connections to the European discovery of New South Wales. The remaining four were selected for different reasons – Hill End for its associations with the late nineteenth century gold rushes, Bare Island as an intact example of late-nineteenth-century coastal fortifications, Mootwingee for its rich Aboriginal and natural heritage, and Vaucluse House because it was the former home of a prominent colonial figure, William Charles Wentworth. These sites, according to Sharon Veale, were linked by their collective representation of the theme of 'progress'. Together they were seen as representing the progress of the nation from 'an ancient land inhabited by primitive people to one where the British Empire would triumph', an idea which Veale acknowledges is highly contentious in today's Australia.[128]

127 Zilber (2001), p28
128 Veale (2002), p22

The La Perouse Monuments was one of the first six historic sites created in 1967. It has since been incorporated into Botany Bay National Park (DECC)

In 1972, another two historic sites were gazetted – Cadmans Cottage, the earliest surviving building on the shores of Sydney Cove, and Hartley, a 'well preserved remnant of one of the first settlements west of the Blue Mountains and one which played an essential role in the development of inland Australia.'[129] Again, their significance lay in their strong links with colonial New South Wales.

Three years later, Throsby Park, in the southern highlands, became the state's ninth historic site. It was significant both as the oldest homestead complex outside the County of Cumberland, and because of its associations with prominent colonial figure Dr Charles Throsby.

Between 1979 and 1988 another eight historic sites were reserved. There is a clear move – possibly as a result of Pearson's theme-driven acquisition policy – away from the service's initial emphasis on historic places linked to colonial New South Wales. Five of these new sites represented Aboriginal occupation of NSW prior to the European settlement. They were:

- Clybucca, a substantial Aboriginal midden complex on the north coast
- Mount Grenfell, an Aboriginal rock art site in central western NSW
- Tweed Heads, a Minjungbal ceremonial site
- Maroota, a site of Aboriginal art and engravings, and
- Koonadan, a traditional hunting and fishing area for the Wiradjuri people containing a burial site.[130]

Mount Grenfell was handed back to its Aboriginal owners in 2004, but remains a gazetted historic site on lease to the NPWS.

129 Hartley statement of significance, HHIMS register

130 'Koonadan Historic Site', http://192.148.120.24/parks.nsf/ParkContent/N0215?Opendocument&ParkKey=N0215&Type=xo, accessed 3 March 2008

In addition to these sites of Aboriginal pre-contact significance, the 1980s historic sites included Yuranighs Grave. This site symbolises an important collaboration between European explorers and Yuranigh, an Aboriginal man who was described by Thomas Mitchell as 'my guide, companion, counsellor and friend on the most eventful occasions during this journey of discovery'.[131]

The other new sites were Davidson whaling station, the longest running shore-based whaling station in the state, and Wisemans Ferry, reserved because it 'encompasses the most extensive known complex of archaeological sites of a convict stockade.'[132]

Throsby Park House, part of the Throsby Park Historic Site, in 1978. The site protects the 1834 house, home to five generations of the Throsby family, and its associated buildings such as the original stables and a flour mill (DECC)

Yuranighs Grave Historic Site. Yuranigh was an Aboriginal guide to surveyor Thomas Mitchell in the 1840s and his grave represents an important combination of Aboriginal and European burial customs (DECC)

131 'Yuranighs Aboriginal Grave Historic Site', http://www2.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/parks.nsf/ParkContent/N0211?OpenDocument&ParkKey=N0211&Type=Xk, accessed 25 June 2008

132 Wisemans Ferry statement of significance, HHIMS register

The addition of so many historic sites to the New South Wales park system during the 1980s reflected the service's commitment to its responsibility for conserving the state's cultural heritage. However over the same period, four historic sites were removed from this category of reservation. Vaucluse House was transferred to the Historic Houses Trust upon establishment of the HHT in 1980, and Bare Island, Captain Cooks Landing Place and the La Perouse Monuments were incorporated into the new Botany Bay National Park later in the decade.

In the 20 years after Koonadan was gazetted in 1988, only two further historic sites were reserved, indicating the extent to which the service has subsequently moved away from this approach to conserving historic places, as discussed in chapter 1.2. In 2003, the ruins of a mansion built by a prominent colonial figure, Archibald Clunes Innes[133] in the 1830s at Lake Innes, was reserved as a nationally significant archaeological site[134], as was Maynggu Ganai, 'an archaeological landscape site which contains relics of convict agricultural settlement which later was replaced by a religious mission' for Aboriginal people.[135]

Historic sites and their dates of acquisition

Historic site	Year gazetted
Hill End	1967
Mutawintji (formerly Mootwingee)	1967
Bare Island*	1967
Captain Cooks Landing Place*	1967
La Perouse Monuments*	1967
Vaucluse House*	1967
Cadmans Cottage	1972
Hartley	1972
Throsby Park	1975
Clybucca	1979
Mount Grenfell	1980
Tweed Heads	1981
Yuranighs Aboriginal Grave	1982
Maroota	1983
Davidson Whaling Station	1986
Wisemans Ferry	1986
Koonadan	1988
Maynggu Ganai	2002
Innes Ruins	2003

* No longer NPWS historic sites

133 Graham Connah, *The same under a different sky? A country estate in nineteenth century New South Wales* (British Archaeological Reports International Series 1625, Oxford: 2007)

134 The service had purchased the Innes estate in the 1992 but managed the ruins as part of the surrounding Lake Innes Nature Reserve until the creation of the historic site.

135 http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/parkmanagement/MaynggуGanaiHSMgmtplanDraft.htm accessed 7 May 2008

Acquiring historic heritage

In addition to the 15 historic sites, there are tens of thousands of significant historic places spread throughout the park system. Unlike historic sites, which were deliberately acquired to protect their cultural heritage value, most of the other historic places were not specifically reserved but are situated on land protected for its natural values. In this sense, they were incidentally acquired as part of larger protected areas such as national parks, nature reserves and state conservation areas.

There are two important implications of this random process of acquiring historic heritage. Firstly, as we have seen, such historic heritage can be overlooked or neglected by management who are more focused on conserving and protecting the natural elements and wildlife of the landscape in which sites exist. This is not to say that the historic places are never managed effectively, but that they are a secondary consideration in the decision to acquire and so do not always receive priority in the management process.

Secondly, despite Pearson's acquisition policy and the recommendations of *An outdoor museum* discussed in chapter 1.1, the service exerted little control – historic sites aside – over the range of historic heritage represented within the park system. The type of historic heritage items acquired often closely related to the natural features of the surrounding landscape, leading to a collection of historic heritage which is far stronger in some elements of NSW history than others.

The urban built environment, for example, is barely represented on the park system. However, those items and places relating to past uses of areas which are now protected – often because they were not subject to urban development – are prominent. The park system consequently has a large collection of former pastoral stations, accommodation for forestry workers and road builders, mining and forestry sites, alpine and coastal huts, defence sites, as well as historic places associated with the development of recreation and tourism in NSW.

Like many reserves throughout the park system, Nocoleche Nature Reserve in north-western NSW is the site of a former pastoral station. Pictured here are the shearers quarters in 1995 (DECC)

However there have been occasions where the NPWS has acquired heritage sites specifically for their historic significance and, rather than gazette them separately, has incorporated them into existing reserves. The Quarantine Station and Goat Island in Sydney Harbour National Park are two such sites which were acquired in the 1980s.[136]

Ashley, Gojak and Liston argue that such sites were acquired because they provide 'a political solution to some intractable government problem'. Without the provision of additional staff and funding to manage them, sites acquired for this purpose can be just as problematic as those acquired in the process of nature conservation.[137] In the 1990s, as other government agencies stopped seeing NPWS as a repository for difficult heritage items, the service was also lobbying to deliberately acquire certain historic heritage sites it considered would enhance the park system. Thus it acquired ten historic lighthouses, which formed part of the state's 'coastal highway lights', and incorporated them into neighbouring reserves. The service embraced the challenge of conserving the sites while making them accessible to public use. In a successful example of the service's adaptive re-use strategy, the buildings associated with several of these lighthouses have since been transformed into visitor accommodation.

Goat Island, formerly the site of a colonial gunpowder magazine complex, the Sydney Harbour Water Police and the harbour master's residence, was acquired from the Maritime Services Board in 1994 and incorporated into Sydney Harbour National Park. The historic hand-operated jib crane from the magazine precinct is shown here being removed for relocation to the Museum of Sydney (Geoff Ashley, DECC)

136 For a detailed analysis of the acquisition and management of the Quarantine Station, see chapter 3.3
137 Ashley, Gojak, Liston, p28

State Heritage Register and the National Heritage List

As part of its obligations under the 1998 amendments to the Heritage Act, the service has developed and maintained a list of historic heritage places in the park system on the NSW State Heritage Register (SHR). These sites are deemed to be of *state* significance, so while there is some overlap with the list of NPWS historic sites, which are defined as holding *national* significance, not all historic sites are listed on the SHR. In 2008, there were 34 sites in the NSW park system which were listed on the SHR.[138]

The NPWS has developed a number of significant NSW lighthouses for adaptive reuse. Here, the Cape Byron Lighthouse Cottage is being painted in heritage colours for use as a guesthouse. (Sonia Limeburner, DECC)

138 HHIMS database

NPWS-managed historic places listed on the State Heritage Register

Historic place	Location
Albert Goldfield Diggings and Albertown	Sturt National Park
Audley Village	Royal National Park
Bantry Bay Explosives Magazine	Garigal National Park
Barrenjoey Lightstation and Setting	Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park
Blue Mountains Walking Tracks	Blue Mountains National Park
Cadmans Cottage	Cadmans Cottage Historic Site
Cattai Complex	Cattai National Park
Currango Homestead Complex	Kosciuszko National Park
Davidson Whaling Station Complex	Davidson Whaling Station Historic Site
Fort Denison	Sydney Harbour National Park
Gara River Hydro-electric Scheme	Oxley Wild Rivers National Park
Georges Head Gun Emplacements	Sydney Harbour National Park
Glenrock Early Coalmining Sites	Glenrock State Conservation Area
Goat Island	Sydney Harbour National Park
Gondwana Rainforests of Australia	Barrington Tops State Conservation Area
Grave of Yuranigh	Yuranighs Aboriginal Grave Historic Site
Hartley Historic Site	Hartley Historic Site
Hill End Historic Site	Hill End Historic Site
Homestead, Willandra Homestead complex	Willandra National Park
Kiandra Courthouse/Chalet	Kosciuszko National Park
Kinchega Woolshed	Kinchega National Park
Kunderang East Pastoral Station	Oxley Wild Rivers National Park
Lake Innes House Complex	Lake Innes Nature Reserve
Matthew's Cottage, Kiandra	Kosciuszko National Park
Middle Head Fortifications	Sydney Harbour National Park
Montague Island Lighthouse Group	Montague Island Nature Reserve
Mt Wood Station	Sturt National Park
Old Currango Homestead	Kosciuszko National Park
Point Stephens Lighthouse Group	Tomaree National Park
Quarantine Station	Sydney Harbour National Park
Quartz Roasting Pits Complex	Hill End Historic Site
Smoky Cape Lighthouse Station	Hat Head National Park
The Old Great North Road	Dharug National Park
Throsby Park Historic Site	Throsby Park Historic Site
Willandra Lakes	Mungo National Park

In addition to their listing on the State Heritage Register, some NPWS historic places are on the National Heritage List established in 2004. Although this does not provide the same sort of legislative protection offered by the SHR, it does recognise that some parts of the park system are 'places of outstanding heritage significance to Australia', and provides some level of protection.[139]

The Kunderang East Pastoral Station in Oxley Wild Rivers National Park, shown here in 1991, is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register (Geoff Ashley, DECC)

The National Heritage List contains nine places located within managed protected areas. Of these, three are classified as 'historic' – Kurnell Peninsula (Botany Bay National Park), North Head Quarantine Station (Sydney Harbour National Park), and the Old Great North Road (Dharug National Park). While other landscapes like Royal National Park are listed primarily for their biodiversity values, historic cultural values are also recognised.

The diversity of sites in the NSW park system

Geoff Ashley described the NPWS historic heritage collection as 'a huge significant collection of a heritage that talks about the sadness, the loss, the joy, the ordinary history of Australia that's been picked up along the way coincidentally as part of creating national parks.'[140]

With tens of thousands of sites scattered throughout the park system, it is difficult to adequately encapsulate the range and diversity of NPWS historic places. Ashley, Gojak and Liston categorised the collection according to the NPWS district in which they were located.[141] This method highlighted the connection between NPWS reserves and the history of the broader landscape in which they exist – although as the authors pointed out, in some cases 'the historic places in the service areas are not typical of the district'. The NPWS reserves in the agricultural belt of central NSW, for example, 'are often uncleared pockets of land which were unsuitable for agricultural purposes, and whose history often reflects timber and mining, not necessarily representative of surrounding areas.'[142]

139 http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/national/index.html, accessed 30 November 2007
140 Ashley interview
141 In 1991, the NPWS divided the state for administrative purposes into four regions with each of these further divided into 26 districts. These districts roughly equate to the 2009 NPWS regions. See Ashley, Gojak, Liston (1991), p39
142 Ashley, Gojak, Liston (1991), p39. The DECC discussion paper on historic themes also offers a region-based analysis

This section will provide a brief outline of NPWS historic heritage items by their historic themes. It is an approach which has the benefit of listing larger items or those imbued with a greater significance alongside those that are less visible or which sometimes get overlooked. Another benefit of the historic-theme approach is that it reveals those themes which are not as well represented in the park system.

While thematic lists can be a useful tool for categorising historic heritage, they have the potential to over-simplify the past. As Pearson and Sullivan caution, 'thematic approaches in most cases do not help in making decisions about how to manage a place, but such surveys can mean that decisions are made in the light of known heritage resources rather than in blinkered ignorance.'[143]

The following outline shows the rich collection of historic heritage within the NPWS estate. The historic themes used are taken from a draft DECC discussion paper on historic themes.

Historic themes and places within the NPWS estate

Theme	Historic places
Shaping cultural landscapes	• Irrigation systems – dams, weirs • Cleared vegetation • Exotic trees • Seawalls • Protest sites against mining, forestry • Ring-barked trees • Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electricity Scheme sites
Exploration	• Captain Cooks Landing Place • Marked trees • Commemorative monuments • Sturt's stockade against Aboriginal attack (Sturt National Park) • Sites visited by early explorers • Pathways, tracks, routes
Convict system	• Convict built roads • Stockades • Convict built structures (such as Hartley Court House)
Pastoralism	• Pastoral stations – including homesteads, woolsheds, shearers' quarters, cook houses, ground tanks, stockyards • Stock fences, cattle tick fences • Huts associated with pastoralism • Woolscour (e.g. Mount Wood Station, Sturt National Park) • Machinery
Agriculture	• Orchards associated with pastoral properties • Market gardens
Forestry	• Timber mills • Tramways • Flying foxes (for timber transportation) • Logging trails, log loading ramps, snig tracks • Logged areas • Pulleys

143 Pearson and Sullivan (1995), p144

Theme	Historic places
Mining	• Quarries • Mine sites • Mining town (Hill End Historic Site) • Mining relics including engines, tanks, shafts, flues, boilers • Altered rock surfaces • Water diversions • Tunnels
Fishing and whaling	• Ladders to access beach • Boatsheds • Whaling station (Davidson Whaling Station Historic Site) • Fishers camps
Nature-based recreation	• Walking tracks • Lookouts • Scenic tramway (Blue Mountains National Park) • Dancehalls • Picnic grounds
Accommodation	• Shearers' and pastoral workers' quarters • Fishermen's huts • Holiday cabins • Lighthouse keepers' cottages • Depression housing • Military barracks • WWI internment camp (Scheyville National Park) • Bushwalking huts • Skiing accommodation • Miners' accommodation • Hotels • Prisoner accommodation • Stockmen's shelters • Ornamental orchards, gardens
Transport	• Roads • Bullock tracks • Bridges • Tunnels • Railways • Tramways • Lighthouses • Shipwrecks • Wharves • Travelling stock routes • Cobb & Co coach route • Landing strips
Defence	• Coastal fortifications • Radar installations • Gun emplacements • Tank traps
Commemorating events	• War memorials • Monuments and plaques • Huts
Creative endeavour	• Vernacular buildings

Theme	Historic places
Migration	• Quarantine station • Migrant holding centre (Scheyville National Park)
Ethnic influences	• Chinese owned stores
Law and order	• Courthouse and police barracks (Hartley Historic Site) • Bushranger hideouts
Labour	• Site of industrial disputes (Willandra homestead)
Utilities	• Trigonometric stations • Sewer line (Trial Bay Gaol – Arakoon State Conservation Area; Yarrangobilly Caves House; Hill End) • Gauging stations associated with hydro-electricity • Bores, wells • Ground tanks • Windmills
Marking birth and death	• Graves • Cemeteries • Monuments and plaques
Communication	• Post office • Cable station (La Perouse) • Telegraph line • Telephone lines
Industry	• Flour mills • Charcoal pits • Brick kilns • Quartz roasting pits (Hill End Historic Site) • Eucalyptus distilling sites • Boiling down works (Davidson Whaling Station Historic Site) • Explosives storage
Health	• Animal quarantine sites
Education	• Schools
Welfare	• Depression relief labour-constructed infrastructure (lookouts, tracks, amenities etc) • Soldier settlement blocks
Religion	• Churches • Presbyteries
Sport	• Tennis courts (former pastoral stations and mining communities) • Horse racing tracks • Velodrome • Foot-racing tracks

Conclusions

The NSW park system contains a richly diverse catalogue of historic heritage items and places. Some have their conservation ensured through protection as historic sites and/or State Heritage listing while many more exist within a broader park landscape, their management forming only a small element of the overall park management decision-making process. However regardless of the level of specific protection afforded to different historic heritage sites, or the ways they are listed, it is evident that a substantial portion of the post-contact history of New South Wales is represented across the state's park system.

PART TWO: Biographies

Innes Ruins (DECC)

The first NPWS heritage specialists

In 1969, following amendments to the National Parks and Wildlife Act relating to the conservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage places, a full time archaeologist/historian position was created in the NPWS. This job was filled by Sharon Sullivan.

Several years later, with pre-contact Aboriginal heritage consuming most of her time, Sullivan proposed that a position be created which was dedicated to the management of historic heritage. To Sullivan the appointment of a historian rather than an archaeologist or architect was 'just obvious':

> We had architects … They weren't heritage architects but you have to remember there weren't a lot of heritage architects around either. They were even harder to find than historians. But we needed someone with a broader remit than an architect. We needed to start looking at the whole historic resources of the State to see what should be part of the service.[144]

Sullivan recalls the difficulty of finding a historian when the new position was finally confirmed in 1976, because of that discipline's general lack of engagement with heritage places:

> In those days most historians were not … interested in place at all. So it was very difficult to find someone who was a historian but also had the interest in historic places as opposed to a history in manuscripts. They weren't making the connection which people make automatically now between place and history. I know that's hard to understand now. But there was quite a bit of debate about that at the time and [about] trying to get historians involved. I remember writing some papers and things about that. They saw these heritage places as things in themselves, divorced from the cultural landscape.
>
> We felt the strong need to have historic and thematic frameworks for the work we were doing because unless these places were interpreted and contextualised they remain just that. But it was very difficult to get historians involved in that.[145]

Michael Pearson was the successful applicant and joined the Aboriginal and Historic Resources Section which had just been established following a major service reorganisation. His was the first NPWS position specifically dedicated to historical heritage and Pearson comprised the 'entire historic resources unit' within the Aboriginal and Historic Resources Section. Sullivan was promoted to a senior archaeologist/historian and the section head supervising Pearson in the Historic Unit and the four professional and three technical staff in the Aboriginal Unit.[146]

Following Pearson's appointment Sullivan had far less involvement in settler historic heritage matters, although the two worked on several projects together. One of these was the introduction of cultural heritage management training for rangers which, as discussed in chapter 1.1, was published as the book *Looking after heritage places* after both had left the NPWS. This book became a standard text for heritage management courses and was widely read by students, practitioners and managers alike.

144 Sullivan interview
145 Sullivan interview
146 NPWS *Annual report* 1976, pp4, 14; Michael Pearson, 'Notes' (2003); see Appendix for organisational chart

Both Sullivan and Pearson were highly respected within the service and in the broader heritage field. Sullivan said of Pearson:

> I think that after Mike Pearson had been working for us for about four years we had one of those staff cut[s] … so [a senior manager] called me down to his office and said we need to cut one of the staff, I'm thinking of disposing of Mike's position. I said 'you have to be joking, Mike's position's quite crucial'. He said 'oh no … he doesn't do anything'. I said 'what do you mean doesn't do anything?' He said 'we don't get any complaints from the field about him so he can't be doing anything much. We never hear a lot.' And what he was really saying to me was there's not a lot of drama up there. And he's probably correct because Mike just really works so impeccably with everyone, often frustrated but really did a fabulous job and I think in terms of historic heritage management, a lot of the policies that Mike developed and a lot of the work that he did is just absolutely ground breaking. I think it was really important to Australian historic management generally and I think that Mike was responsible for the foundation for that stuff in a lot of ways.[147]

Looking back after 20 years, Sullivan and Pearson provided valuable reflections on their roles and on the challenges they faced as the first heritage practitioners employed by the service. They examined the extent to which their ideas and programs subsequently influenced heritage practice in the NPWS, and in the Australian heritage field more generally. The following chapters thus offer insight into the early formulations of heritage practice from the perspective of the service's first heritage professionals.

147 Sullivan interview

2.1 Sharon Sullivan

Sharon Sullivan has been a pioneer in the field of cultural heritage management. In 1969 she was the first cultural heritage professional employed by the NPWS, so she was instrumental in establishing its initial policies and procedures for heritage management. In 1986 Sullivan was appointed Manager for the Central Region of NPWS, assuming responsibility for the national parks around Sydney and the historic heritage within them. In 1990, after 21 years with NPWS Sullivan left the service to become Director of the Australian Heritage Commission. Throughout her time at the NPWS Sullivan was actively involved in the national and international heritage sector.[148]

Sharon Sullivan (front row, fourth from left) at the Scotts Head Training School in 1980 (Harry Creamer, DECC)

Making history – beginning at the NPWS in the late 1960s

When Sharon Sullivan joined the NPWS as an archaeologist/historian in September 1969 the fledgling organisation had been in existence for two years. Modelled closely on the US National Park Service, it was also the only government agency in Australia with responsibility for the protection of Aboriginal and historic heritage. Sullivan was initially employed as the service's sole heritage professional.

The identification and recording of Aboriginal cultural heritage places on all land categories across NSW was a major priority of Sullivan's position. She recalls that 'it was pretty overwhelming as we were also trying to consult with Aboriginal people about sites being destroyed and getting the Aboriginal cultural revival going'. Sullivan was herself in the early stages of her career. Following the completion of an Honours degree in history, and a Diploma of Education, Sullivan had worked as a research assistant for Dr Isabel McBride on a regional pre-history project involving the location, recording and

148 This chapter is based on two oral history interviews conducted with Sharon Sullivan on 12 April 1988 and 15 November 2005

excavation of Aboriginal sites occupied before 1788. It was among the first projects of its kind in Australia. Bonded to the Department of Education, she then spent some eighteen months teaching at Punchbowl High School before commencing with the service.

In the early days of the service, Sullivan campaigned for the active management of heritage places across all reserves. Unlike natural heritage management, however, cultural heritage management at that time was not subject to any clear legislative requirement or policy directives but evolved through the practices of those working with the sites.

In 1973 with the help of a public service scholarship, Sullivan embarked on a four-month study tour of the United States' national parks system. The tour was 'immensely important in finding out what was going on' in historic heritage management internationally. She had been particularly impressed by the extent to which large US national parks such as Yosemite were managed in an integrated way for their cultural as well as natural values.

Upon returning to Australia, Sullivan introduced many elements of the management approaches she had seen. She benefited from the support of her colleagues within the Resources Division of NPWS, including its head Jim Starling. As she recalls:

> Often when they were doing their [park] acquisition work they'd call me in and I'd look at the historic stuff. Particularly out west, they had those big acquisitions in the Tibooburra corner there [Sturt National Park]. I'd say 'what about this homestead?' 'Should we include this?' and so on. So everyone was conscious there that it wasn't just the land, it was also the homestead and so on that needed protection.
>
> So while it was pretty ad hoc and there was only me, we did do that sort of investigation. Reports [on] acquisitions began to have stuff in them about the historic values as well. In no sense a full survey and in no sense anything as thorough as the natural stuff but we did begin to note them.

Growing support for cultural heritage

In the early 1970s, as we have seen in chapter 1.1, there were few people in Australia working in cultural heritage management. 'Heritage' was a new area of professional practice, yet to attract the interest of universities. Sullivan was one member of a small and disparate group of professionals including archaeologists, town planners and architects. Generally they worked in isolation from each other.

In this context, the service's cultural heritage conservation practices were simply 'invented' by Sullivan and her colleagues as they went along. As Sullivan reflected in later years, 'although we didn't know it at the time, basically we were beginning pioneer work on what is now called cultural resource management or Aboriginal and historic site management'.

A major obstacle confronting Sullivan and her colleagues was the lack of understanding of cultural heritage and its management among those working in the field. Not only was the acquisition of historic sites a lower priority but the acquisition process was, it seemed, far less rigorous than for assessing the natural values of land under consideration. As Sullivan points out, historic sites were for the most part 'found for us' by the Minister for Lands, Tom Lewis, who was somewhat of a history buff, 'as he ambled about the political landscape'.

> You'd find you had another historic site, which people used to groan about a bit because there wasn't any money. And when you get something like Hill End, it's a major problem from the point of view of management because there's just not enough money.

Cadmans Cottage, the former government coxswain's residence on the shores of Sydney Cove – and one of Sydney's oldest surviving buildings – was one historic site acquired in this way. Sullivan recalls her concerns with the young service's ad-hoc approach towards its restoration when it was handed over to the NPWS in 1972:

> [We] were concerned about it because of archaeology. And we actually went down to visit it when it was being restored because it had been given to architects to restore, we didn't have anything to do with it. And we noticed that they'd taken out a good metre of stuff from the floor and they showed us very proudly the stain around the walls where it had been. And we said 'did you find anything?' 'Yes, we found lots of stuff, the workmen took a lot of stuff home that's really interesting', etc, etc. And at the same time, they weren't able to interpret the site because they didn't know anything at all about its early history and what it had been used for … It was a classic case of the evidence from the site having been destroyed in the course of its restoration, [but a] very early case.

Recognising post-contact Aboriginal heritage

Post-contact sites represented a key area where Aboriginal and European cultural heritage converged. The recognition of such sites as having strong significance for Aboriginal communities was, according to Sullivan, something that heritage professionals and heritage agencies only slowly began to recognise in the 1970s:[149]

> The Sacred Sites Survey Team went off to try and find the authentic pre-1788 sites that might be still existing in New South Wales. They would go out and talk to Aboriginal people throughout the state and say to them, 'what sites are important to you?' But what they got from everybody were stories about missions and mission burial grounds and recent history events.
>
> It actually took us a little while to cotton onto the fact that this was what was most significant in many cases to Aboriginal people, certainly what they wanted talked about and protect[ed] first; the old reserves and things.
>
> They did talk about sacred sites but we had this idea in our heads that we had to find the sacred or the pristine, pre-1788 sites which was the 'real' Aboriginal stuff and anything else was 'contamination', if you like, and we had to find our way through that 'contamination' to find out what remained.
>
> This was an anthropological view of the time, search for the 'vanishing savage' and so on. And the Institute of Aboriginal Studies [AIAS, now the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)] was set up to record all those things which were being lost because 'our Aborigines' were being acculturated. So it took us a year or so to realise that people were not telling us these stories [for example about mission cemeteries] to send us away, but because these were the places that were really important to them.

However the service was not the only agency with this outlook:

> I then had to have an argument with the Institute of Aboriginal Studies about it because they said, 'that's not real anthropology, who wants to know about old missions and that sort of thing, that's not what's important'. But gradually that became accepted, so that was really our initial [venture] into that shared history.

Sullivan recalls that there were very few sites within parks that reflected a shared Aboriginal/settler history. 'We mainly created "protected archaeological sites" for these places [sacred sites] which were by then mostly on private land.' It took both the AHC and the AIAS, says Sullivan, much longer to embrace post-contact history and take up this broader concept of Aboriginal heritage as a living culture rather than simply a remnant past.

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149 See also Johanna Kijas, *Revival, renewal and return: Ray Kelly and the NSW sites of significance*

Sullivan admits, however, that even within the service 'any understanding that places such as pastoral properties might also be sites of shared histories was something that developed quite later'.

New challenges – managing Central Region

Sullivan reluctantly moved into wider NPWS management in 1986 when she was appointed the manager of the Central Region. While taking on the new position represented 'a big promotion', Sullivan was 'very nervous' about her ability to do it because of the broader park management it involved. The Central Region covered a vast area, taking in the Sydney basin and extending as far west as Hill End in the Bathurst district. Central was different to other regions, however, because of the large number of historic sites and in particular a large number of 'sandstone' sites, such as the fortifications in Sydney Harbour. This allowed a much greater focus on historic heritage.

After a few years of working in the position Sullivan realised the full implications of the funding problems she had inherited and the legacy of years of failure to match financial resources with the growth of the park system. Sullivan attributes this in part to the service's failure to be 'politically active enough to get extra money' which saw it 'just getting less and less'.

> The big city parks with high visitor use and massive impact on very old facilities had just gone down the gurgler. And they were our front line. More than half the people in New South Wales would never visit a park other than Ku-ring-gai or Royal and that's the only chance we … [had to give them] the conservation message. And we'd been totally neglecting that key area.
>
> A lot of issues came up in cultural heritage. There were all of these major sites that we had, even though we really couldn't look after them terribly well because we didn't have the money. The Central Region probably had more problems per square foot because it had so many more historic places than any other region. We had major problems throughout Sydney Harbour. Bare Island was also falling down and God knows what. As usual there wasn't much money. We never really resolved the issues. We did the best we could. We set up the La Perouse Museum with the French. That was a really big job. I don't know how we did all these things. But anyway we did. And it was very exciting.

In addition to the limited funding, Sullivan was also concerned at the manner in which the limited resources were spent. She recalls that by the mid-1970s the service had been 'kidnapped' by the policy and biodiversity research arm, with 'a great deal of money' spent on nature conservation issues which she considered to be 'peripheral'.

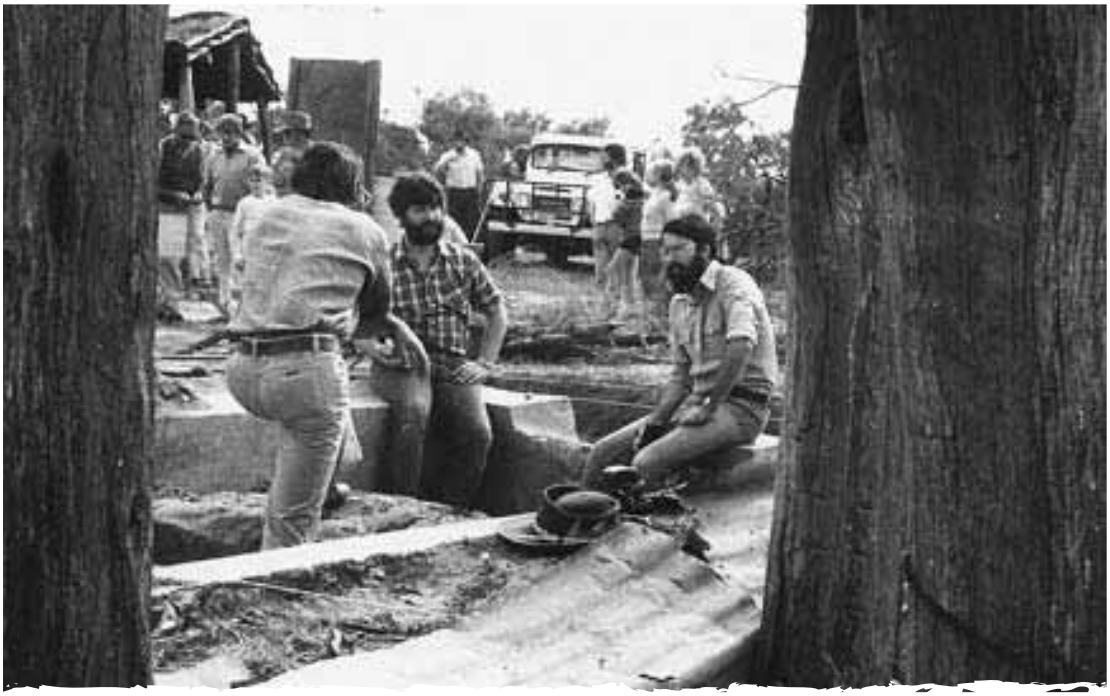
Moving on

Sullivan left the service in 1990 to take up the position of director of the Australian Heritage Commission. While heading the commission had long been an ambition of hers, by then she was also looking for 'more direct connection with heritage issues'. She admits, however, that leaving the service 'was a very hard thing to do':

> I spent a lot of my working career there. We were a small group of people, we knew each other really well, we'd all worked there for years and years. National Parks really in a way felt like a dysfunctional family. It's very difficult to live in but it's very hard to leave.

2.2 Michael Pearson

Michael Pearson was the first NPWS employee to specialise in historic heritage – previously all head-office heritage staff had dual responsibility for Aboriginal and historic heritage. He worked in the head office of NPWS from 1976 to 1985 travelling across the state recording, assessing and conserving sites, advising field staff and park managers and developing a range of polices for heritage management. Pearson left the NPWS in 1985 and established a successful career in the heritage sector, where he continued from time to time to undertake heritage consultancies for the NPWS.[150]



In May 1983, Mike Pearson (seated, right) ran an excavation of the Mt Wood wool scour in Sturt National Park with a team of nine volunteers. An open day was organised by Superintendent Rod Holmes and Ranger George Townsend to show the locals 'what we were up to' (Bini Malcolm, DECC)

Getting out in the field

In July 1976 Michael Pearson, a twenty-four year old 'green and naïve' university graduate, took up the newly created position of Investigations Officer (Historian) with the NPWS, at a time when the service was just developing an approach to historical heritage. Pearson's time with the service involved working across all areas of the management of historical heritage, including the conservation of specific sites throughout the state.

Surveying and recording historic heritage within the park system was a fundamental part of Pearson's role:

> Getting out in the field was really important. I spent a hell of a lot of time in the field, especially in the first five years or so I was in the service before I started getting bogged down in other things.

150 This chapter is based on an interview with Pearson by Jennifer Cornwall on 30 August 2005

He visited sites ranging from the wool scour in Sturt National Park, where he undertook excavations,[151] to huts and mining sites in Kosciuszko National Park, to the old whaling areas in Ben Boyd National Park.

In the late 1970s Pearson found allies in 'a fresh set' of architects in the Technical Services Section. While he believes most of the earlier architects with the service had been supportive of historic heritage management and 'pretty good in a conservation sense for the time', this new generation were 'professional conservation architects'. Working closely with these architects and others, Pearson's enthusiasm was buoyed with some important successes:

> We were together in fighting a lot of those battles and using each other's energies and evidence to argue them. In that regard the architects and the Technical Services Section were very, very good and very supportive and very often we did have successes. A place like 'Roto', the Flynn House up in Port Macquarie, that was a really nice example one could feel happy about … It was a place which had significance, local significance, some architectural values, but in a modest sort of way, but a place that deserved to be kept for the local community particularly, and that was successful in the long run. There [were] initially some District concerns about that because of the resources and all those sorts of normal arguments but I think eventually the District got behind it and it was successful. So you get the successes which sort of bore you up and keep you going.

Roto House, in Port Macquarie Nature Reserve, was restored by NPWS staff (DECC)

Guiding acquisition of heritage places

When Pearson began in 1976 there was a strong consciousness among the heritage staff of 'the poor state of historic heritage policy' at NPWS. While the service had been in operation for over nine years hardly any heritage policy had been developed. During his time in the service, Pearson was integral in developing policies to guide the NPWS in key areas of heritage management. These policies influenced heritage practices long after Pearson left the service.

151 Michael Pearson, 'The excavation of the Mount Wood woolscour, Tibooburra, New South Wales', *Australian Historical Archaeology* (1984, vol 2, pp38–50)

One of Pearson's first priorities was 'the development of an identification and acquisition framework'.[152] In the mid-1970s there was a strong push for a proactive program for the acquisition of historic sites. By 1978 Pearson had produced policy guidelines for the acquisition of historic sites based on a thematic approach, and these were followed in 1979 by an artefact management policy which incorporated definitions from the recently written Burra Charter.

The intention of using a thematic approach, Pearson recalls, 'was to try to ensure there was an active acquisition program that was structured and controlled in a way which had some sort of logic behind it, *and* which covered quite consciously the range of the Australian experience.' However a concern that 'it's used these days in a much broader context and sense' has made Pearson more reserved today on the merits of a thematic approach in the twenty-first century. 'I've yet to be convinced that it's being used effectively'.

Although the work of the historic heritage team was guided by these policies, Pearson believes they were not effectively implemented throughout the service as a whole:

> Things like the artefact and acquisition management policy really *wasn't* implemented that effectively because there wasn't much, or there wasn't any centralised process for it to slot into. It was very much an ad hoc process of acquiring artefacts and using them in interpretation. So there wasn't anybody really driving that that you could say, abide by the policy. The acquisition policy clearly wasn't used because it wasn't really acquisitioned! But the management policy is probably the one that more reflected what was really going on.

Protecting heritage places across the park system

As well as developing a more defined process for acquiring historic sites, Pearson tried to ensure more active management of the park system's historic heritage. He developed a process for identifying heritage places, documenting their heritage significance, and making management decisions based on that significance.

He anticipated that the new policy would effectively stop 'or at least slow down the sorts of decisions' that had allowed the destruction of places like the mining town of Kiandra and the 'clean-up' of rural and mining sites in parks across the state.[153]

In the case of Kiandra, for example, a nineteenth-century mining village in the middle of Kosciuszko National Park, there had been 'an active removal of evidence' justified on the basis of 'duplication'.

> The argument seems to have been that they'd made a conscious decision to acquire Hill End, which was a mining village site, so they didn't need two. So there was an active removal of evidence from Kiandra … I can see why that decision was made – but in hindsight it was one that one wouldn't make now.

Working with heritage professionals

The Australian branch of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (Australia ICOMOS) also served as an important forum for Pearson in developing approaches to the service's historic heritage places.

> I came fresh from University full of good ideas but not much experience … I went along to a number of the early ICOMOS meetings and got involved. One of the very important things that ICOMOS provided was exposure to other ways of doing things around Australia through its meetings and conferences and an exchange of information.

152 Michael Pearson, 'Notes' (2003)
153 Michael Pearson, 'Notes' (2003)

> Other than National Trust type conferences which tended to be a bit more constrained in terms of the range of things which were presented to them, it was, I think, very influential in building up a sense that there was a community of conservation expertise and conservation practitioners out there who could work together.

By the late 1970s much of the conservation thinking and practice in Australia was developing independently of overseas countries, largely driven by the impetus created by Australia ICOMOS.

Integrated management of sites – landscape approaches

Pearson was instrumental in the shift in the NPWS beyond a focus on heritage sites as discrete entities, to recognising the interconnection between the natural and cultural heritage values of park landscapes. One area where he believes this was crucial was in the preservation of the Kosciuszko huts:

> We did survey work of all the huts, to try to identify all the huts, try and document at least some *basic* historical background for those huts; did some comparative assessment of the huts, condition assessment of the huts, those sorts of things, in the lead up to the plan of management. That was reasonably successful in changing that philosophy to [be able to] say, 'OK, well the huts *are* a valid contribution to the landscape'. There was still an ongoing tension [around the idea] that some huts were better than others.

One of the successes of that project, recalls Pearson, was the commissioning of oral history recording by people such as Klaus Huenecke, which linked historic huts to the landscape and to the experience of living people.

Although the service has officially adopted this 'whole of landscape' approach, Pearson suggests it still comes second to nature conservation outcomes:

> There [are] still some challenges I think in terms of dealing with the organisational concepts of how it *really* interprets its mandate and its tasks … I found it *intriguing* that there was all this rhetoric about whole-of-landscape approaches to conservation and that rhetoric stops at the cultural fringe …
>
> I can understand the perception, even in-house, that the primary tasks are the conservation of natural values of ecosystems, of species. I'm more than happy and supportive of that view, but they're not just a nature conservation organisation. They are a land manager and with the land management responsibility comes responsibility for everything that goes with that land, and the cultural values are part of the land. If you are going to take it seriously you've got to address it seriously and really try and co-ordinate your cultural assessments and your cultural management *with* the natural assessments and management so that you get good management outcomes at the end of the day. Nobody I think would stand by now and see National Parks knock down every hut in Kosciuszko. So it's progressed that far, but going the next step and saying, 'OK, we should be *actively* conserving now the sites of the Snowy Mountains Authority activities', is still a bit more contentious in terms of their views of it …
>
> In most of your parks you're managing a cultural landscape, which happens to have high nature content and values, but it is a cultural landscape.

Moving on

Attracted by the prospect of a quieter professional life and a marginally higher salary, Pearson left the service in 1985 to take up the position of the director of the Historic Environment Section at the Australian Heritage Commission. By then the service had all but abandoned its acquisition policy for historic sites in favour of spending its limited funding on natural heritage acquisitions.

Reflecting on his years at NPWS, Pearson suggests that the work he achieved was hampered by his initial lack of experience, and patchy corporate support outside the Aboriginal Unit and Historic Resources Unit:

> Sharon could play a pretty strong game in that arena but her attention really was focused on the Aboriginal stuff. She sort of helped and pressured and pulled and got a lot of things done for the historic stuff but it wasn't a primary focus … So there's always that tinge of slight regret to think it could have been a lot better. It could have had a lot more impact than it did.

He also considered his role to be a constant struggle:

> Looking back through them [his years at the service], the impression that just sticks in my mind was the *gruel* of trying to fight in that arena without the real systemic backup to sustain it. I mean, you'd have personal backup and you'd have backup to a position, and Sharon was always *extremely* supportive of where I wanted to take it but beyond that you just hit, not brick walls, you hit sort of foam rubber walls. There weren't hard and fast policies or rules that stopped you. There was just this grey fog that you ran into all the time. And it was very wearying.

But Pearson is overwhelmingly positive about his achievements in the role:

> When you sit back and think of it, yes, there *were* some successes and there *was* a development in acceptance and there was certainly the laying of the ground conditions for the expansion and development of the broader cultural heritage approaches, which included historic as well as the Aboriginal which was already well developed. So yeah, I mean, playing with all that stuff, all the policy stuff and getting some of the information about what the service actually had, but also working internally to overtly, or simply by association, change some attitudes, was important. Being involved in the changes in the professionalisation of the ranger force I think was important.

He also benefited on a personal level:

> [The] experience with National Parks, I think, stood me in very good stead for the decade or so I spent at the Heritage Commission after that, in that I had hands-on experience with some of the management issues and problems, not just a theoretical one. That was really very, very useful in getting a lot of policy stuff through at the Commonwealth level, which has now been largely abandoned [with the demise of the Australian Heritage Commission as an independent authority, and the changed perception of the Commonwealth's role in the field].

Pearson also stresses that working with Sharon Sullivan and others in the Aboriginal and Historic Resources Section and staff in the Technical Services Section, such as Helen Clemens, David Earle, Kate Sullivan, Jane Foulcher, Peter MacKenzie, and Bruce Eeles, provided strong intellectual support and good role models for a young heritage professional, as well as establishing lifelong friendships.

Regional and field perspectives

We have seen that from 1969 staff were employed in NPWS head office to provide advice on the historic heritage of the park system, and support the management of historic heritage sites. However the day-to-day management of the sites was the responsibility of regional staff who also allocated resources, while the historic heritage specialists from head office only had an advisory role.[154]

The NPWS heritage specialists interviewed for this history found this system to be problematic, and all had numerous frustrations with rangers and field staff who prioritised the natural heritage of their parks over the cultural heritage. In the more extreme cases, this has resulted in the deliberate destruction of heritage sites in order to re-construct 'natural' spaces. Pearson observed that:

> There were many rangers over the '70s who were not at all sympathetic to historic [heritage] sites. I mean, intriguingly, some of them were in fact collectors of historical objects or had strong genealogical interests but when it came to *management* of historic places they put on a Green Hat and a Minimalist Hat in terms of cost and staff resourcing and were *very* against conservation of historic places. And, because many of those rangers had direct day-to-day control over the parks, things just disappeared … Things were moved. Things which were there one year wouldn't be there the next. They'd either been actively removed or a blind eye had been turned to collectors coming in and taking them, that sort of thing.[155]

However other interviewees emphasised the fantastic outcomes from working closely with those field staff who were allied in their approach to historic heritage. Denis Gojak, for instance, said of ranger Eric Claussen:

> Eric is a good example of one of those rangers who you find as a sympathetic soul and so we were able to establish a good rapport with him. Although at the time we had some screaming matches about money and how things are done, his objectives for the site [Innes ruins] were very closely in sync with what we hoped would happen to the site. So we were able to support him through tapping into these areas of expertise, for the brickwork and ruins conservation and the archaeology. He's been able to see the lasting benefit and that it's adding value and understanding to these places.
>
> We should have him stuffed. [laughter] He, yes, was a good example of one of those sympathetic rangers who knew his stuff, you know, had obvious competence and skill and enthusiasm that communicated itself to his own staff. So they were supportive of what he was doing. That was just as important as having head office's support. He's been an advocate for good relations with historic heritage and you *hope* people like that stay within the service. You can use that effort that you've spent in supporting them, [and hope] that they would then spread the word and nurture it in the areas [where] they are. But very often a lot of the good rangers disappear.[156]

The rangers and regional staff mentioned in the following pages are just a small sample of those in the latter category. They have been committed to the preservation and proper management of the historic heritage in the parks they managed, even though,

154 This excludes HAMP funding
155 Pearson interview
156 Gojak interview

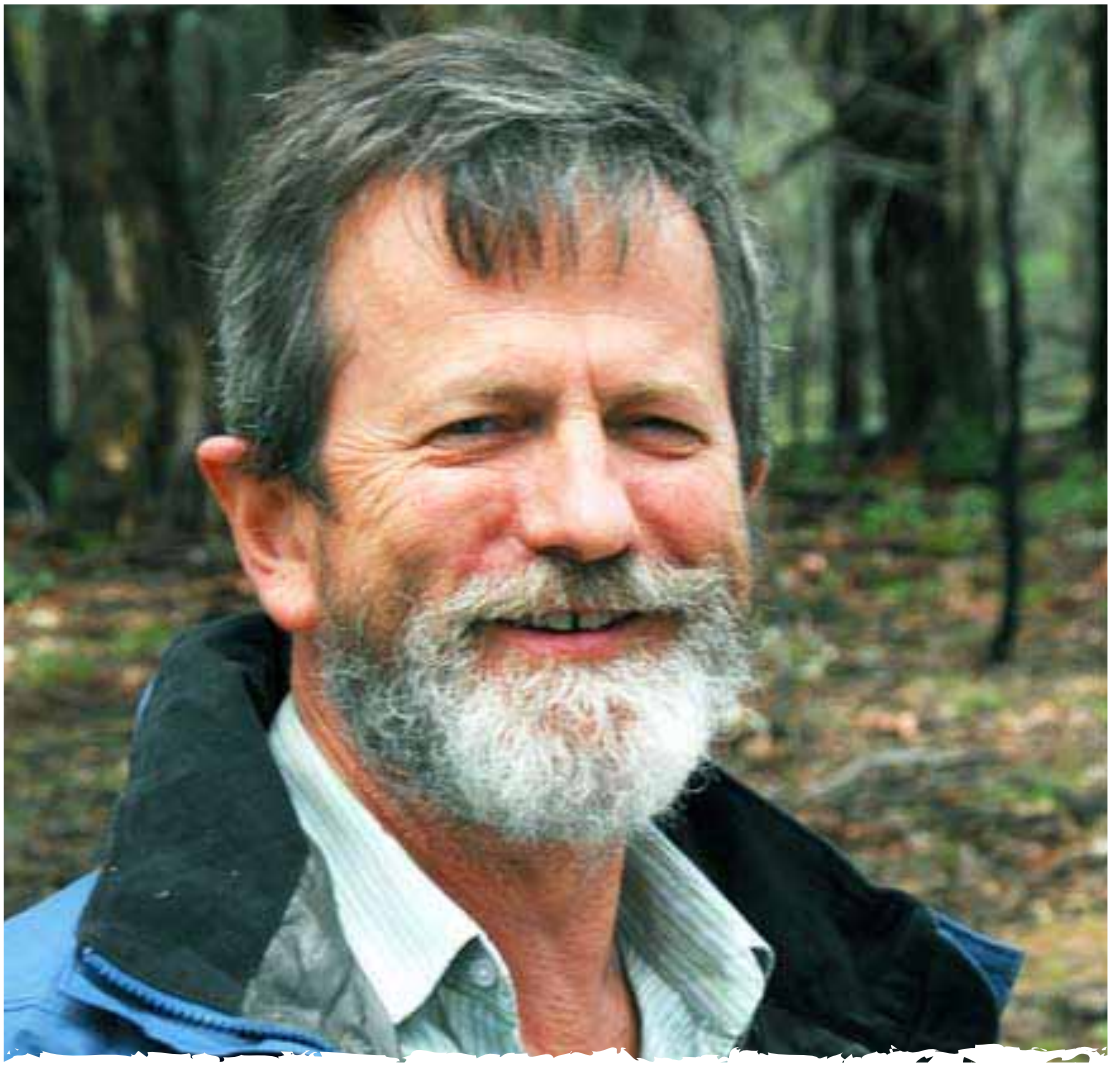
in most cases, this formed only a small component of their job, and funding was limited. Their insights and experiences provide a personal perspective to the issues discussed in part one of this history.

These staff all note frustration in their attempts to gain recognition, funding and resources for historic heritage management. Furthermore, they have observed the shifts in attitudes towards NPWS historic heritage, and can shed light on the struggle to encourage NPWS colleagues to adopt a 'whole of landscape' approach to park management.

The following biographical chapters highlight the diversity of ways of managing historic heritage, despite the similar issues faced by park managers across the state.

2.3 Alistair Henchman

Alistair Henchman was the regional architect for the South East Region of the NPWS between 1986 and 1995. Based initially at Sawpit Creek in Kosciuszko National Park, he concentrated mostly on heritage buildings within that area, and particularly the ski resorts, for which he completed a heritage study in 1994. He also provided advice on the Kosciuszko huts, and contributed to management decisions regarding other important heritage places in the region such as Davidson Whaling Station and Montague Island. He is currently Director of the Southern Branch of NPWS.[157]



Alistair Henchman (Stuart Cohen, DECC)

Beginnings

When Alistair Henchman saw the advertisement in the mid-1980s for an architect attached to the South East Region of the NPWS, he was working for a large architectural firm in North Sydney, mostly on multi-storey building projects. Henchman simply 'couldn't resist' applying for the position. While he was not an active environmentalist, he had always

157 This chapter is based on an interview with Alistair Henchman by Jennifer Cornwall on 31 August 2005.

been sympathetic to the cause and the appeal of nature. For him, the position presented the opportunity to do work that was 'meaningful and interesting and [that didn't involve being] stuck in an office all the time'.

Henchman's position had been one of several created after an organisational restructure. While Henchman's role was principally that of providing technical design advice and project management for new buildings, he inevitably had some involvement in the conservation of built-heritage sites – especially those in the Kosciuszko area where he was initially based.

Ski resorts: commercial interests in Kosciuszko

One of Henchman's major roles was the assessment of development applications in the ski resort areas, which had been opened for commercial development in the 1950s. Unlike the huts, homesteads and other heritage items in Kosciuszko National Park, those items with potential significance located in the resort areas were not managed as heritage sites, but in the context of the needs of winter recreational visitors. By the early 1990s, only two sites had been listed on the Register of the National Estate.

Despite the growing awareness from the late 1980s of the economic benefits of retaining the heritage character of buildings, this awareness had not extended to the 'isolated world' of winter ski resorts. Any debate was dominated by the economic imperatives of commercial ski lodges and, due mainly to the transient nature of the resort population, there was no active community group lobbying for historic heritage conservation in these areas.

> The majority of people who use the resorts in winter go there to ski and don't really think about much else. And the small permanent communities in these areas really just exist [as] managers and others involved in the tourism industry. There are local heritage groups based in the Snowy River, at Cooma and in Berridale who are interested in old pastoral buildings and indeed the huts in Kosciuszko, [but] they don't really think about the ski resorts as being places that have heritage value. The ski resorts are quite separate from these local communities in many ways.

In contrast the not-for-profit ski clubs were generally more sympathetic to heritage issues, although they too had to contend with the forces of generational change and a push for modernisation of the facilities.

> Typically the clubs … don't have a lot of resources but they do have a real love for the place and often the people who are involved in the clubs were the ones who constructed these buildings … maybe back in the '50s or '60s. So they were very … keen to retain character. And what happened at that … time in the '80s was that these buildings were getting to the end of their life and also the style of accommodation was changing. So whereas they'd originally been built as sort of bunk houses basically with a common area, by that time people were keen to have their own en-suite bathrooms and have … [more] modern type of facilities in these clubs. And it was to do with this generational change … The original generation were sort of getting on and not so active skiing … So there [were] a number of clubs that were undergoing … some fairly major renovations to their buildings. In some cases they virtually demolished the building and started again but tended to keep to the same sort of aesthetic.

As Henchman points out, some clubs undertook 'modern but sympathetic extensions'. Others resisted modernisation:

> Some of them are still the same, and that's exactly what people really value, particularly in a place like Perisher, where each building is relatively separate to the other, that you can have a real feel of being out in that winter wonderland with the fire and feel quite isolated and not really be conscious of neighbours. You know, it's a great feeling and people *do* really value that experience.

Even so, the net effect of development was that the character of the buildings and that of the resort areas was changing. Henchman increasingly realised that this was a major heritage management issue. He subsequently conducted a heritage study of the park's ski resorts with NPWS heritage architect Geoff Ashley which examined the building types and assessed their historic value.

> [The study] looked at all the buildings and did some analysis of … building styles. [Asking the question], was there an Australian alpine style … and looking at the characteristics. What we identified was a series of what we called building 'types' rather than 'styles' because the variations weren't as significant. But what [the building types] reflected were the influences at the times those buildings had been built …
>
> As well as looking at the different styles we did an assessment of the buildings for their significance. [This also considered] the significance of the complex as a whole in the resorts.

The outcome of the study was a series of processes for the protection and management of the places identified as significant, which could now 'be on a sort of listing that [could be recognised by] the Heritage Act.'

A new direction

From the mid-1990s Henchman moved into management. He was appointed director of Southern Branch in 2004 responsible for all parks south of Wollongong and east of the Riverina. While no longer working directly in the field, he remains involved in historic heritage management. He sees the recent decision to rebuild some Kosciuszko huts destroyed in the 2003 bushfires as evidence of the shift towards valuing cultural heritage as well as natural heritage:

> Basically my experience with the organisation has been [one of] the organisation working through that process of moving from a nature conservation agency to … realising its obligations, which are all built there in the legislation, but realising them through practice. That does include firstly thinking about historic heritage as being, 'oh well, there's the hut, that's the historic heritage item, we can look after that' in … isolation, but then seeing those things as being part of themes, if you like, [such as] people moving through the landscape and relating these historic themes to the Aboriginal themes and starting to actually think about how you manage the landscape holistically. And [asking], to what extent do you actually intervene in natural processes to maintain a cultural landscape.

He considers this as part of a more general shift towards an integrated approach to the management of natural and cultural heritage:

> Our previous mode was very much, 'where's the archaeological site?' And, 'here is our hut'. And 'here are our threatened species'. All that kind of thing … all just happening in parallel and then when you actually get a conflict it's kind of, 'oh well, we're in the middle of Kiandra therefore it's historic heritage'. Or, 'we're *not* in the middle of Kiandra therefore it's the natural heritage that dominates' … So it was all sort of black and white I suppose. But I think the more people look into all of those things the more they … realise it's not that straightforward or that you have opportunities to actually do all of those things.

Henchman argues that one area in which the service has made significant improvement has been a greater emphasis on community liaison prior to the commencement of projects.

> I think one of the things we've been doing better in recent years is actually talking with communities more about those decisions. So we spend a hell of a lot of our time talking with communities and finding who the people are in communities that have an interest in our management and/or a particular issue, and involving them in decision making and using them to help us actually make the difficult decisions. So typically … on a project, we'd be spending … as much if not more time in that planning phase than we do in actually doing the work, whatever the work might be.

Henchman is generally positive about the role of heritage management within what is inherently a nature conservation organisation. He believes that while some rangers are more interested in the nature side of park management, they are balanced by others who are 'into historic heritage'.

> Different geographic patches have different suites of issues and not all of the issues are evenly represented everywhere so people tend to gravitate or they get shifted around … So the area manager has the ability to say, 'oh well, you're really interested in historic heritage, so I'll give you this patch over here, which includes Davidson Whaling Station' … So people shuffle around and tend to kind of gravitate to things that are of interest to them. I think that … occasionally you might discover that historic heritage issues [aren't actually managed in a location] because the particular person is focusing on doing other things, because that's their area of interest. Yes it does happen but I think it happens in a positive way much more often. We've got some people who've really developed a huge expertise in historic heritage management, as well as still being able to manage all the other stuff and deal with weed spraying and road maintenance.

He also welcomes advice and cooperation with heritage professionals from within the service:

> It is interesting watching the literature over time and even the changes to the Burra Charter from when it was originally written to the more recent amendments. [It] just totally reflects that same experience that we went through. But I guess our experience was as the actual on-ground people making the decisions and dealing with the difficult questions. It got us to the same point. So there's a body of people out there who are the theorists, if you like, who are working through it in a sort of theoretical, logical way … It seems like there's an alignment between that and the evolution of the practice of just dealing with the issues. So it probably means that that body of theorists is in touch with the practice. I just … see it as an evolutionary thing. I guess it will keep on going.

2.4 Eric Claussen

Eric Claussen was employed as an NPWS field officer on the NSW Central Coast in 1976. He became a permanent ranger in 1986 following the completion of his BA degree, and was located in the Bathurst district where he gained valuable heritage experience at places like Hill End and Seaton's Farm. In 1990, he was transferred to the Port Macquarie district, where he continues to work as a ranger, and has a particular interest in the ruins of the Lake Innes Estate.[158]

Eric Claussen at the Innes Ruins Historic Site near Port Macquarie (image courtesy Eric Claussen)

Shaping a career

Eric Claussen, it seems, has never been out of uniform, at least in spirit. As an ardent 'Skippy' fan his future career path was decided at an early age. While his ambition had found more mature expression by the time he left school, his desire to become a ranger with the NPWS had not diminished. As Claussen explains, his 'underlying interest was always the protection and preservation of the environment'. This remains his 'driving force'.

Claussen swapped his school uniform for that of the NPWS in 1976 when he started as a field officer on the Central Coast. These were the service's formative years, with the emphasis on natural heritage at the expense of the cultural. As Claussen recalls:

> All the rangers that I worked with at that time were Fauna Protection Panel rangers, which was the agency [to manage nature reserves] that existed before the service. They were all very practical people and most of them were employed for their ability to fence and ride a horse and drive a tractor rather than anything else.

158 This chapter is based on an interview with Eric Claussen by Jennifer Cornwall on 2 September 2005.

While Claussen progressed to a temporary ranger after a few years with the service, permanency continued to elude him as the entry level and prerequisites for the position kept changing:

> I'd gone for the [ranger] job quite a lot of times. For various reasons they kept shifting the goal posts and saying, 'no, you don't have enough years experience'. Then it was an Associate Diploma and five years experience and I got the five years up and they said, 'no, sorry, it's a degree'.

In 1983, Claussen 'bit the bullet' and went off and did a degree to gain the necessary qualifications to become a permanent ranger. While the educational background of most rangers being recruited was in the fields of pure or applied science, Claussen decided on a different direction, undertaking a Bachelor of Arts and studying anthropology, Australian pre-history and physical geography. It was a deliberate strategy to differentiate himself from other applicants and, as he saw it, increase his chances of a permanent position. As he explains, Sharon Sullivan was acting as the director of Central Region at the time and he had become aware that her specialty was cultural heritage management. It had also 'filtered through' to him that the service was 'hunting for those skills'.

Cultural heritage management: a ranger's perspective

On completion of his degree, Claussen finally secured a permanent ranger position in 1986. But he confesses that, while aware of a growing emphasis on heritage management by the service, he had no greater understanding of what this really meant in practice. Nor was he aware of the scope of the historic heritage within the park system. His focus was 'very much still on managing the natural resources'.

His assignment to the Bathurst district marked the beginning of his practical education in historic heritage management. Hill End was particularly influential. It was through Claussen's contact with this historic site that he came to understand and appreciate that the service had 'this other role' which was 'quite important'. Claussen remembers how Hill End was resented by other rangers and regularly referred to as 'the black hole' because of the substantial proportion of the district's budget which was 'continuously poured into it'. In time Claussen came to appreciate the significance of the site:

> I suppose where it really changed my opinion was walking into … places like Northey's Store and the Butchers … [It] was quite amazing to see the amount of work that was *being* done in the conservation works, and to see the result of some of that work. It was *really* inspiring stuff. Also, the thing I thought was very clever there was the interpretive work … terrific photographs of all the buildings that were no longer there … and using your imagination to create the building in front of you. *Really* effective stuff.

A new location

After four years in the Bathurst district, Claussen was transferred to the Port Macquarie area in 1990. He spent his first year there on secondment to Arakoon State Recreation Area which included the Trial Bay Gaol ruins. Claussen found himself managing another ruin when he arrived in Port Macquarie proper in 1991 where the service was then in the final stages of negotiating the purchase of the privately-owned Innes peninsula which included the former Lake Innes Estate.[159] The remains of the 1830s mansion – the Innes ruins – were to become a 'passion' for Claussen.

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159 The estate was acquired in 1992. While managed for many years as part of the adjoining Lake Innes Nature Reserve (reserved in 1984), the Innes ruins were gazetted as a separate historic site in 2003; *Lake Innes Estate Conservation Management Plan* (NPWS: Port Macquarie 2000).

Claussen developed a works program for the Lake Innes Estate, which included weed control management, stabilisation and interpretation. While Mysore thorn (*Caesalpinia decapetala*), the weed which engulfed the site and its surrounds, had served to protect it over the years, it was an 'environmental vandal' which needed to be contained before it got into the waterways. Claussen made the decision to remove the Mysore thorn, along with the flooded gums dotted throughout the site which were causing structural damage. This delicate process was painstakingly undertaken largely by a group of young people under a Commonwealth Employment Program scheme. To Claussen's surprise, an entire group of previously unknown building ruins were unearthed in the process.

Removing Mysore thorn from the Innes ruins (Geoff Ashley, DECC)

Much to Claussen's relief the 'friends' group which had originally envisioned the site becoming a major tourist attraction for Port Macquarie eventually dropped its push for the rebuilding of the ruins. Working closely with this group and conducting his own primary research in Sydney's Mitchell Library, Claussen developed an interpretation of the site modelled on the approach used at Hill End which had so impressed him.

Claussen recalls that in these early years, problems would arise every so often in the course of managing the site. Aware of his limitations, Claussen started tapping into the expertise of the head office cultural heritage staff, establishing an effective long-distance relationship:

> It was hard for those people to come out of Sydney and walk around the site … so I'd video a problem, send it down to head office and then a couple of the heritage architects and maybe an engineer would sit around the video and go, 'hmm, alright', and send me up a little two-page report … It was brilliant. It was a really great way to manage. It made me feel like I wasn't walking in the wilderness anymore.

Claussen also points out, however, that the solutions proposed by head office staff often demonstrated a lack of understanding of the budgetary and other constraints. He found advice regarding the reconstruction of one of the towers, for example, to be impractical. Even though his solution to the problem created a wall which looked distinctly different to the others, the experience reinforced Claussen's view that a balance often needs to be struck between 'the purist and the practical' in carrying out conservation work.

A holistic approach to landscape management

Claussen believes that the service still has a way to go before it achieves a landscape management approach:

> It's a *really* important, fundamental thing that we haven't really grappled with. We manage the fabric of the site. We manage the natural features of an area. But we don't manage a landscape, which contains both of them.

The Innes ruins have, according to Claussen, served to crystallise his understanding of the concept of cultural landscapes. Indeed, along with its history and rarity, the site has captured Claussen's imagination because of the way it is inextricably linked with the rest of the Innes peninsula and the opportunity it presents for this type of landscape management approach:

> It's an important nature conservation area as well. It's got a stronghold of koalas on it. It has 17 threatened species just living in that reserve, and nature has reclaimed the site *big time*. That's a real … delicious dilemma of managing that. It really is. How you manage both aspects and how they interact is really fascinating.

His attempts at integrated management, however, have been frustrated. He attributes this in part to the service's current funding arrangements, in particular the tight rules associated with the HAMP program.

Claussen would like to see the service's capacity for self-reflection and the discussion of new ideas and approaches that occurs in relation to natural heritage management extended to historic heritage. In particular, he feels there should be some consideration of the management implications of placing Innes ruins and similar sites into what is in effect a 'holding pattern', a non-intervention approach that allows sites to continue to slip into ruin.

> [The question is] how much money do we put into it? It means a lot to the community. It gives a sense of place to a lot of people. It's an important aspect in understanding our colonial days. But do we just keep putting 15 or 20 thousand dollars into stabilisation works for time immemorial? Or do we get to a point where we say, 'let this site melt back into the bush'? I think that might be heresy but those decisions really have to be made, not just for this site but for any of the sites we manage.

Claussen also believes that there is greater scope for certain historic sites to be self-sustaining, especially in the Hastings area. He argues that the Innes ruins have the potential to be managed more cost-effectively in conjunction with universities through its use as a teaching field resource for students to study professional archaeological investigations.[160] Roto House, in Claussen's opinion, is another example of a site which is under-utilised and kept open 'by the good graces of the very enthusiastic friends group'.

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160 Professor Graham Connah from the University of New England, Armidale, oversaw the Lake Innes Archaeological Research Project between 1993 and 2001, which began as an undergraduate field training course, was extended through volunteer labour and completed on an Australian Research Council research grant. See Connah (2007)

Archaeological excavations at Innes ruins as part of Graham Connah's major excavation project (DECC)

Reflections

Claussen has never had any regrets about his chosen career path as an NPWS ranger despite the challenges he has faced. He believes that rangers generally remain ill-equipped to deal with many of the issues which confront them in the management of historic heritage, despite the 'occasional workshops' which are provided. He considers HAMP-related group meetings with other rangers to be useful:

> … because you realise that other people are grappling with the same problems [and] there are other techniques and methods out there you haven't thought about.

But although opportunities for an interchange and sharing of ideas and experiences are rare, Claussen remains unfazed. He is currently arguing for a virtual rebuilding of the Innes ruins, drawing on the growing body of knowledge about the site, particularly that revealed by the archaeological investigations carried out by Graham Connah in the 1990s.[161] A veteran of the service, Claussen is also realistic: 'I don't know how far I will get'.

161 Connah (2007)

2.5 Ross McDonnell

Ross McDonnell joined the NPWS in 1987 as a seasonal ranger at the Royal National Park on Sydney's southern edge. In 1990, he was made a permanent ranger and relocated to Griffith where he has remained ever since. He moved through the ranks to become manager of Griffith District in 1995 and eventually manager of the Riverina Region, now the Western Rivers Region. He has developed the view that historic heritage is as much about people as it is about bricks and mortar, whether it involves neighbours of pastoral properties like Willandra, or residents in Hill End. His career has been driven by a belief that park management should have 'an equal weighting between natural and cultural heritage'.[162]

Ross McDonnell (centre) with Shire Mayor Athol Roberts (left) and Bob Debus, Minister for the Environment at the opening of the restored Willandra Homestead, November 2001 (Image courtesy Ross McDonnell)

For Ross McDonnell, becoming an NPWS ranger was something he 'fell into'. Working as a plumber on Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour for five years, he gained an insight into convict-constructed historic heritage. He then gained a horticulture diploma and started working as a seasonal ranger at the Royal National Park in 1987 while completing an applied science degree. As McDonnell recalls, 'it was somewhere along this path that the idea of becoming a [career] ranger arose'.

In 1990, McDonnell moved to Griffith as a permanent ranger. While a lack of resources was a major issue across the service at this time, McDonnell remembers the particularly desperate situation which existed at Griffith when he arrived:

> We hardly had enough funds to [make phone calls]. Cars weren't used because we didn't have fuel. It was that *dire*. Rangers … produced plans because that was all we could do. We had a pest management budget … of about five thousand dollars. I used to buy bullets and give them to the field officers to use. Now our regional pest budget is hundreds of thousands of dollars.

162 This chapter is based on an interview with Ross McDonnell on 19 September 2005.

Managing cultural heritage in south-western NSW

One of the more substantial historic places to fall within McDonnell's patch when he arrived at Griffith was 'Big Willandra', once one of the largest pastoral properties in the Riverina. With some assistance, McDonnell managed to complete and implement the long-delayed cultural heritage management plan. The timing was fortuitous:

> For the next four or five years (after HAMP began) we were recipients of HAMP funding [for] the restoration of the various heritage precincts at Willandra National Park. So the buildings have [now] been fully restored [on an adaptive reuse basis] … Anyone can go out there now and stay in the homestead or shearers' quarters or men's quarters. So it's a viable going visitor concern.

The area's park management operations also come from within the main Willandra precinct.

The restoration of the Willandra homestead provided a valuable opportunity for training field staff in historic heritage practices and used a portion of its funding to employ a contractor to teach local staff about restoration processes and techniques.

> There was a skilling-up of the planning process with the professional ranger staff and a skilling-up of the practical work with the field staff … There was a great social outcome. It was a good learning outcome for everyone involved. So when I drive past that building I think … well we did that work *ourselves*, as staff *totally*, whereas every other building we used contractors. It was a good skilling-up of staff and there are still plenty of staff around now, you know, ten years later, 12 years later, who probably benefited from that project at the time.

Overseer's House, Willandra which was restored as a form of conservation training for NPWS staff (Andrea Cashmere, DECC)

Nonetheless, managing complex historic heritage places in such a remote area requires compromises. Strict adherence to best conservation practice, for example, is not always possible simply because 'getting the necessary expertise is a problem':

> Trying to get a plumber to understand [or accept] the Burra Charter and [replace some] guttering up in accordance can be a problem if you say to them, 'no, you can't use pop rivets and silicon' … At Willandra the ram shed … has a thatched roof and [trying to replace it] was a major task. We had to find [a contractor who knew how to do the work] and then we had to find the thatching. [It was difficult during] a drought! A member of the regional advisory

> committee had [some reeds on his property] he said we could have it … It wasn't the perfect material so the expectation is that it won't last as long as a proper thatching job would have but it was that or nothing.

The work was further complicated by the then native vegetation clearing regulations.

Pastoralism is a dominant theme of the historic places in the Riverina, and pastoral heritage items continue to be incidental acquisitions as part of land acquired 'to fill the gaps in natural heritage representation in the park system', land which often comes with 'some form of pastoral remnants'. The recently acquired Oolambeyan National Park, for instance, came with 'a homestead and a full suite of structures'. But McDonnell believes that, unlike in the past when historic heritage was 'seen to be a maintenance and OH&S liability' and buildings, roads and other structures disappeared as a result of being 'bulldozed, demolished, trucked out or sold off', there is now a concerted effort to do things differently.

Improvements in heritage practice

McDonnell says that the service over time has improved its techniques and approach toward conserving historic heritage in the parks of the south-west. Whereas 30 years ago, upon acquiring a pastoral property[163] it is likely that the NPWS would have 'just sold everything [movable heritage items] and got rid of it all', the service's approach to the acquisition of Yanga, an eighty-thousand hectare pastoral property in 2005 was to undertake a 'collections management project' prior to acquisition:

> There's a team of people going down … to go over the entire property and document, not every item that's there, but identify where items are and where significant items are likely to be. So we can get involved early on when they have clearance sales and when we're looking to take over the property … [and] we're doing it in advance of actual acquisition … On some of the properties we've acquired in the last couple of years … we did that straight after acquisition. This time we've got the resources to be able to do it beforehand.

McDonnell also sought professional advice prior to the acquisition of the station, inviting the Director of the Historic Houses Trust to Yanga as 'an impartial observer' to advise both the NPWS and the station's owners. The outcome, says McDonnell, was advice which helped the service 'in our negotiations with the current owners, in terms of what we might acquire and how we might present it'.

McDonnell also notes that general funding improvements in field operations have increased the capacity for historic heritage management in the park system:

> I place quite a bit of heart in the knowledge that the money that is being provided for park management per se has increased over the years. I take heart in that, all being equal, some of that additional funding that we've received … would have gone to cultural heritage as well as natural heritage. So … across the board, we should be in a better position now to manage cultural heritage than we were some years ago.

Working with community

McDonnell argues that the potential for adaptive re-use of historic places in western NSW to operate as commercially viable entities is limited. Because of the isolation of the reserves and smaller local populations there will always be less demand than in more populated urban areas with a higher need for facilities such as conference centres,

163 Stephen Gapps, *Yanga: oral history report*, (DECC: unpublished, June 2007)

Visitors enjoy a 'Back to Willandra' event in November 1998 (Ross McDonnell)

restaurants and tourist accommodation. But as McDonnell points out, there can be other equally constructive outcomes which serve the longer-term management objectives of places like Willandra:

> Willandra's not on a tourist route. It's not on a major road [and most visitors plan ahead to go there]. The visitation's not large by any means but the response from [visitors] is … very positive. The [local] community … see [the completed restorations] as a major step forward. [Historically], Willandra … was one of the large Riverina wool-growing properties. The [local] community see Willandra as part of its shared history … Some of the neighbours' families were managers there. So we've had this interesting [outcome] out there where [neighbours who have been] opponents to the national park ethos [are] supportive of what [we have achieved with historic heritage] on this one site. If you talk to some of our neighbours out there about any other matter they'll be opposed to what we're doing. But [if] you talk about historic heritage and what we've done … they're very positive. So that's been a good community outcome in the local area, it's been good.

Particularly successful, in McDonnell's mind, were a number of events where people with a connection to Willandra were invited back for open days:

> We had a couple of … 'Back To Willandra' days, and so we invited people. [And through] word of mouth it really expanded out. We had people coming from Queensland and Sydney and the ACT, all over the place, people who used to work there. And we had some really large events there.

McDonnell is also very hands-on when it comes to acquisitions, having 'sat around in kitchen[s] drinking cups of tea and eating cake with the owner of every property we've acquired [in the region]'. This undoubtedly helps the relationship between the service and former landowners.

Reflections

Throughout his career at NPWS, McDonnell has been striving for a neat balance between the natural and cultural heritage of the park system, and has 'always felt that natural and cultural heritage were equal partners in what we should be trying to achieve.' He believes this balance hasn't been successfully reached, even though 'personally I don't see why natural heritage *or* cultural heritage should have a higher priority in what we do.'

A source of tension has been the allocation of resources, which 'remains a juggle' even though there are now 'more staff and those staff have more resources to undertake work on the ground'.

> You [rarely] have enough. Maintenance is always under pressure. You can't always do it when you need to. Willandra is a great example. Hundreds of thousands of dollars was spent restoring derelict structures [and the outcome] complied with all the current conservation requirements. But sometimes we have trouble buying nails to do a bit of maintenance.'

Reflecting on the differences between managing historic heritage as a ranger and then as a regional manager, McDonnell noted that the differences were 'good and bad':

> As a manager you've got more of an overseeing role and making sure that the staff who are involved in [historic heritage] understand [the process]. So it's about trying to guide rangers in what they're doing and how they are thinking about a project, and what's achievable and what isn't achievable. I mean, to be honest, every ranger looking after every reserve thinks that every historic asset on every one of those reserves is very significant and should be funded. We will never have the resources to do that and nor should we, because not all the historical assets are equal in significance.
>
> As a manager it's more about trying to encourage the rangers that are looking after parks that do have … structures that should be protected better than they are now, into the future, encouraging them down a path to see [their conservation] as an outcome.

2.6 Neville Burkett

Neville Burkett, a conservation architect with experience consulting at Hartley and Hill End, was employed as the regional development coordinator for Central Region in 1986. Ten years later he established the Cultural Heritage Services Division of NPWS, and played a key role in establishing the HAMP funding system, and its implementation at a regional level. Following a restructure, he became works manager for the Metropolitan Region.[164]

Neville Burkett attending a Goat Island open day (image courtesy Neville Burkett)

Neville Burkett's first involvement with the service was in the early 1980s when he was an architect in the historic building section of the Department of Public Works. Burkett was an experienced heritage architect, having worked on major projects such as the conservation of Hyde Park Barracks and Rouse Hill House, and he became a consultant to the Central Region of NPWS where he worked on Hill End and Hartley historic sites. One of the major conservation issues that arose from these projects was the question of how the buildings would be used:

> You know the buildings up there are so fragile. And it was an issue of just how much change would be possible to allow a modern use of the buildings. And some of them had been basically derelict for quite some time and so that was quite an issue.

Tradespeople who possessed knowledge of the old techniques required to undertake the work were also hard to find. Much effort went into training people in obsolete building practices such as wattle and daub.

164 This chapter is based on an interview by Jennifer Cornwall with Neville Burkett on 12 October 2005.

Haefflinger's Cottage, Hill End, in 2007, a wattle and daub hut which was stabilised and re-built with the original materials (Caroline Lawrance, DECC)

Managing historic heritage sites in the Central Region

Burkett eventually joined the staff of the NPWS Central Region in 1986. The manager was Sharon Sullivan. The position involved 'organising all the capital works program, including everything from sewage disposal to historic heritage conservation'.

> Sharon was looking for someone to manage … the historic heritage throughout the Central Region. That [region] was a very big area in those days … And of course it contained an incredible number of historic [heritage] sites, which most people in the service didn't really understand or recognise. And so it was very much an issue of changing perceptions, particularly among people who had trained almost exclusively in natural heritage management.

While much of what he did was as an extension of his work with the Department of Public Works, there was one major difference. One thing that Burkett quickly realised while working with the service was that, unlike most architectural work where 'you do something and then you walk away from it', historic heritage management at the NPWS required more than 'just putting the windows in and repainting it and all that stuff'. It required ensuring a long-term conservation outcome. This would be one of the most challenging aspects of his career in the service.

Burkett worked closely with Denis Gojak and Geoff Ashley from the service's Historic Resources Unit. But he sees a clear distinction between his outlook, and the roles and approaches of Gojak and Ashley to historic heritage:

> My speciality became 'how to manage' rather than 'how to conserve', and 'how to get an outcome for conservation'. The physical conservation is a reasonably mechanical process. But to actually manage that conservation so that you get an outcome that sees the place being conserved is much, much more difficult, much more challenging.

Funding historic heritage maintenance

In 1996, Burkett was asked to set up the Cultural Heritage Services Division of the NPWS where one of his priorities was to highlight to the service executive the extent of unfunded and unidentified historic heritage within the park system, or what he calls the 30-year 'backlog of repair'. The outcome was a statewide survey that identified 'very quickly the cultural heritage value of a place' and assessed how much was required to conserve that value. The findings of the survey convinced Treasury of the need for recurrent and dedicated funding for historic heritage management, and resulted in the HAMP funding system.[165]

According to Burkett, the availability of this funding transformed the way that service managers looked at historic heritage:

> One of the things I was able to convince the executive about [with] the … costs associated with conserving the heritage was a hidden commitment which hadn't been recognised by the service … it was nowhere near enough, nowhere near enough, but it was certainly something. And I think that brought about a very, very major change in the way the service managers looked at historic heritage, because in fact there was some specific money that they couldn't use for anything else that was identified for historic heritage management …
>
> And then they could start to manage them. Then they could get them to a state of safety, that you could actually let people on to them. And that brought a major change, because then they realised that these sites could actually be used by the public and appreciated by the public. And the public did appreciate them. And so it brought around quite a change in the way that the National Parks [and Wildlife] Service looked at historic places.

Following his return to the Central Region, Burkett was involved in implementing HAMP at the regional level.

There were other sources of support for historic heritage management that could be tapped. Burkett recalls obtaining funding from the Urban Parks Program that assisted in upgrading the assets in urban parks. Preparation for the Bicentenary in 1988 and the Olympics in 2000 also created significant funding opportunities. As he recalls:

> All government departments were required to put in estimates of the impact on their operations of the Olympics. And we went through a very substantial study of the likely impacts on [Sydney Harbour National Park], from trampling to increased visitation [due to] yachting of course. There was the likelihood of major impact on the natural heritage of the park, apart from the use of the facilities. And so there was a lot of funding made available for upgrading those park facilities. And a lot of those were the historic facilities, and also upgrading walking tracks, toilet facilities. And also putting on staff to actually provide a physical presence during the events.

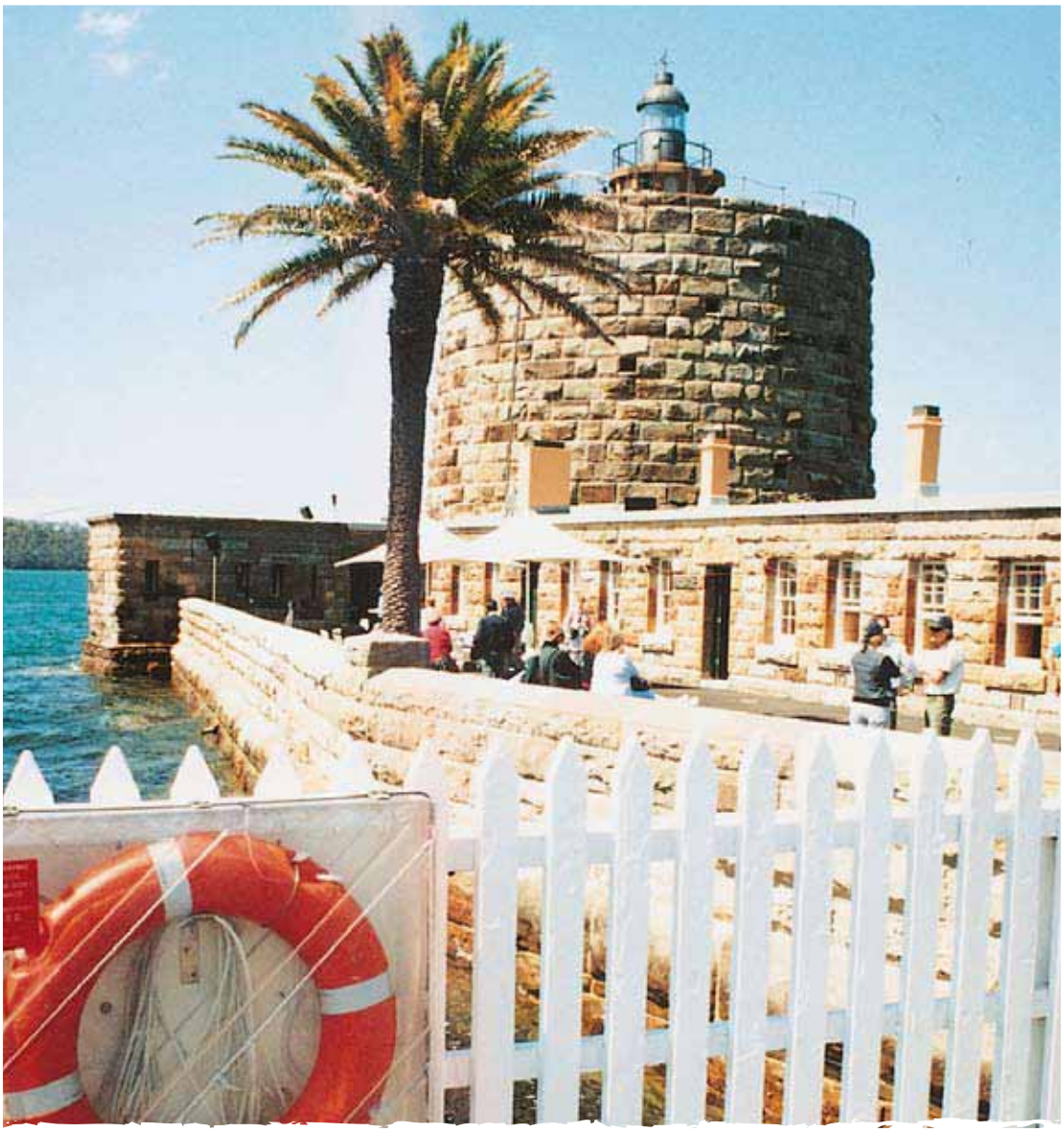
Among the sites that benefited were Bradleys Head, South Head and North Head. At Bradleys Head, historic walking tracks were upgraded to enable disabled access and lookouts and an amphitheatre were installed at Athol Wharf. These works, according to Burkett, have proved to be 'an enduring legacy for Sydneysiders' turning a 'wasteland' into a space which is 'incredibly popular now'. These improvements have, he believes, also served to raise public understanding of natural and historic heritage as inter-related and 'one continuum'.

165 See chapter 1.2

Adaptive re-use of heritage sites

Burkett observes that since the 1980s, the leasing of heritage buildings for public or semi-private use has been increasingly used as a management strategy aimed at minimising the financial burden on the service by allowing 'the private sector [to] contribute to the conservation of [the heritage structures]'.

Burkett acknowledges that leasing is a mixed blessing and not a suitable management strategy for all sites. It has been successful at Fort Denison where the service managed to receive considerable funding from HAMP, the Department of Public Works and a large sponsorship from Energy Australia for conservation work. It was then able to get an operator to run a café on the island. Another success story has been in Hill End where a number of buildings which were derelict are now leased for commercial use, with the lessees contributing financially to the buildings' ongoing conservation. Places such as Bobbin Inn in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, have proved less successful.[166]



Café at Fort Denison, 2003 (L. Donne, DECC)

166 See also chapter 3.3: Quarantine Station

Responding to demands for greater access to historic sites can be similarly problematic. It involves managing:

> the level of use that's appropriate for the place versus the amount of funding that's needed to manage the place, and how to manage the impact of increased visitation on the place.

Burkett gives the following example:

> If you want to re-use a building on Goat Island – and there's some major examples over there that could be re-used very successfully – if you want to re-use a building as a restaurant you've got to have enough patronage [able] to get to the island to make that successful. And because the island has always been an industrial site, it's not terribly safe and so you've got to upgrade all the safety issues and particularly you've got to make sure it's safe at night. If people are going to be going to a restaurant there at night, you're not going to allow them to fall over a cliff, or trip on a badly maintained step. And those issues become more intense if, as we are, [you're] looking at having people staying overnight in cottages there. If you do that you've got to have something for them to do that's not going to compromise security and is going to be safe for them to undertake and also be interesting.

Managing community relationships

Funding was not the only management issue which confronted Burkett. Public expectations about the management of historic sites have been a critical component of his work. In the past, he argues, the service was 'a very inward looking organisation and produced a very adversarial relationship with the community over a whole range of issues.' Although the service has made huge improvements in this area across the state, he still thinks that:

> the level of public input [into] the management of sites is … a big issue … it still needs to be more recognised that the local community do have an ownership of a place … they're not always being listened to adequately or understood adequately, so there's still conflict with the community there. I mean those attitudes are changing but there are still some, even now.

Reflections

After nearly 20 years with the service, Burkett says that staff attitudes towards historic heritage have 'changed substantially'. He attributes this largely to the educational work of staff in what is now the Culture and Heritage Division, as well as regional level managers such as himself and Alistair Henchmen who were sympathetic to the demands of historic heritage. He also thinks that a general shift in public opinion has played an important role in determining the attitude of park managers, suggesting that 'the more people wanted to have access the more the service has had to respond to that'.

Finally Burkett notes the development of a more integrated approach to park management, which has changed the way historic heritage is viewed within the service:

> I think also over the 20 years is a realisation that heritage is not just compartmentalised, that it really is the natural heritage and the way the natural heritage has been used by occupants, whether they are Aboriginal or European … And I think that's been a big issue for National Parks, recognising that as well, that the natural heritage landscapes have been impacted. Every area of a national park has had some human impact on it and it's taken a lot of natural heritage managers a long time to realise that.

Historic Resources Unit

Michael Pearson's departure from the NPWS in 1985 coincided with a significant expansion of the agency's historic heritage capacity. The position of historian was replaced by the Historic Resources Unit (HRU), which consisted of a historian, an architect and a historical-archaeologist.[167]

The unit was primarily set up to facilitate the identification and listing of historic places in service areas. According to the annual report that year, 'after filing information in a computerised register, the unit produces regional reports analysing the range of sites and setting priorities for research, conservation and interpretation, funding and emergency works.'[168]

By 1987, the HRU consisted of Joan Kent (historian), Denis Gojak (archaeologist) and Geoff Ashley (architect).[169] The group referred to themselves as 'the flying wedge':

> We called ourselves the flying wedge because there [were] the three of us and we had this idea like a hit squad of heritage that would go and solve everyone's problems. It was a great time because when we started there was an injection of staff and resources at a similar time; so hitting the ground at the same time was a great thing.[170]

Although they came from different backgrounds, the three members of the HRU had fairly similar roles:

> There was no clear sense of how projects were divided. Sometimes it was divided geographically … Other times it was just whoever picked up the phone first, or seemed to have a gap in their program. So it was a fairly hodge podge coverage and all of us did stuff all around the state, in various degrees.[171]

By the 1990s, Gojak recalls, the individual job titles were fairly meaningless. Kent, Ashley and Gojak were the only permanent employees dedicated to the historic heritage of the NSW parks system:

> We had to do everything from the very specific, 'what's the colour of this doorknob going to be?' type stuff, right through to that high-end strategic type of work that the Heritage [Asset] Maintenance Program represented. We were largely left within that to work out our own prioritisation of the task. There was certainly more than any of us needed to fill in our working week.[172]

Although they spent a lot of time working independently, the three did sometimes work together on big projects. The Willandra Homestead was one:

> One of the first ones we worked on was the Willandra homestead site, where we actually not only did research – Denis archaeology, Joan history and myself [Geoff] physical conservation research – we physically did the work. We actually buffed up the tables, took the furniture up there in a truck and laid the lino floor. This was for … complicated reasons. One of the downsides of being a specialist group is that sometimes, if you take the whole job on, they'll let you. Everyone will let you if you say 'we'll do everything'. Obviously it's a silly thing in terms

167 NPWS *Annual report* 1985, p37
168 NPWS *Annual report* 1985, p36
169 Ashley assumed the position following the death of David Earle in a road accident on a field trip
170 Ashley interview
171 Gojak interview
172 Gojak interview

> of [having] a key specialist role going out laying lino. But sometimes it was a therapeutic and cathartic thing to do, to actually physically just do the thing, not stuff around with endless reasons why it couldn't happen. So we actually did a few jobs together like that.[173]

Another prominent result of collaboration between the group was the 1991 report, *An outdoor museum*, discussed in chapter 1.1.

By the mid-1990s, the 'flying wedge' had been dismantled: Kent and Ashley had left the service, while Gojak remained until the end of the decade. More staff were gradually employed in the historic heritage area allowing more clearly demarcated roles.

The following chapters show the extent to which the staff of the HRU relied on and supported each other in their efforts to conserve the historic heritage of the NPWS park system. The chapters also provide insight into the challenges faced by these head office staff in the late 1980s and early 1990s – the sheer scope of work required, and difficulties negotiating with field staff and park managers, many of whom continued to value the natural heritage over the cultural heritage of their parks.

Although their perspectives, as dedicated historic heritage practitioners, contrast with those of field and regional staff outlined in preceding chapters, Ashley, Kent and Gojak share many of the attitudes and experiences expressed by other NPWS staff members who were sympathetic to the requirements of conserving historic heritage. These chapters also reveal that, although the NPWS now had more defined policies and better education surrounding historic heritage management, many of the issues faced by the Historic Resources Unit had changed little since Pearson and Sullivan had led the way.

173 Ashley interview

2.7 Geoff Ashley

Geoff Ashley began working for the Historic Resources Unit of the NPWS as an architect in 1987. Although he travelled around the state working on and advising on many projects, he became known as 'Mr Huts' for the heritage study he conducted on NPWS huts in the early 1990s. Ashley left the service in 1996 to work for Godden Mackay Logan where he continues to provide advice, as a consultant, to the NPWS in areas such as the Kosciuszko Huts.[174]

Geoff Ashley joins his colleagues in 1988 inside the restored dining room of the Willandra homestead posing as owners during a boom period. From left are Ashley, Sally Morris, partner of Ewen McGregor, Ewen McGregor. Seated are Joan Kent (left) and Liz Croll (DECC)

Geoff Ashley began working for the NPWS in 1987 after he had spent two and a half years at the NSW Heritage Office on secondment from the Department of Public Works. At Public Works, Geoff had been a design architect working with heritage buildings on sites such as Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens. As he recalls, 'I started to work in this [historic heritage] area more and I started to enjoy it'. He traces his interest in heritage back to his time in Canberra:

> Funnily enough, I come from Canberra, but I think in a way I've been driven to heritage as something [that] was missing in my life in Canberra – Canberra's a great place but it's missing a bit of soul and a bit of history. So I sort of gravitated to projects when I was studying in Canberra that were out of Canberra – Goulburn, South Coast – that were heritage-based.

At the Heritage Office, Ashley 'got a great taste of the range of heritage issues in New South Wales and the geography', and the NPWS job appealed to his liking for travel.

174 This chapter is based on an interview by Jennifer Cornwall with Geoff Ashley on 18 November 2005

Working in the park system

Although the NPWS had employed architects previously, for most of them heritage conservation was only one part of their work, which otherwise encompassed the architecture of the entire parks system. Ashley was appointed to replace David Earle as a specialist conservation architect. He found working closely with an archaeologist and historian in the Historic Resources Unit to be a great experience. Until then he had worked solo, advising others on projects 'then standing back and seeing what people do with it'.

> One of the great things as a professional in National Parks is actually working in the 'mix' and therefore taking the pluses and minuses that go with that. Sometimes you have successes and sometimes you have failures that are part of the hurly burly of making decisions. It can be frustrating but it can be really rewarding as well.

In addition to working with his immediate team, Ashley enjoyed the challenges posed by working with other staff, especially those in the field:

> That's one of the positives of working with the service, there's some wonderful people, wonderfully committed people, even where their views are perhaps a different ilk to mine. Some people with science training who are very into nature conservation saw this heritage stuff as a bit of a pain in the arse … But others were extremely supportive, even though they might not have had that background; they understood the theory, they understood why they were doing it and knew they had to do it. I think it was a great experience working with rangers.

Ashley also played a role in developing policy. He noted that the Historic and Archaeological Services Branch, of which HRU was part, was responsible for both providing technical advice and developing policy:

> so you had these two things going together quite a lot of the time … In the year or so before I left, I think there was a restructuring that led to a technical section and a policy section. But often [when I was there] we'd jump those roles.

Ashley appreciated his mixed role of fieldwork and policymaking. As he says, if you just do fieldwork 'you're not actually driving some bigger decision-making processes along, you're missing opportunities as well' whilst the danger of just focusing on policy is that you get 'removed from the real world'. Throughout his stint at the Historic Resources Unit, Ashley constantly pushed for the service to assume a more proactive role in historic heritage conservation and to manage it as part of a whole-of-landscape approach. This was demonstrated in his fieldwork especially in the more remote regions in the north, south and west of NSW and in his policy papers.

Huts

Ashley earned himself the nickname of 'Mr Huts'[175] through his interest and involvement in surveying, researching and conserving huts, most notably during his statewide NPWS huts study in the early 1990s. As part of the study, Ashley prepared conservation plans for huts in Royal and Kosciuszko national parks. In Kosciuszko, the issue was less about stopping demolition than 'which ones to put resources into and which are the more significant ones'.

175 Gojak interview

In his report Ashley argued for greater recognition of the huts as part of the cultural landscape that the NPWS was legally bound to protect and conserve. As he explained:

> … the huts were not just objects in the bush, they were actually part of the landscape; the huts were there because of the landscape and in turn were evidence of changes to the landscape through pastoralism and other uses.

Ashley argued for conservation and later reconstruction of huts on the basis that 'they provided strong social connections with the community, not only for pastoralist families but also for 'people who have skied, walked, bushwalked, ridden bicycles there for 30 years'. Ashley believes that there has been a paradigm shift to 'a slow recognition that parks have their own history and that they reflect an on-going history'. With huts, the issue is 'not just preserving relics' but actually managing an ongoing use effectively.

Geoff Ashley's photo of a bark hut at Tabletop Mountain, Oxley Wild Rivers National Park, which was taken as part of his huts study, 1991 (Geoff Ashley, DECC)

Governance

Although the hut study and a later ski lodges study were important in fostering a new way of thinking, there were problems gaining support at an upper level. As Ashley remembers:

> It was a great project, we did lots of great research, lots of outcomes. But I think we didn't connect at a senior level when we started the project with regional management to … lock in where we were going with the project and what that meant in terms of providing resources for conservation of these places that we identified. So, great result, but it didn't get connected into the system. And particularly in funding.

He considers it a pity that the ski lodges are no longer the responsibility of NPWS, blaming the service's inability to 'grasp the nettle in terms of managing the complexities of a place'.

> I think it has the ability and I think it's a pity that it gets a circle put around it and it plays into the hands of those that either want to develop the hell out of those places or the 'green' side that say these aren't anything to do with national parks therefore just cut them out. So you get that Swiss cheese idea of national parks, that somehow they're just natural things and these terrible heritage things or public visitor facility things that are a problem and therefore put a circle around them. Ultimately I think it's a pity because I think holistic management of resources, whether they be ski fields or huts, is a more intelligent way to go but perhaps more difficult in a resources sense.

One problem faced by Ashley was that his managers all came from backgrounds in pre-historic archaeology and, he felt, under-valued historic heritage.

> One of the things … that I think is really critical is that administratively, having historic heritage within the cultural heritage unit that was primarily running the Aboriginal heritage aspects was really difficult at times. Being a twig on the branch is how I'd describe it. National Parks has a very big role managing Aboriginal heritage across New South Wales, not just on parks, and the political issues that came up and the perceived importance of these tended to dominate the workings of the Division.

Moving on

In 1996, Ashley left NPWS to work for heritage consultants Godden Mackay Logan. Ashley doesn't regret his experience at NPWS which provided the foundations for his future career, but he was frustrated by what he saw as constant difficulties in having heritage policies effectively implemented throughout the service. He felt threatened by the dislocating effects of 'the endless restructuring'. He also felt it was time for a change.

> I think overall, whilst it was time for me to move on and there was some degree of frustration at times, it's personally been the key part of my professional work, it's given me the foundation for the work I do now, it's the biggest influence on my work. I think National Parks still provides a big influence.

Ultimately, he thinks the service has played a strong role in leading heritage management in NSW:

> I think that's where National Parks can be very proud that they have been at the forefront of the development of cultural heritage practice. Sometimes they've been further ahead in terms of the words than the practice. They've been very good at the words and the corporate plans that say the right thing. Sometimes there's a lag between that and actually doing things – sometimes there's a resource issue where they have the will but not the way to do it. Reflecting on my current professional relationship with National Parks, they have a very clear idea of what should happen with the sites.

Although he began his career as an architect, history and landscape remain passions for Ashley:

> I see myself as an architectural historian, not as a member of an organisation in the formal sense, but I think my interest in architecture is actually about history and how it's reflected in the fabric of places. What history tells us about the land and how it's been managed … Fabric conservation is not my passion. It's really about fabric and other evidence as a vehicle for telling the story of history. The landscape history in particular is what I'm most interested in.

2.8 Joan Kent

Joan Kent was employed by the NPWS as a part-time history researcher in 1985, assuming the position full-time the following year. In 1990 she moved to England to undertake a Masters in Industrial Archaeology and upon returning to the service in early 1993, remained for only eighteen months. Kent left NPWS because she felt her job had changed too much, but she also feels that the Historic Resources Unit in which she worked was privileged to have had 'really dedicated, committed people working against the odds'.[176]

Joan Kent (image courtesy Joan Kent)

Joan Kent, who in a former life had been a stenographer, had some good history experience when she was employed as a part-time (job-share) history researcher in 1985. She had completed an honours degree at Macquarie University, had been a research assistant for Professor John Ward at Sydney University for five years, and had written a history for a credit financing company. She had lived near a national park in Victoria and had an interest in natural and cultural heritage. The NPWS job was appealing to Kent both because of the opportunity for primary research, and also 'actually getting out into the field, [being a] strong boots type of historian I suppose. You've got to be out there walking around'.

176 This chapter is based on an interview with Joan Kent on 23 September 2005

One area Kent was particularly interested in was the shared history of the post-contact period, and in this, she recalls facing many challenges. Although she enjoyed 'a really good relationship with all the Aboriginal people', the value of oral history was still being contested by historians:

> You were accused … by [some] historians of not having proper sources. That it was oral history and this was [at a time] when oral history really was a bit suspect. I had a lot of arguments about that, too, even though I ended up doing quite a lot of oral history, whether I did it the right way or the wrong way. That was a real problem in that it wasn't accepted as a true history. I mean it's not very long ago.

NPWS and heritage management

Kent recalls that in taking an active role in campaigning against the destruction of the huts at Camp Cove and the Royal National Park, the Historic Resources Unit 'actually got into quite a bit of strife internally':

> We'd had a lot of – I don't know if I should say this – a lot of past experience with unfortunate accidents out in the bush when things which we valued and others didn't, suddenly burnt down, or fell over, or whatever …
>
> I guess we were a bit wary that was going to happen with the huts particularly. There was such an enormous amount of social history associated with the way they were built, how they were occupied, where the materials came from. It was a wonderful exercise in cultural heritage but of course there were different values also at play. So that caused us a bit of a problem.

During her time with the NPWS, Kent witnessed some major changes in attitudes towards historic heritage and its management. She cites the drive for adaptive re-use as a major shift:

> When I first started working for National Parks it was very purist. The Burra Charter was the way that you did things. There's nothing wrong with the Burra Charter either but … there were lots of changes going on in that time. I've mentioned the government need for supplementing our income, all those sorts of influences …

But the ultimate concern of Kent and her colleagues was with the preservation of the heritage managed by NPWS:

> You know, we got to the stage where we didn't really think – 'we' being the unit – we didn't believe we could cope with the [heritage] resources that we had to manage, or [that] the service could. We actively canvassed other conservation bodies, like Historic Houses Trust, National Trust, because we felt that they might be more appropriate as managers of quite complex conservation projects. But they weren't interested …
>
> [We] couldn't give them away. I take the point that there were legal constraints because a lot of these historic places are in-holdings within national parks. There could have been *real* management and resource funding problems with the concept. But no, we got no response whatsoever … I'm not sure … still, whether anybody else could do it either. It's one of those strange situations that it's not perfect but it's probably as good as it gets. What is really needed is more people and more resources.

The value of history

Although Kent was the first full-time female historian within the NSW bureaucracy, she felt history was marginalised within the service. Even within the unit, Kent recalls, 'history was at the bottom':

> I don't say that in an unkindly [way] or in criticism of Geoff or Denis. We all got on extremely well and we crossed over disciplines without any trouble, but in terms of allocation of tasks and priorities I still think that history was at the bottom …

> I felt that there was not the same recognition given to history, partly because of the fact that it was seen as a female area.

Kent felt that her history background and her gender worked against her. When she re-joined the service after three years studying industrial archaeology in the UK, she was not encouraged to be active in archaeology and fieldwork which she was keen to do. She says:

> I actually knew that why I was not encouraged to do that was because I would be the only person in the office much of the time. The other two would be out and doing field work. And I don't think being female helped either.

Although Kent admits that the others were 'quite capable of researching a particular item', she felt that in terms of contextual history they were:

> caught short [as most staff] don't know what is normal, what isn't normal, what you could expect in a particular situation at a particular time … I guess it is context that is really missing and can be overlooked if the historian is not involved.

Reflecting on the marginalised role of history within the service, Kent noted the complexities and ambiguities guiding the official attitude:

> Legislatively, there was a much clearer responsibility for National Parks to look after the Aboriginal [heritage sites] than necessarily for the European heritage. Although, looking back at the formation of the National Parks, that's rather ambiguous because part of the reason for establishing [the NPWS] included places like Hill End. There was a big move to copy the American system of national parks, which included historic places. Having had that focus I always found it rather strange that it sort of slipped away and wasn't emphasised, until in the late 1980s there was more of an emphasis on historic – There were a number of reasons for that actually. There were political reasons. There were financial reasons and within the service itself a lot of the staff, the regional staff could see that there was a possibility of making funds available for regions because of their particular range of historic resources.

Project work

At the NPWS, Kent was involved in several projects out in the field. One of her major projects was with the conservation and interpretation of the homestead at Willandra National Park. Prior to the introduction of HAMP in 1995, Willandra Station received financial support from the Boral Foundation that made conservation of the homestead buildings possible. However, conservation and restoration at the homestead remained complicated. Kent recalls an uneasiness between the natural resources staff, the Aboriginal Resources Unit and the HRU. There were also difficulties with finances because, while HRU made the suggestions for conservation, the funding for it ultimately came from regional budgets.

In addition, working with staff largely ignorant of heritage conservation issues and the historical significance of heritage sites, posed a challenge. She recounts an incident related to a 'little fibro cottage' that the shearing expert used to live in at Willandra. The fibro on both the homestead and the outbuildings, she recollects, was some of the earliest Australian manufactured fibro. 'Some larrikins had put their foot through the fibro and had cut the sheets, and the roof needed some attention, the drainage needed to be maintained and we had a contract out to do it.' Instead of consulting the heritage specialists, the local staff decided: 'we're pretty handy fellows out here, we'll do it ourselves'. So they took '*all* the fibro off and replaced it with new fibro … and dumped it in a hole somewhere'.

Although Kent was appalled there was little she could do about it. When she raised the issue with the district manager he was more sympathetic to his staff as 'he had all these calls upon his finances and it seemed a sensible thing to do, to rip out the old fibro that was more brittle anyway and replace it with the new'.

Moving on

Following some major restructuring within the service, Kent no longer found the same level of satisfaction in her job she had initially enjoyed. Within the space of seven or so years, her job description had changed substantially, from being:

> mostly about researching and supporting regional staff, a little bit of policy advice and any other task deemed necessary by the supervisor. As it turned out the emphasis switched very much towards policy, which I found very disappointing, because it wasn't the job, the ideal job that I thought I had.

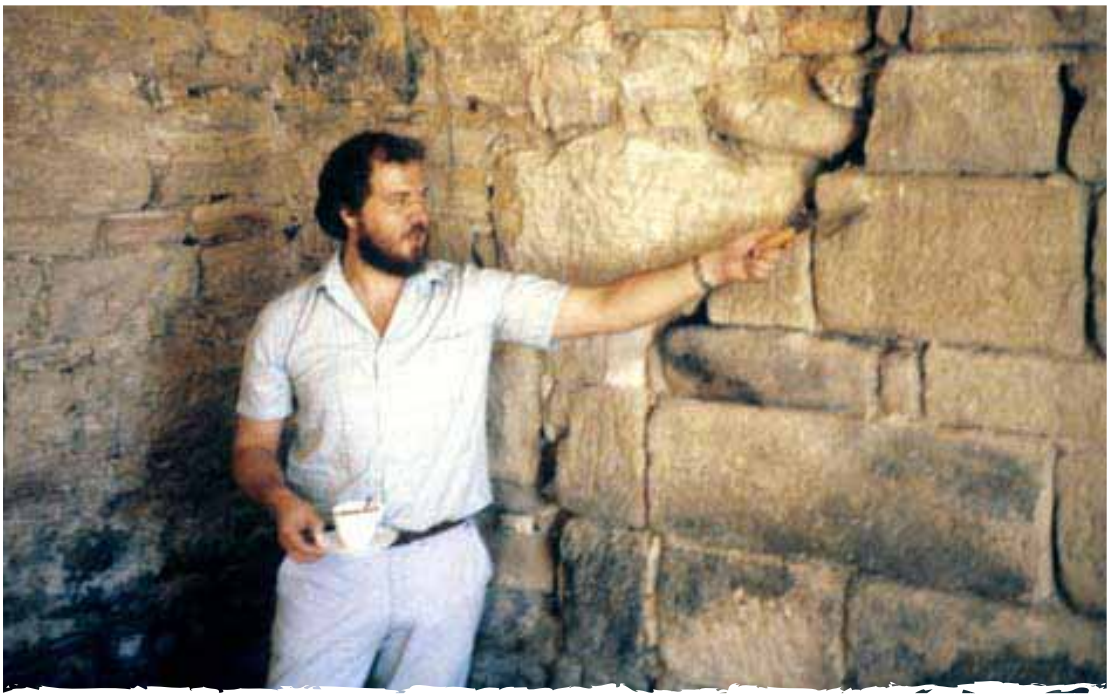
In 1994, Kent left NPWS, feeling that 'the job wasn't the job that I had initially applied for'. She also felt her role wasn't understood or supported by management, and was particularly critical of the unit's move from Kent Street, in the city, to suburban Hurstville:

> Moving into policy, yes, but to the point where I had to struggle to get into the Mitchell Library to do any research. I think there was a lack of understanding about how historical research is carried out. Denis and Geoff had a better idea, and particularly Denis, because he does a lot of research himself. But I don't think that the powers that be realised what a devastating affect the move to Hurstville would have on our particular unit, because all our contacts, our heritage contacts were in the city. Our bases of research, unless we were out doing fieldwork, were all in the city.

When she left the service, Kent did some work as a freelance historian, before yet another dramatic career shift, settling in Hartley as an alpaca farmer.

2.9 Denis Gojak

Denis Gojak was employed as an archaeologist for the Historic Resources Unit of NPWS in 1987. He worked on a variety of projects around the state, including the Davidson Whaling Station, Innes ruins and the Sydney Harbour forts. He is overwhelmingly positive about the 13 years he spent with NPWS, and the feats achieved by the Historic Resources Unit during this time.[177]



Denis Gojak inside Cadmans Cottage, 1988. Denis points out some of the archaeological features that were revealed when the early-1970s NPWS interior fitout of the lower floor was removed, exposing earlier fabric. The larger blocks on the right show a fireplace which was filled in during the mid-19th century, and clearly contrast the earlier colonial stonework of the cottage (DECC)

Joining the NPWS

Denis Gojak had some experience with the NPWS prior to being permanently employed as a historical archaeologist in 1987:

> It was when I was doing those first two roles as the technical officer and [with] the National Parks Quarantine Station team that I started to be occasionally borrowed as a heritage person via the [heritage] parts of the service, either to go and do site inspections or to work with the permanent staff there, because they had occasional shortfalls in skills. So when the position came up in mid-1987 I applied and got it.

Despite his title, Gojak recalls that his involvement in actual archaeological work was limited:

> Probably only a third of my workload directly involved doing real archaeology, whether it was survey or occasionally excavation, and other sorts of documentation and probably another third of it was general historical heritage management and another third was more general administration that anybody could do whether they had a heritage background or not.

177 This chapter is based on an interview with Denis Gojak on 6 September 2005

Archaeological excavations at Mowarry in Ben Boyd National Park in 1999 (Denis Gojak, DECC)

While his project manager role continued throughout his years with the service, the amount of direct archaeological work dropped off in the 1990s, eventually becoming a small proportion of his overall workload.

A prominent theme throughout his employment at NPWS was the tension between natural and historic heritage:

> I guess one of the recurring themes through my tenure and probably the broader history of the service is that tension between the needs to further the service's corporate objectives and how that sometimes compromises historic heritage a lot more than natural heritage objectives. We were pretty much the little group that was trying to redress the balance. So we often got into conflict with field staff and managers about what we thought should be done.

The problematic concept of 'wilderness' also proved a source of tension:

> One of the big debates that happened during the period that I was there was the declaration of the Wilderness Act and the whole issue of, 'is there such a thing as a wilderness anywhere in Australia?' There was still, within the service, and outside it from various lobby groups such as the Nature Conservation Council, the idea that wilderness exists, it's a good thing, it's something we want to protect, and so on. The view of cultural heritage people within the service and probably not clearly articulated outside the service was [that] … within New South Wales these are all environments that have been used for thousands of years by Aboriginal people. They're not the products of a fenced off parcel of bush being left to grow like billyo. They've been managed through burning and harvesting practices. And the most recent overlay is European activity which could include mining and logging and all sorts of things. Wilderness is more about what the late twentieth-century mind responds to rather than the factual ecosystem approach. So one of our roles was always to try and, if not challenge these sorts of constructs, at least try and say, 'yes, but you can't forget the sites that are in there', or, 'there are implications for managing these things as if they are pristine wildernesses'. So that's probably, I guess, skirting around a couple of the sorts of issues we dealt with in historic heritage.

Historic heritage projects

Gojak recalls that he was always busy, and often worked a ten-hour day in addition to taking work home. There were a number of ways he selected his projects:

> I guess it's a mixture of things that I saw were important versus things that people were yelling at me because they thought they were important. Then you have to really just make a judgement about how much time you can devote. You could certainly, for any historic heritage issues that came up as a matter of money and detail of works, you know, you could easily spend a week on it but you just *can't* afford that sort of time. So you'd do what you could.

One of Gojak's earliest projects was an excavation at Cadmans Cottage in Sydney's Rocks, one of the oldest standing buildings remaining in the city of Sydney.[178] The excavation was part of the conservation of the cottage and the aims were to provide information for conservation, to contribute to a better understanding of the past and to promote archaeology and heritage conservation through public access to the dig.

In the course of the three-month excavation, 228 volunteers assisted in the dig and the site was visited by more than 100,000 people.[179] Gojak remembers it as 'a reasonably good dig which had a high public profile and a lot of public information' and is still one of the few archaeological sites that is open and visible for people to see in Sydney.

One of Gojak's regrets was that 'there was not adequate time to analyse the results and complete the documentation'. To Gojak, it is 'unfinished business'. Given the great demands on time and shortage of resources, detailed archaeological work became a real luxury. Gojak still hopes that one day he will be able to 'finish it off properly and write it up and make sure the knowledge that I've got ends up on paper'.

Gojak also fondly recalls working on the Davidson Whaling Station Historic Site at Twofold Bay, which protects the remains of the longest-operating shore-based whaling station on mainland Australia and which was the last of its type to close.[180]

Before Gojak joined the NPWS, Michael Pearson had strongly advocated the acquisition of the whaling station. When Gojak stepped in, his role was to try and help find money as well as to manage the project from 'getting a plan of management to deciding whether or not they had a caretaker in the main building or had it open'. Although there were disputes as 'everyone wants to see a lot of money invested in places and things recreated', generally he felt comfortable with the decisions made by the district managers who were 'conscious of the whaling industry as a sort of backdrop for the whole identity of the community around Eden'.

The historic site opened to the public in May 1991 with a range of visitor access facilities as well as interpretive signs incorporating historic photographs and sketches installed around the site to explain the history of the whaling operations.[181]

Working with field staff

When working with field staff, Gojak ensured that he supported their management of historic heritage sites by providing advice and a 'routine level of confidence', rather than intervening. He describes this work as 'trying to suggest alternatives or, you know, get them to bend their fire trail, that sort of thing'. Methods which required little involvement such as 'turning a straight line into a slightly wiggly line on the map so that it managed

178 NPWS *Annual report* 1989, p40
179 NPWS *Annual report* 1989, p41
180 NPWS *Annual report* 1991, p21
181 NPWS *Annual report* 1990, p53

to miss most things' tended to be how conservation input for most sites was delivered. However he says this input has often gone unrecognised as it wasn't recorded. The need for good rapport was also crucial, especially at a time when there wasn't a clear policy and process for historic heritage management.

> A lot of that relied upon the willingness of managers to comply with processes that weren't mandatory. It's really only in recent years that the legislative force has come in to make these sorts of processes mandatory.

Thus Gojak considers his best successes were in situations where rangers were in place:

> who we knew and who knew us and were supportive and knew that we would be supportive in return and that we would work to do what we could to help them to build their road or their toilet block or, you know, revegetate their area, as long as we were able to make sure that we minimised the impact in historic heritage.

He saw a 'real divide' in ranger attitudes to heritage management issues, from those who were interested in and had a passion for historic heritage, to responsible ones who did it out of a sense of duty, to those who 'just don't want to know'. However he has seen a positive shift in attitudes through a 'much more even-tempered approach with the recruitment of younger rangers'.

Despite their best efforts, there were still instances when historic places were destroyed or compromised without the unit becoming aware until too late. Gojak admitted that this happened all the time and that they were 'constantly finding out about things after the event'.

This situation has changed, says Gojak. The process is now much more explicit and new legislation 'reduces the negative impacts through people doing sneaky demolitions or inadvertent damage to the historic heritage or to threatened species'. However, these more-formalised processes have come at the cost of a greater workload for regional staff, with 'everyone's writing REFs [Reviews of Environmental Factors] all the time' leaving local staff little time for anything else. The common complaint of rangers these days, Gojak says, is that 'they don't actually manage – they manage the compliance to allow them to manage and never get to the end point'.

The disadvantage of this 'sense of *relentless* compliance', Gojak argues, is that it 'doesn't leave a lot of time for people striking off and doing fun stuff'. And the fun stuff, Gojak says, is what people enjoy and keeps them in archaeology and other sorts of historic heritage.

Moving on

In 2000, Gojak left NPWS to take a secondment at the Department of Planning. After 13 years with the service, he thought he had 'been in the job too long.' When his secondment ended, he decided not to return to his old job:

> Rodney Harrison who took over from me found that both of his managers were insisting on getting their fifty percent worth of his time and his sweat, and probably a fair bit more. So he was really sort of pushed into working pretty hard. His discretion to pick and choose – which in my case meant that I responded to opportunities to travel out and sort out field problems rather than doing proper research – he wasn't given that chance.
>
> So I guess, when my secondment ended and the choice to come back came, the big restructure had already been mooted, which filled me with a bit of dread. It was fairly clear that I'd have lost that sort of discretion to plan my own workload quite so much. I wasn't really sure that I wanted to go back … The secondment kept me away to give me enough perspective to feel that I'd done enough and it was probably time for other people to have a chance.

Gojak remains, nonetheless, overwhelmingly positive about his experiences and achievements at NPWS:

> I had a fantastic time, pretty much, for 13 years. I thought I was learning something new every day. I think even with retrospect and even though I tend to be fairly cynical I think the work that our team did, *did* make a real difference to what was left on the ground when we all finished.
>
> I think it's probably an enduring legacy that there's so much stuff left for other people to worry about now, that we were able to at least halt the demolition and destruction of items to the point where now people can engage with the problems of conserving them. Now they've got *buckets* of money, relatively, to deal with that. Those buckets are largely thanks to us as well. The change in the philosophy is not our doing but we were certainly ahead of that trend that brought a change in recognising historic heritage as having value. And recognising that ephemeral sites were just as important as substantial sites and that historic heritage probably isn't incompatible with managing large natural systems, but just requires care and attention, and we can work with rangers to provide that level of input so that they can do what they need to do without messing anything up.

PART THREE: Case studies

Tour group at Quarantine Station, 1984 (Allan Hedges)

Part three of this history presents the case studies of four significant historic heritage landscapes in the NSW park system. Their origins, and the management issues they present, are diverse.

Only one – Hill End – has had its heritage significance formalised through gazettal as a historic site. It is also listed on the State Heritage Register. As a residential town with a rich mining heritage, the site has presented particular challenges for its NPWS managers who have had to integrate their work on the site with the needs and desires of residents.

The Quarantine Station was acquired due to its significance as the site of quarantine for passengers arriving in Sydney for close to 150 years, and was incorporated into Sydney Harbour National Park. It has had its heritage significance formerly recognised through its gazettal as the North Head listing on the National Heritage List and on the State Heritage Register.

The pastoral huts in Kosciuszko National Park were not specifically acquired due to their heritage significance but, like most of the historic heritage places in the state's park system, were part of the landscape when the park was created. As examples of the way in which the landscape was used prior to becoming a national park, the Kosciuszko huts are therefore representative of most NPWS historic heritage items.

In contrast, many of the cabins in Royal National Park were constructed and occupied under the eyes of, and even with encouragement from, the local national park trust during the first half of the twentieth century. Their nature, purpose, and the individual claims of ownership laid on them by members of the public have created management issues quite different from the other three case studies.

These four studies further our understanding of the variety of issues NPWS park managers have faced in the process of managing historic heritage in NSW. They demonstrate the complex negotiations which have taken place between park managers and NPWS historic heritage staff, as well as the role of local communities and other stakeholders in debates surrounding specific historic heritage sites at particular times.

While the case studies focus on the period between 1967–2000, information is also included about later developments which affected the management of these places when it is helpful to give a more complete picture.

These case studies also highlight the important shifts which have occurred over the history of the NPWS – the effects of increased heritage expertise within the service, improved heritage training for service staff, and changing ideas about appropriate ways of conserving and preserving historic heritage. They demonstrate the effect such developments had on the actual management of some prominent historic heritage places.

3.1 Hill End

Hill End was one of the state's first six historic sites created by the NPW Act in 1967.[182] As a lived-in town, Hill End presented additional challenges to those the service faced with its other historic sites, as residents constantly scrutinised the service's actions and criticised management decisions. The service has had to negotiate this tension between managing the conservation of the site while respecting the interests of residents who live in it. This story provides insight into the early approach of the NPWS towards its historic sites, and some of the challenges faced by staff working closely with community representatives.

Forging a new path: early management of Hill End

Artists such as Donald Friend and Russell Drysdale who settled in Hill End in the late 1940s helped to draw public attention to the town's history and vernacular landscape in the following decades. It was gazetted as a historic site following lobbying by residents keen to sustain 'cultural heritage initiatives and … stabilise the town's fragile economy and tiny population', who had the support of the National Trust (NSW).[183] Upon announcing the reservation, Tom Lewis, Minister for Lands, declared that:

> It is the historical entity that was, and is, Hill End itself, rather than any specific building, or buildings, which warrants permanent dedication as an Historic Village. The buildings, although serving as a direct link with the gold mining era, are not in themselves unusual. Indeed … they are no different to buildings of the period that still remain in many other localities.[184]

For the NPWS heritage advisors and field staff, Hill End became a test of their imaginative application of conservation. In addition to conflicts with residents, a bypassing of legal procedure that had accompanied transfers of legal title within the town meant that the twenty-four properties had no clear titles. Considerable investigation was required to settle the issue. Furthermore, many of the town's greatest heritage assets, including nineteenth-century working class cottages and commercial sector buildings, required major conservation and stabilisation works.

In the years immediately following the reservation of Hill End as a historic site, a practical approach to conservation was enacted. Primary works included renovations of the regional hospital for re-use as a museum and visitor centre, and providing a water supply, construction of a public toilet facility and repairs to the town's primary pub, the Royal Hotel.

Cultural tourism became the town's new industry, and following its launch as an historic village in 1972, the town was attracting somewhere in the vicinity of 20,000 visitors per year. In recognition of the town's overhaul, the Australian National Travel Association awarded the Hill End Historic Site the 1972 Travel Enterprise Award. It was the first time the award had been conferred within the State's tourism industry.[185]

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182 This chapter has been compiled from interview transcripts discussed in section two, and a case study of Hill End in Zilber (2001). For a history of Hill End, commissioned by the NPWS, see Alan Mayne, *Hill End: an historic Australian goldfields landscape* (Melbourne University Press: Melbourne, 2003)

183 Mayne, p129

184 NPWS Parks File P938–P1042, 12/12217(A), State Records, Kingswood, Press Releases on Establishment of Hill End Historic Site, 'Hill End to Become Historic Village' 7 November 1966, cited in Zilber, p67

185 See various correspondence in NPWS Parks Files P6907 – P6979, 12/12257, and NPWS *Annual report 1973*, p20, cited in Zilber p68

The Royal Hotel, Hill End, undergoing restoration in 1976 (DECC)

Basking in the site's success, the 1973 NPWS annual report described Hill End in the following terms:

> The exhibits have been carefully planned to graphically portray the life and conditions of the people who lived in this 'goldrush' town a century ago and progressively follow their history up to the present day. Display items, artefacts and photographs, with related audio effects – the clip-clop of horses' hooves cantering down a road, the clang of a blacksmith's hammer on an anvil, the creak of wagons and the shouts of teamsters – imbue the visitor with the feeling of actually participating in the events of those times.[186]

This was an attempt at re-enactment of histories with the sounds, sights and smells of another era, packaged for a modern audience.

While the project was a short-term success, the costs associated with maintaining so many historic heritage buildings proved high. In the long term the town faced considerable infrastructure problems, not to mention a drop in visitation levels.[187] NPWS historian Joan Kent, who visited Hill End in the 1980s, observed the frustration among residents caused by a lack of infrastructure, even though the shire council was partly responsible for the provision of amenities and services:

> They didn't think National Parks did enough for them. I think they really wanted better water supply, garbage collection, things like that … That's the sort of thing they talked about.[188]

The service was expected by many to play the role a local council normally would, an expectation that continues today.

186 NPWS *Annual report*, 1973 p20
187 Ian Charles, *Shaping the service: the establishment and early development of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service* [Visions for the New Millennium Review], (NPWS: Sydney, February 1998), pp57–60
188 Kent interview

Students inspect an exhibition at Hill End Visitor Centre (DECC)

Finding a workable approach to heritage: St Andrews Church

In 1970, as part of its centenary celebrations, the congregation of St Andrews Church of England in Hill End made arrangements for the restoration of the Church building.[189]

Although the NPWS did not assist with funding for the restoration, local residents raised $2462 and the work was done with the support of ranger Ted Whittington. Commenting on the results, NPWS chief design officer Bruce Loder, stated that:

> Having seen the church in both its 'before' and 'after' state, I am most impressed with what 'change has been wrought' and can appreciate the local congregation's pride and satisfaction.
>
> However in terms of detail, it is almost certainly *not* a 'true to history' restoration. Whether this is of significant importance is open to discussion.[190]

Loder went on to say that approval had been given for the restoration of the missing rear balcony, and that historical research should be undertaken to ensure an accurate reproduction. These comments are revealing. Firstly, they demonstrate that individual NPWS employees were conscious of the importance of historical accuracy in the conservation of historic site buildings, and the value of historical research to achieve this. Secondly, they demonstrate a realisation that heritage is a subjective and sometimes intensely personal issue that is intrinsic to community and personal identity.

In the following year the assistant director of the National Trust (NSW) advised against any attempt at restoration because historical records had disappeared on the original balcony. But he added:

> It would appear that there are many other things to be done in Hill End which should have a much higher priority. Should it be the policy of the service that a balcony be erected, it would be essential to either obtain some information on the original balcony, or working details of a

189 NPWS Parks Files P1069–1120, 12/12217(B), correspondence from Mrs F.A. Ellis, Secretary St Andrews Restoration Committee, to R.C.A. Wotton M.L.A., 1 March 1970, cited in Zilber p70

190 NPWS Parks Files P1069–1120, 12/12217(B), correspondence from Mrs F.A. Ellis, Secretary St Andrews Restoration Committee, to R.C.A. Wotton M.L.A., 1 March 1970, cited in Zilber p70

St Andrews Church, Hill End (Caroline Ford, DECC)

> similar church balcony built in the same period. This in itself raises problems because I feel certain that any balcony erected in this church would have possessed the somewhat primitive quality exhibited in the rest of the buildings in Hill End, which may not be revealed in a church of the same size and period erected closer to Sydney.[191]

The debates over the restoration of St Andrews Church in Hill End are emblematic of the types of discussions which were taking place about a number of buildings around the historic site. In the face of insufficient funds for the restoration of the large number of buildings which were in poor condition, the service was forced to critically analyse its priorities for conservation funding. Often, these priorities differed substantially from those of the community. Furthermore, the general lack of heritage guidelines and professionals in Australia in the early 1970s meant the best course of action was not always clear.

Fortunately for the service, architect Ivar Nelson and historical archaeologist Anne Bickford who were employed at Hill End during this period played a crucial role in ensuring that current best-practice principles were applied to the research and conservation of Hill End buildings and sites.

Challenges in heritage management: best heritage practice

Contrasting opinions about ways of reconstructing the balcony of St Andrew's are just one manifestation of the debates surrounding the restoration and conservation of Hill End buildings throughout the 1970s and '80s. When the plan of management was being prepared for the historic site in the late 1970s, the regional planner in NPWS Central Region, Denis Townsend, argued that, as a historic site, Hill End should not be isolated from

191 *ibid*., correspondence from John Morris, Assistant Director National Trust of Australia (NSW), to D.F. McMichael, NPWS Director, 8 March 1971, cited in Zilber p71

its surrounding landscape, land-use patterns, and local and regional social patterns. He recommended detailed consultation with local residents and council members who continued to question the service's management of the town.[192]

Comments on the Draft Plan of Management for the Hill End Historic Site were welcomed from external and internal stakeholders. The feedback showed that the service was still evolving its management policies for historic sites, but in seeking feedback the service also understood the value of good community relations.

The Australia ICOMOS submission on the draft plan cited the guidelines of its own charter and suggested that conservation should be the main management aim for Hill End rather than preservation. It suggested that reconstruction should be given low priority and the historical integrity of the site would be best ensured by marketing the village in its current state without adaptation. Another suggestion was that the noxious weeds such as gorse and blackberries which had been spread by mining activities should be retained and interpreted as part of the evolving landscape. The Upper Macquarie County Council reminded the service that these same noxious weeds would spread to adjacent properties if not removed.[193]

Michael Pearson notes that the 1979 Burra Charter transformed the management of Hill End. Management actions at the site became closely guided by the charter's principles:

> The Burra Charter coming out sort of coincided with a lot of work going on, for example, at Hill End. And a lot of the conservation work in Hill End in the cottages and in the commercial building was based on the ICOMOS concepts of adaptation to provide new functions and services in a way which minimised impact on significance. So the use of unitised bathroom and toilet facilities, for example – I think at one stage they played with a slot-in bathroom that was a prefabricated cell, basically, that went into a room. [They were] doing things which brought power and services to a building in a way which didn't impact in a major way on the arrangement of rooms and on the fabric of the building.[194]

Challenges in heritage management: conflicts with the community

One of the most difficult issues for NPWS staff at Hill End has been conflict with the local community over management decisions. In assuming governance of Hill End in 1967, the service faced stiff opposition from residents, many of whom felt they hadn't been properly consulted in the process of creating the historic site.[195]

In the years following 1967, the service clashed with residents over several issues. Firstly, residents resented the feeling that they were required to remain in a time vacuum, to resist change, and only do so under strict supervision. The NPWS in turn feared that the residents would not be able to resist the temptation to capitalise on the commercialism introduced into the town, thus compromising its historical integrity.[196]

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192 NPWS Parks Files P6907–P6979, 12/12257(C), Hill End Historic Site, Plan of Management Distribution and Representations, D. Townsend, NPWS Regional Planner (Central Region): Service Response to Individual Submissions on the Exhibited Draft Plan of Management for Hill End Historic Site, December 1979, pp17–18, cited in Zilber p68

193 Zilber, p69

194 Pearson interview

195 Mayne (2003) pp129 –130; NPWS Parks File P1160–1942, 12/12219(C), State Records, Kingswood, Public Complaints Re Restoration Programme Hill End Historic Site, see various correspondence from residents, visitors and NPWS representatives, 1971–1986. For other community consultation efforts, see NPWS Parks Files P5550–P5740, 12/12249(A), Hill End Historic Site Action Committee – Complaints etc, May 1975–Jan 1976; and *Sydney Morning Herald,* Geraldine O'Brien: 'You're not gonna mess with this town', 21 September 1990, p3, cited in Zilber, p67

196 Press Releases on Establishment of Hill End Historic Site, 'Hill End to Become Historic Village' 7 November 1966., 'A new career for a boom gold town' by Frank Morgan, in *Daily Telegraph,* 8 November 1966, p26, cited in Zilber, p67

This wattle and daub hut is typical of the style of housing built by gold miners at Hill End. It was cheap and easy to build – the material such as mud, rocks and branches could be found near the building, so no transport was required (Chris Martin)

Restoration work was a particularly contentious issue. Since Hill End was a historic site with many modest historic structures rather than several key grand buildings, restoration has remained a key issue for residents faced with the gradual aging and neglect of their buildings. At the same time, the service maintained its intention to retain Hill End as a 'lived-in' village, and argued that restoration works were not always financially viable.[197]

Many of those involved with Hill End in the 1970s and '80s were conscious of the tense relationship. Sharon Sullivan recalls the difficulties the NPWS had with the Hill End community when she was a regional manager in the 1980s:

> Hill End was really difficult because of the attitude of the local people who felt like the service had come in and taken over their lives … So I spent an awful lot of time at Hill End … It took us a long while to get on top of the locals there and try to get some real cooperation and some real working together on it …[198]

Joan Kent notes there were even occasions when Hill End residents were violent:

> [at] Hill End you very often couldn't get anybody to talk to you. There was a period when whenever the National Parks vehicle went out there it would have its tyres slashed.[199]

McDonnell agrees, citing examples of nooses hanging in the trees with signs saying 'Heritage out of Hill End!':

> To try and go out and have community dialogue with people who were doing that, is very hard![200]

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197 NPWS Parks File P1160–1942, 12/12219(C), State Records, Kingswood, correspondence from D.F. McMichael, NPWS Director, to Mr & Mrs A.W. Marshall, visitors from Matcham, NSW, 26 October 1971; also see NPWS Parks Files P6907–P6979, 12/12257, Hill End Historic Site, Plan of Management Distribution and Representations, Memo by Michael Pearson, NPWS Historian: Hill End Plan of Management – Review of Historic Conservation Terminology, 21 April 1980, cited in Zilber, p67

198 Sullivan interview

199 Kent interview

200 McDonnell interview

Geoff Ashley argues that the service's inability to recognise the community's integration in Hill End, or to understand that it was actually part of a 'living landscape', underlined the conflict. While residents were anxious to restore each building, the service was less inclined to view each case separately, wanting instead to work at the scale of the township as a whole:

> I think Hill End had a problem [in the] early days because [NPWS] had this very fixed idea that they were managing a relic and they just didn't see the people there; they didn't see the community and the surrounding areas, and hence they ultimately bore the fruit of that problem. I think they've now hopefully managed things better through a lot more leasing [of] some of the buildings and being a bit more engaged with the community.[201]

The NPWS dealt with derisive and derogatory media commentary by sending press releases to local news agencies that redirected attention to other local interest stories, and developments in other parks and historic sites.[202]

Improving community relations

Neville Burkett says that things started to improve in the mid-1980s as a result of better integrated management by the service. He recalls a community meeting he attended there a week after he started in 1986 where:

> We had to try and explain how the service was going to introduce basically new policies about how those houses in Hill End were going to be managed. And we didn't get lynched and I think it was probably a turning point in the relationship between the townsfolk and the National Parks.[203]

Visitors and residents learn about the history and heritage of Hill End during Heritage Week around 1989 (DECC)

201 Ashley interview
202 NPWS Parks Files P6907–P6979, 12/12257; Press Releases, Mootwingee Historic Site, various correspondence and memos, cited in Zilber p68
203 Burkett interview

Alan Mayne agrees that it was in the late 1980s that the NPWS and Hill End community began to understand each other better.[204] Michael Pearson also suggests that despite community backlash against the service, the NPWS presence was critical to ensuring the historical integrity of the town was maintained.

> One of the biggest things probably that would have changed in Hill End without service management would have been … the continued removal of old buildings or … substantial modification of old buildings, and the infill of vacant blocks for modern buildings. Now that's been the pattern elsewhere. It isn't the pattern in Hill End and one of the reasons for arguing that that shouldn't be the pattern in Hill End is *because* of that really *strong* historical documentation of what *was* there originally through the Holtermann photographs and through the archaeological survival in the ground of what was there. It really *is* an encapsulated 1870s mining village. It's a great resource. Finding the balance point with it also being an ongoing living community is the difficult one. That's *always* been where the fights have occurred. I've never had anything but extreme sympathy for any manager who has to actually work and live in Hill End. Some have done it more successfully than others, I know, but the pressures must be immense.[205]

There were few notable differences between the 1988 and 1994 draft management plans for the historic site, meaning the management approach effectively changed very little over that period.[206] However a decade later the development of a master plan for Hill End signalled a new direction for the NPWS in the management of the site.

Residents and visitors to Hill End enjoy a history re-enactment. The date is unknown (DECC)

Ross McDonnell argues that in identifying the interests and responsibilities of both the agency and the community, the master plan, which was endorsed in 2003, provided clarity for the development of a new plan of management for the site.[207]

204 Mayne (2003), pp134–5
205 Pearson interview
206 *Hill End Historic Site: Draft Plan of Management* (NPWS: unpublished, 1988); *Hill End Historic Site: Draft Plan of Management* (NPWS: unpublished, 1994)
207 McDonnell interview

The master plan emphasised the importance of building and maintaining an effective relationship with the community, and signalled a 'refocused approach' which:

> … encourages a greater clarity in the relationship with the local community, who do not see the place as a museum or a static cultural heritage site, but as a living village.[208]

It acknowledged that relationships between members of the community and the agency had been fractured in the past, owing partly to the agency having 'progressively or informally taken over a number of tasks in Hill End that might otherwise be the responsibility of local government or another agency.' According to the plan:

> This has lead (sic) to an unsustainable dilution of NPWS resources and some confusion or misplaced expectations about the actual role of the agency, despite an ongoing productive relationship with the local community.[209]

The master plan also signalled a shift in the agency's attitude towards conservation, guided by changes in the Burra Charter, with a bigger emphasis on the site as a 'lived community':

> With the dominance of the mining legacy in the psyche of the historic site, conservation of most buildings has focused on a museum-style approach to the fabric with less concern for the ongoing role of the particular building in the community. Although many buildings are actively used, there has been a prevailing conservation attitude that fabric mattered more than occupancy … This plan promotes a wider recognition of the continuity of a living community in Hill End. The village survived since the 1870s and many of the buildings have absorbed a degree of change as they responded to contemporary living needs to recognise the balance between fabric conservation, use and contemporary needs.[210]

Interpretive signs at Hill End in 2008 identify for visitors the buildings which formerly occupied each site (Caroline Ford, DECC)

Future directions

Ross McDonnell claims that the service's involvement of the community in the development of this master plan has made it 'better at determining exactly what our responsibilities are and actually delivering on them.'[211] He cites the improved capacities of service staff at Hill End – due to increased funding options, uniforms, widely accepted conservation planning and better community relations – as the source of a greater community acceptance of the NPWS in the town, and a pathway to ensuring that 'proper heritage outcomes have been determined and delivered'.[212]

208 Graham Brooks, *Hill End Historic Site master plan (NPWS: unpublished, 2004)*, p35
209 Brooks (2004), p27
210 Brooks (2004), p71
211 McDonnell interview
212 Ross McDonnell, interview revision notes, 12 May 2008

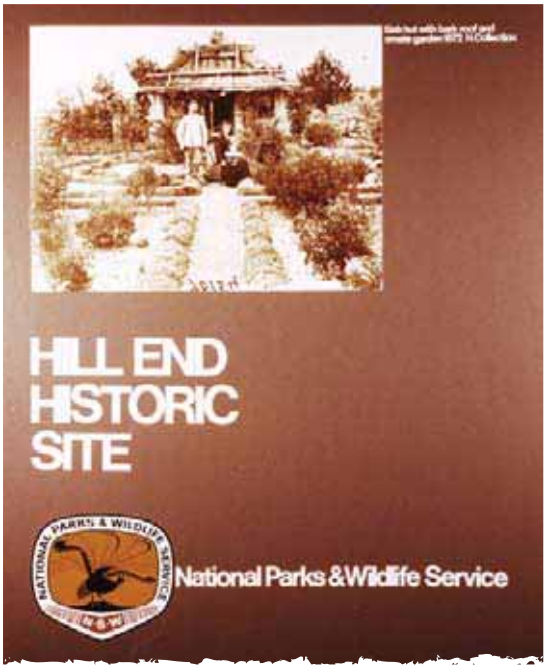
He also notes changes within the Hill End community:

> To a certain extent there has been a generational change where the initial managers and [many] initial residents are not there now … So for quite a few new people moving into Hill End it's all a new, open experience and they're not coming with some of the baggage that previous residents had …
>
> There are [residents in Hill End] who [have been] very supportive of what we're doing and provided we keep the management intent going … and doing it impartially and objectively, I tend to think we should win in the end.[213]

Since the adoption of the master plan, the arrangements for the restoration of buildings is built into new leasing arrangements, and Neville Burkett cites Hill End as one place where adaptive re-use has been successful, not only in assisting financially with the maintenance of historic sites, but also in engaging the community.

Ross McDonnell agrees, citing new conservation management plans and long-term conservation leases. Under new leases, the lessee undertakes identified works and the rent is calculated based on the lessee's financial contribution to those restoration works.

> It places us in a position where we can determine what needs to occur and we partner with the community in delivering a conservation outcome.[214]



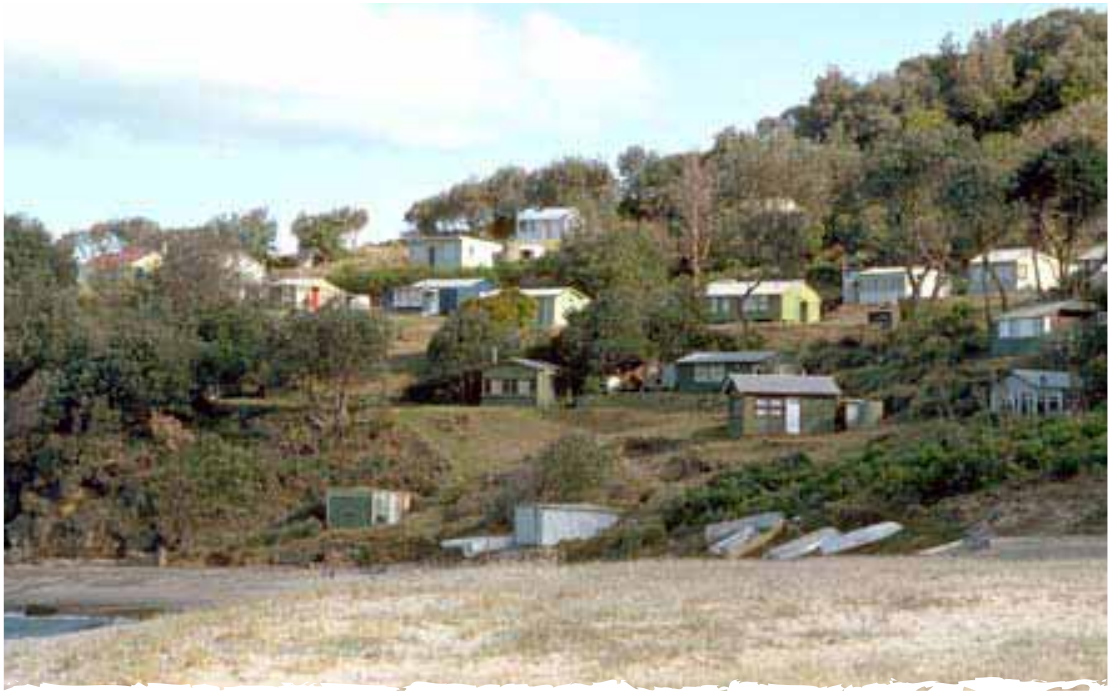
Interpretive sign at Hill End, probably in the 1970s (DECC)

213 McDonnell interview; parentheses indicate revisions by interviewee, May 2008
214 Ross McDonnell, interview revision notes, 12 May 2008

3.2 Royal National Park huts

The Royal National Park has the largest collection of huts in the NSW parks system.[215] In the 1950s and '60s, there were close to 500 huts in areas which now constitute the park.[216] By the turn of the century, there were around 200 remaining.

This chapter traces the evolution of the service's policy towards the huts from 1967. For several decades the service favoured total removal of the huts to enable the landscape to return to its 'natural' state. An externally imposed moratorium on hut demolition, and the development of a detailed conservation report in the early 1990s, marked a major shift in the service's approach towards the huts, leading to a realisation of their importance as part of the cultural landscape of the park.



Huts at Little Garie (DECC)

The history of the Royal National Park huts since 1967 reflects a number of issues pertinent to the service's management of historic heritage places across the state. In particular, the service's initial approach was driven by a belief in removing evidence of the past to restore the natural landscape. However the growing influence of professional heritage staff within the service and improving education for park managers about the value of historic heritage led to a shift in management approach. The management of the huts was further complicated by their occupancy status. Many had been occupied over a long period by the same family which attempted to claim 'ownership' rights.

215 This chapter is largely based on primary evidence explored in Werksman (2002) and on Geoff Ashley, *Royal National Park cabins: conservation plan* [Draft] (NPWS: Sydney, September 1994)

216 Ashley (1994) pp32–3

Royal National Park showing the main locations of the huts. Fifty years ago there were more than 500 huts in the park – some built with permission of the park trustees, some built before the land on which they stood was included in the park.

History of the huts

Most of the Royal National Park huts were built between 1900 and the 1950s for recreational weekend use, although they also provided important housing for the unemployed during the 1930s Depression.

The huts built at Bonnie Vale on the Port Hacking River were built with the approval of the park trustees; those at Bulgo were erected on the public recreation reserve (within one hundred feet of high water mark and therefore outside the park); while the rest, on the ocean beaches at Little Garie, South Era, and Burning Palms, were constructed before the areas in which they were located were added to the park and were built with the approval of the grazier lessee of the land who collected a weekly rent.[217]

Geoff Ashley, citing the National Park Trust *Annual report* of 1889–90, argued that from the very first days of the park[218], the trustees both constructed accommodation and encouraged visitors to do the same, considering the rental revenue generated from leasing land to be 'a vital income for the trust's activities'.[219] Therefore, from 1900 people were constructing cabins for weekend accommodation along the Hacking River, mostly under permissive occupancies, with the blessing of the trust.[220] By 1919, the trust was reporting that 'week-end camps are an institution that is not only popular but highly appreciated'.[221]

217 Ashley (1994), pp23–24
218 Until 1955 the park's name was the National Park.
219 Ashley (1994), p26
220 Ashley (1994), p27
221 Ashley (1994), p28

A group gather in front of their hut at Little Garie (DECC)

The construction of huts was in line with the trust's other activities in the park, including clearing recreation spaces at Audley and arranging leases for minor forestry and quarrying activities. Apart from the revenue they gained, the trustees also considered the huts 'an appropriate use of the park'.[222]

From the 1930s, however, as bushwalkers campaigned for the preservation of wilderness areas across New South Wales,[223] a new understanding of national parks emerged. The permissive occupancies of the huts began to be criticised as compromising the wilderness value of the park. The trust at first vehemently defended its actions, but by the late 1950s under continuing criticism, the trustees ceased issuing new permissive occupancies.[224] They did, however, continue to permit transfers of ownership and hut additions. By the mid-1960s even these were disallowed, meaning that, from that time, leases would terminate with the death of the lessee, and the hut would become property of the trust.[225]

Within a year of the creation of the NPWS in 1967, and Royal National Park's incorporation into the broader park system, many of the original huts were removed.[226] The purpose of demolishing these cabins was to allow the park to return to 'a natural state', in accordance with contemporary theories about the purpose and values of national parks.[227] Neville Burkett recalls that in addition to this anxiety about foreign structures in the park landscape, there was a concern among service managers about the privatisation of public space:

> There were a number of issues there. One particularly was people having exclusive use of the park and that was [a] very, very big issue for many of the managers. And their line was to stop exclusive use. I mean the Act says you can't have exclusive use and yet these people were. And so that was one of the reasons for the demolition policy. [228]

222 Ashley (1994), p27
223 Melissa Harper, *The Ways of the Bushwalker: On foot in Australia* (UNSW Press: Sydney 2007), pp256–71
224 Ashley (1994), p28
225 Ashley (1994), pp30–31
226 Ashley (1994), p31
227 Ashley (1994), pp31–2
228 Burkett interview

Shifts in the management approach to the weekender cabins in the park have reflected the shifting parameters of the debates surrounding their existence, purpose, and future. The formation of the NPWS in 1967 fuelled the debate, as its two objectives of preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the park system sat uncomfortably with each other.

In the early 1980s, the complexity of the issues surrounding the policy of demolition was highlighted by the debate over the fate of a single hut: Lamont's Cottage on the banks of the Port Hacking River.

Lamont's Cottage

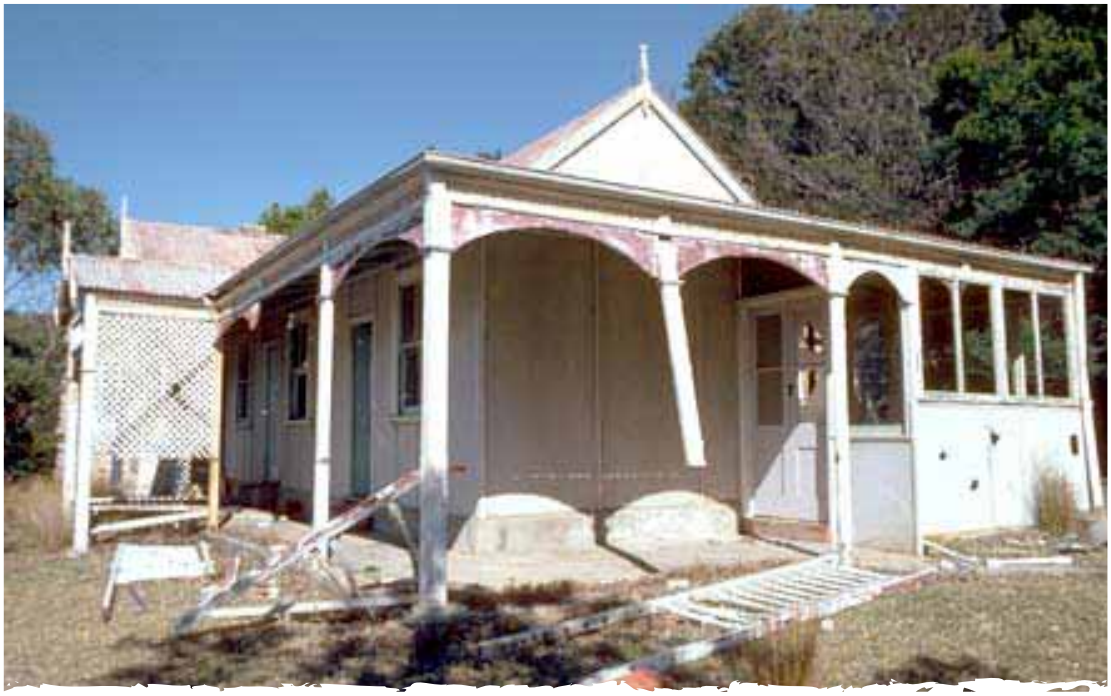
In 1980 the policy of demolition of the Royal National Park huts was internally challenged for the first time by NPWS historian Michael Pearson. A local researcher had uncovered evidence which suggested that Lamont's Cottage, which was earmarked for demolition under service policy, dated back to the late nineteenth century and represented the early history of the Royal National Park. Accordingly, Pearson wrote to the park manager, urging a postponement of the hut's demolition 'until the building's significance has been fully evaluated'.[229] The acting regional director, C.J. Burrell, supported Pearson's request, ordering that the building be protected from vandalism pending receipt of the report.[230]

In his assessment report, produced in May 1981, Pearson argued that Lamont's Cottage (and the other cabins which surrounded it on Gogerly Point), 'is of great architectural and historical importance, and no element of it should be endangered'. He found that Lamont's was 'the last intact surviving example of the turn-of-the-century secluded waterside cottages in Port Hacking', that the architectural decoration was significant, and that it represented recreation in Sydney prior to the popularisation of surf bathing in the early twentieth century.[231]

The Royal National Park Advisory Committee disagreed with Pearson on the need to retain the cottage. One member referred to it as a 'heap of old rubble', while another stated that 'there is no reason to restore it as there are thousands of this type of building in and around Sydney'. Pearson considered that these comments demonstrated 'a misunderstanding on the part of the committee of the reasons for attributing significance to Lamont's Cottage', and was particularly concerned about a call for a second opinion by a member of the committee who:

> … believes that the evaluation by members of the committee 'qualified in the building trade' is sufficient to justify the demolition of Lamont's. Service policy clearly states that such decisions should be based on the evaluation by *all relevant specialists* (ie architectural, historical and archaeological), and unless members of the committee are specifically [qualified] in building conservation work, I would not regard building trade qualifications as valid qualifications for making such a decision. A builder would probably condemn every hut in Kosciuszko National Park. The question here is not one of a building's stability, but one of historical/cultural assessment.[232]

229 Memo, Michael Pearson to Superintendent, Royal National Park, 23 May 1980, cited in Werksman, p54
230 Memo from C.J. Burrell (Acting Regional Director, Central Region) cc. M. Pearson (Historian), Reference: R2/7 CG:AS, 24 December 1980, cited in Werksman, p55
231 Michael Pearson, Lamont's Cottage, Royal National Park: Assessment Report, 10 May 1981, cited in Werksman, p55
232 Pearson, Response to matters raised in Advisory Committee Minutes, 26 June 1981, original emphasis, cited in Werksman, p66



Lamont's Cottage in 1980 (Michael Pearson, DECC)

Pearson was supported in his calls for the retention of Lamont's Cottage by the NPWS regional director, regional archaeologist/historian and the regional works coordinator. According to Werksman, 'only the advisory committee remained intransigent over this issue, calling for demolition 'regardless of its value'.[233]

The result of this disagreement over the fate of Lamont's Cottage was inaction. The cottage was neither completely demolished nor conserved. Michael Pearson was scathing in his 1985 report which found that neglect and partial demolition in the interim had substantially reduced the significance of the building which existed four years earlier:

> No documented final decision concerning Lamont's Cottage has ever been placed on file, but the current approach seems to be to demolish the timber and fibro portions of the building and preserve the stone sections. The reason for this decision has not been documented, and its logic is highly dubious …
>
> In the five years since the initial investigations, the building has been vandalised to the point where, in February 1985, every fibro cladding sheet and window has been smashed, leaving only the timber frame standing, and the verandah has collapsed and all decorative elements (cast iron, glass and turned posts) have been removed or destroyed. A large hole has been knocked through the wall of the stone wing, which threatens the stability of that section. In effect, the building, visually and physically, has been destroyed, and thereby the major element of the significance of the place, identified in 1980, has been lost.
>
> … The remains of Lamont's Cottage should be demolished as soon as possible, as they are currently a hazard … The district should clear up and remove that material it can, but the important thing is that a consistent approach to demolition or retention is pursued in this case and others like it.
>
> It is (or should be) a sobering thought to consider that the 1980 estimated cost of conservation was probably lower than the 1985 cost of total demolition and removal of the building. Also the option of keeping the building on site, thought by district to be impossible in 1980, is now thought quite feasible for the stone sections. This suggests that the management

233 Werksman (2002), p58

> options and constraints were not adequately thought through in 1980. In future when management objections are used as an argument to remove or downgrade the conservation status of significant buildings, it should be necessary for that argument to be put on paper and documented at least as thoroughly as the argument for the significance of the place.
>
> As S. Martin's report suggests, the history of Lamont's Cottage points up the need for the policy applied by South Metropolitan District to its historic resources to be reviewed, and brought into line with current service policy and sound cultural resource management principles. Service policies already exist, and in fact were applied to the Lamont's Cottage case when the original recommendation was made to conserve it. However, the service, based on ill-founded management considerations, chose to reject those policies in this case. The result has been the destruction of Lamont's Cottage and the current untimely attempt to conserve a fragment of the building.[234]

The remains of Lamont's Cottage were not removed, and as part of the larger Gogerly's group, are listed on the service's section 170 register. Their significance is summarised in the DECC Historic Heritage Information Management System (HHIMS):

> The remains of Lamont's Cottage and its surrounding property are evidence of the early development and settlement of the Port Hacking district. The ruins indicate the layout and architecture of this form of residence, and are accessible evidence of the nineteenth-century approach to isolated housing. The site may contain archaeological deposits relating to its early use and occupation.[235]

1980s and continued demolition

The debate over Lamont's Cottage clearly demonstrated that although the service had policies for preserving sites with significant cultural heritage values, when park managers disagreed with heritage specialists about the value of doing so there were no mechanisms for enforcing those policies. Throughout the 1980s, the policy of demolition continued to apply to huts in Royal National Park. Geoff Ashley suggested that the practice 'of demolishing cabins upon death of the owner or for licence breach' which was in accordance with the park's 1975 plan of management, contravened service policies which 'require the preparation of a conservation plan or similar document when demolitions of historic places are proposed'.[236] Nonetheless, by 1992, the number of huts in the Royal National Park had plummeted from nearly five hundred at their peak, to 234.[237]

Following Pearson's lead, a preliminary report on the historic significance of the cabins prepared by Judith Webster of the South Metropolitan District in 1985 recommended suspending demolition until further research was carried out.[238] The recommendation was not acted upon. In a review the following year, the service's cultural resources officer expressed concern that 'the continued demolition of cabins exposed the service to justified criticism over its inconsistent and unprofessional approach to historic resource management'.[239]

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234 Memo, Pearson to Head of Cultural Resources Section, February 1985, cited in Werksman, pp58–9
235 HHIMS statement of significance
236 Ashley (1994), p1
237 Ashley (1994), p23
238 Preliminary Report on the Historic Significance of Cabins in Royal National Park, with Recommendations for their Future Management, prepared by Judith Webster (Ranger, South Metropolitan District) 30 November 1985, cited in Werksman, p72
239 Sherri-Lee Evans, cited in Werksman, p71

Figure 9: The disappearing village of Bonnie Vale c. 1960 to 1992.

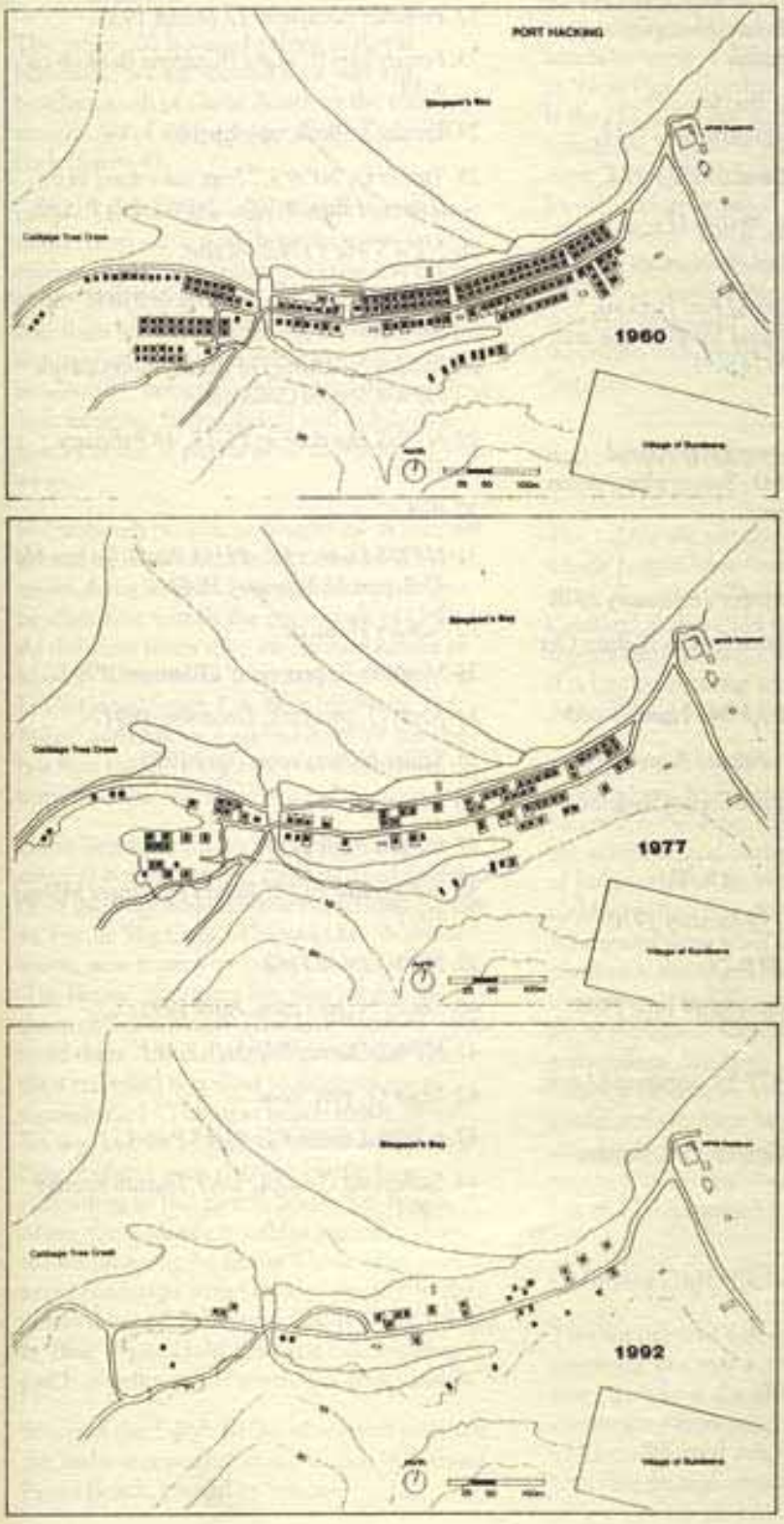

Figure 9a: The village in its most developed form, approximately 171 cabins (6 x 6 m in a 9 x 9 m lot). Note road between beach and front line of cabins.

Figure 9b: Approximately 90 cabins remain in 1977.

Figure 9c: 31 cabins remain in May 1992 dotted amidst mown grass. A potential still exists to conserve the streetscape character of the cabin village and to provide for day use and overnight camping.

Illustrations showing the gradual decline in the number of huts at Bonnie Vale (Geoff Ashley, *Royal National Park cabins: draft conservation plan* 1994)

Cabins at South Era, probably in the early 1990s (Geoff Ashley, DECC)

In 1986, however, Minister for Planning and the Environment Bob Carr, responding to lobbying by hut occupiers against service policy, endorsed the service's continuing management strategy of gradual demolition:

> Private occupations of this nature are objectionable in a national park and are contrary to every accepted concept of national park philosophy and management. The buildings themselves are generally unsightly and are occupying space which rightly should be available for recreational use by the general public. The service is currently planning and undertaking new works to improve certain areas of the park and mounting visitor pressures and planning schedules dictate that complete removal of all cabins from within the park, by strict adherence to the adopted policy, is essential to ensure that areas currently occupied are ultimately available for public use.
>
> Some of the problems associated with these cabins include proliferation of uncontrolled cats and dogs which have a deleterious effect on the wildlife of the park, and considerable damage to the park as a result of unauthorised vehicular access to the cabins. Illegal connection to the service's water supply, encroachment onto the park beyond the licensed cabin site and use of the cabins for permanent accommodation are other management problems that have confronted the service over the years.[240]

Consequently, cabins continued to be demolished throughout the late 1980s.

Heritage protection and the huts study

In 1990, concerned by the prospect of inevitable demolition and frustrated by lack of sympathy from NPWS staff and the government, licensed hut occupiers at South Era nominated their cabin group for protection under the Heritage Act. The Heritage Council of NSW ordered the NPWS to conduct an assessment of significance, and a moratorium was placed on further demolitions pending completion of the report.[241] The suspension of demolition was met with alarm by some service staff members:

> As an organisation we have had a 23-year obsession with the obscenity of widespread private occupation of parts of the park system. We therefore tend to regard all the trappings of private occupation with the same enthusiasm we would lavish on feral pigs or oil spills. It would not be easy to foster a different view of the huts.[242]

240 Correspondence from Bob Carr (Minister for Planning and Environment) to Ken Holloway (President, The Era, Burning Palms and Little Garie Protection League), 19 March 1986, cited in Werksman, pp67–8

241 Ashley (1994), p1

242 Memo: Demolition of Huts, from Head of Policy Development Branch to Deputy Director (Policy and Wildlife) 27 August 1990, cited in Werksman, p70

Bill Shad inside his South Era hut in 1992 (Geoff Ashley, NPWS)

Nonetheless, the service agreed to temporarily halt destruction of the huts. NPWS conservation architect Geoff Ashley was engaged to assess their significance and make recommendations regarding management strategies. He incorporated this investigation *(Royal National Park cabins: draft conservation plan)* into a broader analysis of the huts in parks across NSW. His statewide huts study was jointly funded by the NPWS and Department of Planning with a grant under the Heritage Assistance Program.[243]

In his report Ashley pushed for greater recognition of the huts as part of the cultural landscape that the NPWS was legally bound to protect and conserve. As he later explained:

> the huts were not just objects in the bush, they were actually part of the landscape; the huts were there because of the landscape and in turn were evidence of changes to the landscape through pastoralism [in Kosciuszko] and other uses.[244]

Ashley recommended that the moratorium on hut demolition continue until a new plan of management could be written for the park. He made recommendations designed to ensure that the principal cultural features of the cabins were conserved; to 'ensure a continuity of use and sense of community cohesion'; to enable increased public use of the cabins; and to clarify the responsibilities and roles of key stakeholders.[245]

Ashley argued for conservation and later reconstruction of these and other huts in the park system on the basis that 'they provided strong social connections with community', not only for pastoralist families but also for 'people who have skied, walked, bushwalked, ridden bicycles there for 30 years'. Reflecting on the huts in 2005, Ashley observed that a paradigm shift had occurred and 'a slow recognition that parks have their own history and that they reflect an ongoing history' was emerging. With huts, he argued, the issue is 'not just preserving relics' but 'actually managing an ongoing use' effectively. [246]

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243 Ashley (1994), p1
244 Ashley interview
245 Ashley (1994), pp121–125
246 Ashley interview

Ashley's recommendations for the conservation of the huts on cultural heritage grounds was supported by cabin owners and a majority of park users who responded to a 1995 park user survey.[247]

Reviewing public and stakeholder responses to Ashley's draft conservation plan, Keith Stratten surveyed 227 park users, 120 cabin owners, and reviewed all 502 submissions to the public exhibition of the plan.[248] He found that almost two-thirds of the general park users surveyed believed that the cabins should be retained, and that the most common reason given for their retention was their heritage significance.[249] Despite NPWS arguments that the cabins were not an appropriate use of the national park, 81 per cent of surveyed park users thought that 'the NPWS should preserve a balance of both the natural environment and how people lived in the past'.[250]

Stratten concluded that 'the park user survey suggests that the purely ecological image or wilderness ethic of the national park/conservation movement is not shared by the majority of the park users interviewed.'[251]

Sharing the huts: early 2000s

Although the service continued to hold that individuals should not be able to claim private property rights within a national park, its response to Ashley's recommendations reflected the growing recognition of the huts as cultural heritage items. When a new plan of management for Royal National Park was finalised in 2000, the 229 remaining cabin licences were identified by Environment Minister Bob Debus as 'a major issue' for the park.[252]

The plan itself considered the cabins as 'cultural landscapes', recognising that their significance lay in 'the simple tenting lifestyle that underlies their establishment and their construction as low-cost simple structures without major infrastructure which reflects their isolation and lack of services.'[253]

The plan differentiated between the future management of coastal cabins and those at Bonnie Vale on Port Hacking. Even though they were all listed by the National Trust and most by the Australian Heritage Commission, the Bonnie Vale huts were to be progressively removed to create space for camping and day use,[254] while the coastal cabins were to be conserved:

> As a result of the public exhibition of the draft conservation plan for the cabins and this plan of management, the moratorium now ceases. The service will seek to retain a substantial number of cabins along the coast through licensing with stringent conditions which ensure that their cultural heritage values are retained and their environmental impact is considerably reduced by meeting environmental performance standards. Provision will be made for public use of some of the cabins.[255]

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247 Keith Stratten, *Natural or cultural landscapes? cabins in the Royal National Park as a policy dilemma in the 1990s* (Dissertation: University of New England, 1995)
248 Stratten (1995), pp45–49
249 Stratten (1995), p100
250 Stratten (1995), p94
251 Stratten (1995), p101
252 Bob Debus, 'Foreword' in *Royal National Park: plan of management* (NPWS: Sydney, 2000)
253 *Royal National Park: plan of management* (2000), pp7, 32
254 The plan specified that pensioners occupying cabins at Bonnie Vale as their only residence would be offered life tenancy, and all others would be offered non-renewable five year licences. The cabins would then be recorded and removed when the licence expires. *Royal National Park: plan of management* (2000) p36
255 *Royal National Park: plan of management* (2000), p33

Some of the remaining Bonnie Vale huts, 1985 (DECC)

The plan of management also recognised that in addition to a recognition of the cultural significance of these huts:

> … there are also legal, equity, environmental and social questions that require resolution before an environmentally and socially feasible program for the management of the cabins can be finalised.[256]

In 2001 the NPWS commissioned a conservation management plan for the coastal cabins. This plan, published in 2005, confirmed the recommendations outlined in the earlier plan of management for retention of the coastal cabins. In addition, it clearly articulated the parameters for their conservation and interpretation. One of the key recommendations was that the service should:

> … recognise that the historical nature of individual cabin areas has been degraded by the progressive loss of cabins to either natural causes or demolition over the decades. Retention and ongoing use of the remaining cabins whilst retaining their vernacular character, is the preferred approach to protecting the historic, social and visual character of the areas.[257]

Nonetheless, the cabin occupiers have continued to challenge the service's management strategy for the remaining coastal and Bonnie Vale cabins. In around 2005, representatives of 119 cabins in Little Garie, South Era and Burning Palms launched court action against the service, in an attempt to have their claims to ownership of the huts legally recognised.

Geoff Ashley acknowledged the continuing complexity of the situation, but expressed hope that a resolution could be reached:

> My personal feeling is that, yes, there's a very strong social connection and family connection with these places, but there is another reality which is that this is a national park. They can't own this block of land. They can own the fabric but not the site. There's a reality of changing circumstances. I think to retain the cabins but at the same time not just lock in ownership of particular people is going to be a tricky thing to manage. But it needs to be managed. There needs to be a transition, I think, from 'this is their place but only under a temporary licence'. I think [the hut residents] need to be given a decent reflection of their connection and association … There needs to be some way that a broader community access can be made to these places while reflecting the social values. So it's a difficult mix but I think that needs to happen and hopefully it won't be through a court case.[258]

256 *Royal National Park: plan of management* (2000), p34
257 *Royal National Park coastal cabin areas: conservation management plan* (NPWS: Sydney, 2005), p152
258 Ashley interview

The Bonnie Vale landscape in 2008, where campers occupy the spaces left behind by removed huts (Caroline Ford, DECC)

The court case was resolved through mediation in 2006 and an agreement that the service would work with the cabin occupiers to nominate the cabins at these three sites for listing on the State Heritage Register.

Conclusions

The recommendations outlined in the plan of management and conservation management plan demonstrate a clear shift in attitudes towards the Royal National Park huts. Between 1971 and 1992, 117 cabins were removed from Bonnie Vale, South Era, Burning Palms and Little Garie in accordance with the park management policy of demolition. Geoff Ashley's 1994 draft conservation plan for the cabins was the turning point in the attitude towards the huts. It was the point when a recognition of the

A South Era cabin in 2007 (DECC)

cultural value of retaining these heritage sites replaced the policy of automatic demolition; the point at which the possibility of adaptive re-use was raised as a way of maintaining the huts, while opening up the potential for public use of these spaces.

Denis Gojak considered the outcome of Ashley's report to be a great achievement:

> It was largely Geoff Ashley who lobbied from our point, from our group, to get a moratorium on their demolition on the grounds that they were historic heritage items. That's gradually gone through a process now where National Parks' attitude to historic heritage within parks has caught up with our appreciation of their significance. The emphasis now is on managing [them] not just [as] an historic heritage resource but as a useful visitor amenity within the parks, although that's been a sort of very long, slow road. But that's sort of one big achievement.[259]

Ashley himself remains fascinated by the diversity of cabins – not only in their architectural structure but the communities that grew around them:

> There's a really interesting mix. Each of the cabin groups has a different cultural history, some of them are more working class southern Sydney; some of them are an interesting mixture of minority groups. There's gays, communists, writers, plus the working class from Helensburgh, all in the one spot. It's still reflected today; I think you're getting different subgroups within these cabin groups that are either the middle class Sydney people or the working class history. You're getting this really interesting dynamic with lots of minorities reflected in the sites. That's what I was picking up; the different characters of the sites but also obviously the architecture of the cabins and their history.[260]

The decision by the NPWS to retain the remaining coastal huts is a recognition of the cultural value of these historic places. The huts are no longer considered merely buildings which threaten the regeneration of a natural landscape, but a fundamental element of the cultural landscape of Royal National Park. Nonetheless, their continued presence in a park landscape remains contentious.

259 Gojak interview
260 Ashley interview

3.3 Quarantine Station

The North Head Quarantine Station was incorporated into Sydney Harbour National Park in March 1984 after its ownership was transferred from the Commonwealth to the NSW Government. This change of ownership was 'one of a series of transfers of redundant foreshore Commonwealth properties, whose location was considered to warrant their return to general public use and access.'[261]

The site was incorporated into the park 'in recognition of the historic significance of its buildings, structures and artefacts, its past use as Australia's first quarantine station, its role in six generations of migration and its continuing value as a research and educational resource'.[262] Some minor conservation works were carried out just prior to the service acquiring the complex, but otherwise little maintenance had been done since the mid-1970s.[263]

Some of the Quarantine Station buildings in 1981 prior to NPWS acquisition (DECC)

The addition of the fairly rundown Quarantine Station to the NSW park system created a major challenge for the NPWS, which recognised the historical significance of the large complex with more than 60 buildings but had insufficient funds and resources to properly conserve it. Its solution was adaptive re-use – to develop the site in a way so it would generate visitor income. From the start, it was anticipated that the private sector would play a major role to ensure that any development was financially viable.

This case study traces the controversial and complex process of developing an adaptive re-use policy that was viable and amenable to both the private sector and community interest groups. It is an example of a large and significant historic heritage landscape which was incorporated into the park system without being gazetted as a historic site, and one for which the service had insufficient resources to adequately manage.

261 *Sydney Harbour National Park: North Head Quarantine Station conservation management plan, volume 1* (NPWS: Sydney, April 2000), p89
262 Interim Management Plan, 1984, quoted in *Sydney Harbour National Park: Quarantine Station conservation plan* (NPWS: Sydney, 1988), p7
263 *North Head Quarantine Station: conservation management plan* (2000), p89

Initial concerns

The NPWS historian Michael Pearson expressed concerns regarding the acquisition of the Quarantine Station in the early 1980s. He was particularly alarmed that the artefacts and archives previously held at the site were removed prior to NPWS acquisition, and transferred to Canberra for storage by the Commonwealth Department of Health. He informed the service's director of his concerns in 1984:

> I am disconcerted to hear that the agreement reached was that the contents of the museum be transferred to Canberra for housing, to be returned on request. I foresee possible problems with this procedure unless certain safeguards are applied … If the collection is to be transferred out of direct service control, then some form of inventory, or preferably full cataloguing, should take place before transfer …
>
> A related point, which is unclear, is whether these museum items become service property on transfer from the Commonwealth, or whether the Department of Health retains ownership and simply loans the material to the service. The latter option should be strenuously avoided.[264]

Pearson still considered this to be a major issue when he left the service in the mid-1980s:

> The problem there was that the transfer of land wasn't automatically linked to the transfer of objects … Because they hadn't done any cataloguing of the objects before they were removed, the service would have had no way of specifically requesting objects back. You'd be at their mercy. If you said, 'oh, we'd like some objects to display for Quarantine', *they* would select them, rather than you saying, 'look, we know that there was a cot in this ward of this form' or there was a particular object which we know was related to a particular ship in Quarantine. We didn't have that opportunity. So I'm not quite sure how that was resolved because that was at the point where I left the service, but it was a major issue, certainly in *my* mind.[265]

Pearson was also concerned by the implication made in the draft conservation plan that the station was surrounded by pre-1788 vegetation. Writing in 1985, he argued that:

> There is physical and photographic evidence to suggest that at least part of the area being described as 'pre-1788' or 'original' was cleared until as late as mid-20th century … It is, I feel, therefore misleading to suggest, as the draft statement does either incidentally or unintentionally, that those areas not currently cleared are remnants of pre-1788 landscape. *Visually* (ie. *aesthetically*) it may have that appearance, and that is certainly significant, but *scientifically* and *historically* it is a simplistic and misleading assumption. As the statement of significance, among other things, will guide interpretation and research approaches, it is necessary for this vegetation history question to be identified clearly, as it is in itself significant.[266]

Managing a financial liability

Prior to acquiring the Quarantine Station, the service was anxious about its ability to meet the substantial financial and staffing commitment required to manage it effectively. A 1983 discussion paper by NPWS Assistant Director G.J. Armstrong, considered Michael Pearson's recommendations 'that the site be managed as an integrated historic area, and not as a collection of individual buildings' to be 'logical', but impractical in light of the likely cost of such an approach:

> If three of the newer buildings cost $270,000 [to conserve], what will the other 60 (plus roads, sewerage, area management, security fence, wharf, fire control etc) cost? Unless there is a cast iron commitment by the government to the provision of staff and funds, should we aim

264 Michael Pearson, 'Memo to the Director: Re: Quarantine Station Transfer of Artefacts and Fittings', 12 January 1984, cited in Werksman, p112

265 Pearson interview

266 Michael Pearson, 'Memo: Quarantine Station Conservation Plan – Comments on Phase Two Report', 5 March 1985, cited in Werksman, p98

> at a total number of inevitably poorly maintained buildings … or should we select a smaller number which we might be capable of maintaining adequately to record the valuable history of the area?[267]

Armstrong acknowledged, however, that the latter course was 'probably not tenable' due to the major protests it would 'inevitably attract', and the political ramifications it could incur. Accordingly, adaptive re-use was considered a viable, and indeed the most appropriate, management strategy for the Quarantine Station from the service's first involvement in the site. Several months after drafting the discussion paper, Armstrong wrote:

> In planning, the service would not exclude the possibility of public uses of some of the buildings for accommodation (historian Dr Pearson accepts this as likely and possibly even desirable) or the handing over of visitor activities to a concessioner under strict controls. It was generally accepted that the service and the government would wish to see such commercial activities as are compatible with the site's historic value and national park status, rather than have it as a financial liability.[268]

Accordingly, upon acquiring the Quarantine Station at North Head, the service made a concerted attempt to lease the site. Sharon Sullivan, manager of the Central Region from 1986, later recalled:

> We spent about four years trying to lease the Quarantine Station. That was the first attempt to do that and we did very good work on it. But this and that happened and it didn't get leased at that time.[269]

However the service did commence 'a major conservation program for the station buildings, structures, grounds and siteworks' in 1985, with assistance from the Commonwealth Community Employment Program and some funding from the NSW Heritage Council.[270] Sullivan considered this to be 'emergency work':

> We ran a really good program of employing and training unemployed people. And we did get some money with the handover of the Quarantine Station so we could employ some guides. So we did actually build up at the Quarantine Station quite a good interpretation program and general basic maintenance and so on and some good practices. We gradually worked away at doing things like getting all the European engravings recorded and stuff. Quarantine Station really did work nicely although we had some problems with it. The main issue was long-term conservation because there just wasn't enough money to maintain it. The services were a hundred years old and a total mess … [there are] things that are a nightmare at historic sites [which] really don't have anything to do with the nice bits of history, like just the plumbing and the sewerage and the wiring and the termites and all of that stuff. So that was a really big job and that's why we were trying to lease it out and get somebody to put some capital into that.[271]

Planning for the future

By March 1988, a conservation plan for the station had been finalised. It identified the major planning concern for the site to be:

> How best to conserve the valuable historic fabric and associations of the Quarantine Station site while meeting the needs of public use and the interpretation/conservation goals of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.[272]

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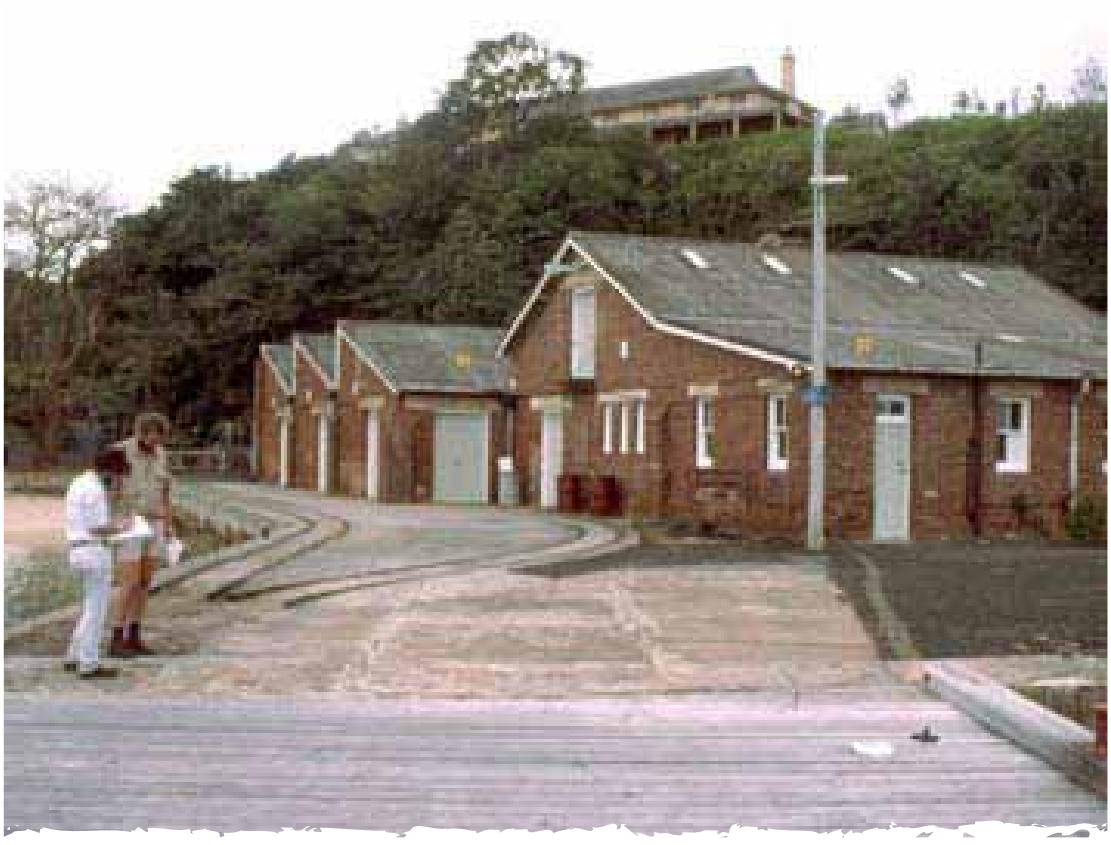
267 GJ Armstrong, 'Sydney Harbour National Park: Discussion Paper on Future Management of the Quarantine Station', (NPWS: unpublished, August 1983), cited in Werksman, p104
268 GJ Armstrong, memo to NPWS Director, 22 December 1983, cited in Werksman, p101
269 Sullivan interview
270 *North Head Quarantine Station: Conservation Management* Plan (2000), p89
271 Sullivan interview
272 *Quarantine Station conservation plan* (1988), p2

A tour group at the Quarantine Station following NPWS acquisition in 1984 (Allan Hedges)



The Quarantine Station luggage sheds, 1995 (DECC)

The plan acknowledged the community demand for the site to be accessible to the public with a key feature being 'the promotion of the Quarantine Station as a major tourist destination'.[273] Accordingly, it considered interpretation to be 'the most appropriate use for the station'. In contrast, recreational uses including golf courses, swimming pools and playing fields were considered to be inappropriate, as they 'would draw attention from and impact on the significance of the site'.[274]

Ultimately, the plan recommended 'conservation as an historic place':

> This would provide for adaptation and interpretation as a significant tourist attraction with additional uses such as a seminar and training centre, a venue for educational programmes and NPWS management with support facilities for visitors and staff.[275]

A second conservation plan was developed in 1992, in which NPWS Director W.J. Gillooly described the Quarantine Station as 'a place of tremendous and quite complex heritage value.'[276] Although the site was still being managed by the NPWS, including conservation works, guided tours and a conference centre,[277] it was never opened for public access and was only accessible via guided tours.

The second conservation plan, developed by NPWS employees rather than consultants, brought adaptive re-use through commercial operators a step closer:

> The conservation plan presents a structure which allows the service to lease the Quarantine Station to one or more commercial operators. The revenue from leasing, and active use of the buildings and grounds will ensure the place's conservation. The service has taken the initiative in identifying opportunities for sensitive, commercially viable development which does not compromise the abundant cultural heritage values of the Quarantine Station.[278]

It considered the most appropriate uses to be those which 'are compatible with the interpretation of the place, are generally available to the public and do not require intervention with significant fabric.'[279] But again, finding the funds to ensure the conservation of the station and its buildings was a primary concern:

> The service needs to find uses for the Quarantine Station which will enable it to generate some or all or the revenue required for its conservation.[280]

The plan's recommendations were made in accordance with the guidelines of the Burra Charter, which specified that uses of an historic place 'should be both feasible and compatible.'[281]

Public resistance to commercial leases

It was to be more than a decade after the publication of the second conservation management plan before the site was leased to a commercial operator. The proposal was highly contested and politically sensitive and the service received many public submissions in response to the 1992 plan. Most of them were critical of what was seen as a purely financially driven proposal, and demanded the site be opened to the public, rather

273 *Quarantine Station conservation plan* (1988), p44
274 *Quarantine Station conservation plan* (1988), p49
275 *Quarantine Station conservation plan* (1988), p1
276 WJ Gillooly, Foreword, *Sydney Harbour National Park: Quarantine Station conservation plan* (NPWS: Sydney, 1992)
277 *Quarantine Station conservation plan* (1992), p4
278 *Quarantine Station conservation plan* (1992), pvi
279 *Quarantine Station conservation plan* (1992), pv
280 *Quarantine Station conservation plan* (1992), p56
281 *Quarantine Station conservation plan* (1992), p57

than privatised for the use of hotel patrons. Robert Pauling, for the Manly Warringah and Pittwater Historical Society, summed up the views of many detractors when he wrote that 'the site is too important to entrust to private enterprise'.[282]

Neville Burkett, working in the Central Region, recalls the difficulty of negotiating with Quarantine Station interest groups:

> I've had a lot of involvement with the Friends of the Quarantine Station. Yes, I was an employee of the government and my job was to implement that government policy. And I accepted that, I agreed generally with the policy and I didn't have any personal problem with that. But trying to present that policy to a group of hostile residents is difficult, very difficult. And trying to let them see the benefits that we'd identified. We understood that they'd identified a whole lot of problems which we had to face in doing it, to make sure that the conservation outcomes were received. But they also had problems about gentrification of the place and increased use is going to lead to what one might call gentrification just by letting more people into it …
>
> I don't think there is an alternative, I don't think those sorts of places can be locked up and only shown to a very small number of people who won't impact on the ambience of the place as it is at the moment. But the Quarantine Station has a very long history of change and for lots of periods it was a very bustling place, there were lots of people there. And so the way you see it today no way reflects the way it was used …
>
> I think you can preserve that presence and allow more people to see the place. And I think that's really important, that you can increase public visitation because the public demand to see it. I mean there are limits; you certainly wouldn't allow a million people in there a year because that would just entirely overwhelm the historic heritage and the natural heritage. I mean the Quarantine Station's a very difficult site because it's got an endangered population of bandicoots, it's got the penguins, and the historic heritage values. And they don't necessarily all coincide. You know if you increase public use you do put more pressure on the bandicoots, there's no doubt about that. But whether it's an acceptable pressure is what you have to work out. And also have mechanisms in place so that if it does become obvious that something's happening – whether it's historic heritage or natural heritage – that you can change the operation of the place to lessen those impacts.[283]

In the late 1990s work began on a third conservation management plan. During this time, substantial conservation and stabilisation works at the station and other prominent sites in Sydney Harbour National Park were funded through the NPWS HAMP system. In the preparation of the third plan, the lobbying by a Manly residential interest group and the National Trust against the leasing of the site posed a major challenge.

Denis Gojak recalls:

> And so we had to manage the whole context of that issue, from making sure that historic heritage issues were adequately assessed and not covered over, making sure that the leasing process took account of that, and making sure that the service, if it got caught up with anything, certainly wouldn't be picked apart because it was seen as doing a rush job or a deliberate botch job on preparing its conservation management plans and its own guidelines – so that we weren't sort of trying to pull a swifty on anyone, and that it was all clear and above board. So that took *a lot* of my time in probably the year or two before I left in about '98 and '99.[284]

The result was an extensive conservation management plan, totalling six volumes, finalised in 2000 and developed in negotiation with key interest groups.[285]

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282 Cited in *North Head Quarantine Station: conservation management plan* (2000), Appendix C, p5
283 Burkett interview
284 Gojak interview
285 *North Head Quarantine Station: conservation management plan* (2000), p270

In 2000, following four years of negotiation, a conditional agreement to lease the Quarantine Station precinct to Mawland Hotel Management was announced.[286] The lease would be for a period of 45 years and would be subject to a full environmental impact statement (EIS).[287] The conservation management plan recommended that such a lease only be entered into on three conditions:

- the demonstrated ability of the lessee to manage the heritage values of the station
- any deliberate action adversely affecting the natural or cultural values of the place would result in the review and possibly even the termination of the lease
- under no circumstances should the lessee be allowed to upgrade the standard of accommodation originally agreed.[288]

In 2003, the NPWS published its proposal for the station's conservation and adaptive re-use:

> The NSW Minister for the Environment and Mawland Hotel Management Pty Ltd are the co-proponents for the activity. The co-proponents propose to adapt and re-use the Quarantine Station site for cultural tourism purposes and are seeking a 21-year planning approval. The proposed uses include: a visitor centre and museum; guided tours; a restaurant; accommodation; functions and conferences; and an environmental and cultural studies centre. The proposal involves physical changes to the site, including the buildings and the landscape. It also includes an expansion in visitor numbers from the current 30,000 to approximately 100,000 per year.[289]

The NPWS recommended 'that the activity should be approved subject to conditions',[290] and were careful to highlight that this decision had been reached only after a detailed scrutiny of the proposal and its implications for the natural and cultural heritage of the site, and community values:

> The assessment of the proposal has been a complex and challenging process. The Quarantine Station is of outstanding national significance and all elements and layers of the site have value. The assessment process has been guided by the provisions of the conservation management plans for the site and the outcomes of the Commission of Inquiry (COI). It has also been informed by the public submissions, the majority of which raised objections to the proposal or various aspects of it. The volume of public submission, either on EIS or to the COI, are a reflection of the substantial level of community interest in future management and development of the site that has existed for many years. [291]

In 2006, more than two decades after the possibility of commercially driven adaptive re-use was first mooted by the service, the Quarantine Station was finally leased to Mawland Quarantine Station Pty Ltd for conservation and adaptive re-use. When reopened in 2008, the site offered a restaurant, accommodation, function and conference facilities, tours and ghost tours, a spa, and 'immersion theatre' in which actors recreated past experiences at the station in the buildings in which they occurred.[292]

Issues with adaptive re-use

The management of the Quarantine Station highlights a number of general elements of NPWS management of historic places. The decision to develop the site for adaptive re-use demonstrates the range of management options being considered by park

286 *North head Quarantine Station: conservation management plan* (2000), p254
287 *North head Quarantine Station: conservation management plan* (2000), p254
288 *North head Quarantine Station: conservation management plan* (2000), p255
289 *North Head Quarantine Station conservation and adaptive re-use proposal: Clause 243 report under Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, Volume 1* (DEC: unpublished, 2003), pvii
290 *North Head Quarantine Station conservation and adaptive re-use proposal,* pviii
291 *North Head Quarantine Station Conservation and Adaptive Re-use Proposal,* pvii
292 'Q Station: Sydney Harbour National Park', http://www.qstation.com.au/, accessed 14 February 2008

managers across the park system during the early 1980s. However the fact that it took over 20 years before the site was leased to a commercial operator demonstrates the extent of planning and negotiation required to develop a viable re-use strategy for historic places within the park system, and reflects the strong public opposition to leasing.

Ultimately however, the decision to lease the station to a private company for an extended period of time is indicative of the major financial constraints on the service when it comes to managing certain high-maintenance historic places. Geoff Ashley, who was critical of the decision to lease the site, acknowledged that the service had never had sufficient resources to manage it effectively:

> I've made no bones of the fact that I personally believe that in the big picture the government shouldn't have leased the site, it should be National Parks, it should've had the resources – it gets back to the role of National Parks to manage the site themselves …
>
> It's a flagship site, of national significance and would've been a great example of the living cultural landscape approach that I think is relevant to National Parks. Having said that, I think that the [private] scheme and what they're doing within the constraints of leasing the site are as good as you can get … But it's a good example of the test of what the role of National Parks is, and when it came to it, they've fallen at the hurdle of … really managing that site … The people who were managing it, if they were given the resource, they could do a very good job there.[293]

This is the most significant element in the management of the Quarantine Station, and one which featured prominently for the 20 years the service managed the complex directly.

The debates over the station demonstrate the extent of public opposition to the concept of private interests benefiting from publicly owned space. In the case of the Royal National Park huts, the private users had been individuals and family groups who had previously enjoyed exclusive access to huts situated on publicly owned park land. In the case of the Quarantine Station, the thought that a company could financially profit from the land, was equally as offensive as the suggestion that the general public might be excluded from its use. As Felicity Pulman of Balgowlah wrote, 'why should a private company benefit financially from one of this state's most important resources …?'[294]

The Quarantine hospital building in 2007. The hospital was rebuilt by NPWS in the early 2000s following destruction by fire (Caroline Lawrance, DECC)

293 Ashley interview
294 Cited in *North Head Quarantine Station: conservation management plan* (2000), p4

3.4 Kosciuszko huts

A large number of huts and hut remains are scattered through the alpine and subalpine landscapes of Kosciuszko[295] National Park. Most of these were constructed by pastoralists and miners prior to the area's reservation as a state park in 1944, while some are associated with the Snowy Mountains Scheme of the 1950s. In his 1993 study of the huts, Geoff Ashley summarised their significance:

> As a group, the 90 or so intact huts in Kosciuszko National Park are of national significance. Many are rare examples of vernacular construction invoking cultural images of sometimes legendary proportions, based upon human endurance in an inhospitable environment. The huts provide the only remaining physical evidence of former landuse patterns, such as sheep and cattle grazing, that were phased out primarily for environmental reasons between the 1940s and 1960s.[296]

The Kosciuszko huts often act as a refuge in winter for cross country skiers (DECC)

The following discussion of NPWS management of the Kosciuszko huts highlights a contrast between the service's attitude to them over the years and its attitude to the huts in Royal National Park. In Kosciuszko the service recognised the important cultural values of the remaining pastoral huts, which had continuing uses as shelters for recreational park users. It officially advocated the retention of the huts, rather than their demolition – although many individual staff members were keen to see them removed – and even raised the possibility, from as early as the 1980s, of rebuilding damaged huts.

The distinction between the two approaches to the management of these heritage structures which shared many characteristics is indicative of a lack of consistency in NPWS heritage policies, and highlights the potential for contemporary uses of historic places – in this case recreational shelter – to have an influence in determining their future.

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295 Until the 1990s, the name of the park and mountain were spelt without the 'z'. In this publication the updated form is used, including for older references to the park

296 Geoff Ashley, *National Parks and Wildlife Service huts study: part C: Kosciuszko National Park huts review* (NPWS: Sydney, 1993), p1

Policy development

Ashley suggests that the total number of huts that have existed at various times in the area which now constitutes Kosciuszko National Park was probably more than 400.[297] In 1993, in addition to the 90 known intact huts which remained, Ashley identified another 150 huts or remains of huts scattered through the park. In 1967, Kosciuszko State Park was re-dedicated as a national park and its management transferred to the NPWS. Since this time, according to Ashley, most of the huts have 'had a new use as recreation shelters.'[298]

In 1971, shortly after the formation of the national park, the Kosciuszko Huts Association (KHA) was formed to 'raise public interest in the maintenance of the sites'.[299] The group consisted mainly of members of skiing and bushwalking clubs, who had been invited to discussions about the future management of the huts by park superintendent, Neville Gare. Geoff Ashley interprets this as evidence that, rather than a policy of demolition as in Royal National Park, 'the NPWS had recognised the value of the huts and sought support for their management' within only a few years of assuming management of the park.[300]

In the first plan of management for the national park, finalised in 1974, it was suggested that most of the huts would be preserved:

> A continuing review will be made of non-conforming structures, with the aim of progressive removal. This review will take into consideration the cultural and historical value of any structures proposed for removal. Instances of such structures include …
>
> Old Stockman's Huts, except where they are to be retained for some Park purpose such as the Survival Hut System organised through the Kosciuszko Huts Association or for historical reasons (most will fall into these categories).[301]

The plan was vague on the proportion of huts which would be retained, as well as the methods for determining either retention or removal. But it did highlight the contribution the service expected of the KHA and, in particular, the extent to which the service relied on members of the group for working management of many of the huts.

The 1982 plan of management was more careful to specify both the future use of huts and the process for determining their status. In particular, it categorised the huts into three different management uses, according to their 'historic values':

> Category A – Structures of outstanding historic value managed to protect these values above all others
>
> Category B – Structures of historic interest managed for shelter and/or storage
>
> Category C – Structures identified in this plan as ruins will only be subject to reconstruction, restoration or maintenance if it is primarily to achieve historic conservation objectives, and the historic authenticity of the structure is maintained.[302]

These categories were based on those identified by Michael Pearson in his 1980 review of the historic and architectural values of the huts.[303] Ashley suggested that 'it is probable that these various lists and categories arose from a desire to identify a rational sample of huts to

297 Ashley, *Kosciuszko National Park huts review* (1993), p2
298 Ashley, *Kosciuszko National Park huts review* (1993), p3
299 Zilber (2001), p73
300 Ashley, *Kosciuszko National Park huts review* (1993), p13
301 *Kosciuszko National Park plan of management* (NPWS: Sydney 1974) p38
302 *Kosciuszko National Park plan of management* (NPWS: Sydney, 1982), p33
303 Cited in Ashley (1993), p13

be retained in the face of the twin pressures of a perceived impact on natural environmental values and the need to rationally allocate the scarce staff and financial resources available for hut conservation.'[304]

The integral role of the KHA was also highlighted in the 1982 plan of management:

> The valuable work of the Kosciuszko Huts Association in maintaining and restoring historic huts is recognised and it is expected that this will continue. Even in those cases where the service may exercise direct responsibility for management of any hut the expertise of Kosciuszko Huts Association volunteers will be substantially involved.[305]

The 1982 plan specified that management of the huts would concentrate on continuing their role as sites of shelter, rather than providing more general accommodation, since this would require an upgrade which 'would destroy their character and would be in conflict with other objectives.'[306]

The future of damaged huts

An appendix to the 1982 plan listed all the huts and ruins within the park, and summarised the intended management strategy for each.[307] The plan also specified that a management brief for each individual hut would be developed, which would articulate, among other elements, 'replacement in the event of destruction or damage by any means.'[308] The suggestion that huts might be replaced or reconstructed was an important – and new – inclusion in the 1982 management plan. Although the process for determining whether replacement was appropriate for individual huts was not defined, it represented a clear dedication on the part of the service to maintaining huts throughout the park. Importantly, 'historic preservation' was listed as one of the three functions which must be served by the re-construction of a hut.[309]

In 1988 a revised plan of management was published. Ashley argues that it was 'based on information compiled in 1982 that is inaccurate, in relation to the physical and management status of many huts, and it does not reflect current conservation planning practice'.[310] It remained vague on both the methods for determining historical significance, and policies for rebuilding huts.[311] Consequently, the management strategy for the huts changed very little during the 1980s.

In 1990, a conservation study into one of the Kosciuszko huts, Wheelers Hut, indicated that despite existing policies, the service remained reluctant to replace huts which had been largely destroyed. It found that, since there were no other shelter facilities within eight to ten kilometres of the hut:

> The shelter value for Wheelers Hut is high and consideration should be given to the provision of shelter in the area if this hut were to be destroyed accidentally … [However] allowance should not be made for reconstruction if the building is not predominantly intact. This includes destruction by fire.[312]

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304 Ashley (1993), p14
305 *Kosciuszko National Park plan of management* (1982), p33
306 *Kosciuszko National Park plan of management* (1982), p33
307 *Kosciuszko National Park plan of management* (1982), pp139–142
308 *Kosciuszko National Park plan of management* (1982), p34
309 Hut Policy Discussion Paper (NPWS: unpublished, c1980), cited in Werksman (2002), pp38–39
310 Ashley (1993), p20
311 *Kosciuszko National Park plan of management* (1988), pp34-36
312 *Wheelers Hut conservation study* (1990), cited in Werksman, p25

Werksman pointed out that such a policy, in which historic values guided only two of the seven criteria for assessing the replacement value, 'made it relatively simple to remove a hut without the expectation of rebuilding.'[313] Despite the possibilities flagged in the various plans of management, a 2005 study found that 'prior to the 2003 fires, lost huts were not rebuilt if destroyed'.[314] Ashley reflected in 2005 that since his study in 1992, 'the numbers have been reduced by about a third [from bushfires and other accidental fires]'.[315]

Pig Gully was a miner's hut built near Kiandra in the 1920s. This is what remained in 1988. (Geoff Ashley, DECC)

Contested policies

As was the case regarding the management of historic heritage elsewhere in the park system, champions of the huts in Kosciuszko National Park faced opposition from staff in other parts of the service who valued the natural landscape above historic heritage. Hence the president of the KHA suggested in 1978 that 'the range of opinion of Kosciuszko huts is almost as wide within the service as it is among the various user groups.'[316]

A prominent cause of opposition to the retention of the huts – and an argument we have seen used in relation to other historic sites throughout the NSW park system – was the supposed inappropriateness of huts to the perceived wilderness value of Kosciuszko National Park. A 1983–84 report into the Whites River corridor, for example, expressed concern that the huts attracted people to the area who otherwise might not have used the corridor, thereby placing extra pressure on wilderness areas.[317]

313 Werksman (2002), p25
314 *Kosciuszko National Park: huts conservation strategy* [draft] (Godden Mackay Logan for DEC: Sydney, 2005), p188
315 Ashley interview
316 Pieter Arriens, 'Kosciuszko Huts and Wilderness Values: a personal view' cited in Werksman, p36
317 J Whitaker, 'The Whites River Report' (NPWS: June, 1984), cited in Werksman, p24

Sharon Sullivan summarised the myriad of issues facing park managers on the question of the Kosciuszko huts:

> People were really intent on pulling them down because they didn't want them in those wilderness areas … Not only an intrusion on the natural landscape but … they were seen as a major management problem because they attracted people. A lot of them were originally pastoral huts … some of them were built for recreation but they attracted people to them for shelter etcetera so that meant they created the management problem as far as parks was concerned because they attracted people in difficult weather circumstances to go places where they would not normally have gone. And the argument was they go looking for this hut and they're not properly equipped because they think they're going to camp in the hut and they can't find the hut so they die. So that was the occupational health and safety argument. Then there was the other argument about 'this is bringing more people than we want to these fragile alpine areas'. And the third argument was 'they're falling down anyway and we don't want to put any resources into fixing them'. And the fourth argument … and this is really important – they were associated with a period in the park's history which people saw as really just bad. That is, when the graziers had been there and ruined everything so we should get rid of this because this keeps that period alive.[318]

The last argument was a major source of discontent among local community members with a link to the pastoral huts, who felt that they had been excluded from the park and that their history within the park 'had disappeared or been demonised.'[319]

Which history to preserve?

In the preparation of conservation management plans throughout the 1980s and '90s, the service's heritage staff and consultants were largely guided by the principles of the Burra Charter. But the technicalities of reconstructing damaged huts raised important questions about which element of history was being preserved through such actions. In a debate over re-cladding a wall of a hut whose status as a 'ruin' was contested by consultant architects, Ashley highlighted the importance of maintaining the historical integrity of the site:

> Sometimes it seems that the sense of history and character of age that the huts in Kosciuszko can provide is lost through over-reconstruction which makes it difficult to tell the age and evidence of age that these huts can provide.[320]

In the same year, a debate emerged in the KHA newsletter following the suggestion by Klaus Hueneke that the huts should be modified in the interests of current use. Sue Feary compared his suggestion to 'genetic engineering', arguing that 'if we keep changing the huts we are eventually left, not with a structure that tells us about grazing, mining or early recreation, but with someone's re-creation'. Matthew Higgins, an NPWS consultant, agreed:

> It is true that many places have enhanced significance because of the way that they have been used for different purposes, and because of the adaptations made in the past as a result of these different uses. But this doesn't necessarily give us the right to go on making our own changes to structures simply as we see fit … It is because the processes that created the huts … have all now ceased in Kosciuszko that the huts have particular significance. And many of the changes cited by Klaus were made during, or as a result of, these processes, and so have a significance greater than our desire to, say, increase the sleeping space of a particular hut.[321]

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318 Sullivan interview
319 Sharon Sullivan, notes to author, May 2008
320 Ashley, Memo: Kosciuszko NP Gooandra Homestead Conservation Policy, 12 October 1992, cited in Werksman, pp29–30
321 *Kosciuszko Huts Association Newsletter* (no 77, winter 1992) cited in Werksman, p40

Witses Hut on the edge of the Blanket Plain north of Kiandra. The hut was built in 1952 from slabs of mountain ash recovered from a nearby 1880s homestead (K Markwort, DECC)

In the recommendations from his 1992 huts study, Geoff Ashley highlighted the need for the Burra Charter to be more closely followed in all aspects of managing the Kosciuszko huts. He suggested that not everyone involved in the management and conservation of huts was familiar with the charter's principles, and not everyone was making conservation decisions based on the cultural significance of the buildings. He recommended:

> 4.1 Simplified Burra Charter guidelines be prepared by Cultural Heritage Conservation Division in consultation with interested and relevant NPWS staff and outside organisations such as the KHA for the preparation of conservation studies for huts in Kosciuszko National Park.[322]

He also recommended that research be conducted into a number of elements of the huts' history to guide the development of more relevant and effective management plans.[323]

Rebuilding the huts

Alistair Henchman, now director of DECC's Southern Branch, suggests that the service's attitude to the management of the Kosciuszko huts has shifted substantially since the 1970s:

> Hut management is a classic thing where you see changing attitudes towards historic heritage management, going from a focus on fabric and being totally concerned about fabric to one now where we're seeing it more as the cultural value of the place. In some cases fabric is very significant but it's not *everything*. That evolution has been happening within the agency among both specialists and the generic managers, the rangers. Some of our rangers have been involved in huts management for 20 or 30 years and they've evolved their thinking about it. And the thinking in KHA has also evolved over that time.

Partly, this has been governed by the realities of the gradual deterioration in the condition of the huts, and partly by the disappearance of a large proportion of huts which have not been replaced in accordance with NPWS policy. But it also reflects growing recognition and understanding among service staff of the cultural landscape in which the huts exist.

322 Ashley (1993), p22
323 Ashley (1993), p22

Henchman and Ashley agree that the 2003 bushfires, in which 19 huts were either damaged or completely destroyed,[324] was the turning point in management attitude towards rebuilding the huts. The fires were a stark reminder of the vulnerability of the huts. Shifts in international heritage practice, in which social value was given equal weight with historical or architectural value, has also led the service to look more favourably on rebuilding lost huts.

The NPWS contracted heritage consultants Godden Mackay Logan to prepare a *Kosciuszko National Park huts conservation strategy* to help the service with its options following the 2003 fires. Geoff Ashley, in his new role as a consultant for Godden Mackay Logan, was involved in the preparation of the report. Endorsed in 2006, the strategy advocated a greater recognition of the value of the huts in their broader context, rather than simply their historic value as individual sites:

> At the core of the management of the huts in Kosciuszko National Park is the need to retain the significance of the huts as a collection. Retaining the significance of the collection of huts provides for tailoring policy and priority setting to suit the management of the collection as a whole.[325]

It cited 1999 revisions to the Burra Charter, which 'shifted the emphasis from fabric to be more inclusive of social values, associations, meanings and use (intangible aspects of place), as well as fabric', to argue for the rebuilding of some destroyed huts.[326] In particular, it was seen that those huts which had 'social or cultural landscape values' could retain those values when rebuilt:

> This project concludes that where damage occurs but fabric is retained, all values may be retained in so far as the fabric demonstrates those values.
>
> Where complete destruction of a hut occurs, aesthetic and historic values that are demonstrated by the fabric are lost, whereas social and cultural landscape values may be retained for some time.[327]

Ashley draws attention to the link between this outlook and that expressed in his early (1992) report, which recognised that the huts were part of 'the overall environment of the park':[328]

> Practically, that 1992 report has really born fruit with this new study. The huts that were burnt down in the 2003 fires, combined with the plan of management review, really pushed the need for making some decisions, really looking at the thing. Because ultimately, if the huts weren't rebuilt, which had been their policy, they would all disappear over time; that was definitely the way it was going ... So there was a great impetus to do the study but it built on that earlier work. I suppose particularly the process has changed and I think this reflects the change in [NPWS] generally to be much more consultative. The key finding in our report was that the social value exists even when the huts are lost, to some extent, but not forever. One of the key findings was the social connections associated with community, not just the pastoralist families but also people who have skied, walked, bushwalked, ridden bicycles there for 30 years have also got strong connections and those associations are ongoing ... But there's ongoing use that in fact reflects the traditional use of the huts – minor differences, but effectively the same sort of use. So we've built on that and we're really pushing, I suppose, a paradigm shift that conserving the huts is not something that's just preserving relics, it's actually managing an ongoing use.[329]

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324 *Kosciuszko National Park hut rebuilding/reconstruction report* (DECC: unpublished, 2007–08)
325 *Kosciuszko National Park: huts conservation strategy* [draft] (2005) p257
326 *Kosciuszko National Park: huts conservation strategy* [draft] (2005), p188
327 *Kosciuszko National Park: huts conservation strategy* [draft] (2005), p189
328 Ashley (1993), p2
329 Ashley interview

The NPWS supported the recommendations of the Godden Mackay Logan report and began rebuilding some of the damaged and destroyed huts in 2007. The guidelines for hut reconstruction were designed to retain the heritage significance of the original structures while using modern materials and methods of construction:

> Designs have been developed for new huts that look similar and reflect significant elements of the old hut but include modern fixings and more robust footings. The new hut designs have been modified to meet category 2 wind and snow loading, to meet Australian standards as well as other building codes while still retaining the look and significance of the old hut. The design of the huts aims to produce structures that will require minimal maintenance so as not to impede the conservation of the remaining 64 huts in [Kosciuszko National Park].[330]

The NPWS was also careful to include the KHA and individuals with a connection to the huts in the rebuilding process, as a way of ensuring continuity of their social significance. Consequently, when Broken Dam Hut was rebuilt during late 2007:

> KHA donated timber for the rebuilding of Broken Dam Hut and provided labour for this and other huts. Descendants of the families who built and used the huts were also involved in the designing and volunteered labour. The involvement of families and users was a significant part of the project as a way of continuing their social connection. Meetings were held on site involving NPWS, KHA, families and a structural engineer to discuss where to build the new hut and the design.[331]

Commenting on the hut reconstruction, DECC South West Slopes Regional Manager Steve Horsley demonstrated an understanding of the complexities of heritage reconstruction and of the value of the huts to the cultural landscape of the Kosciuszko National Park:

> We are not going to pretend that the new structures are copies or faithful reconstructions because we can't replace exactly what was gone but we can go close and continue a heritage tradition that is dear to many people in the mountains and beyond.[332]

Conclusions

During the first few decades of the NPWS, the management approaches to the huts in Kosciuszko National Park and Royal National Park were very different. Although the managers of Kosciuszko did not have a policy of demolition, the ultimate result of their policy would have been the same as that at Royal. Through not rebuilding destroyed or severely damaged huts, all historic huts would eventually have disappeared from the NSW high-country landscape.

The realisation of this, together with important changes to the Burra Charter, enabled the service to develop a policy which would see the historical and social values of the Kosciuszko huts maintained, even when the fabric had been destroyed. This represented a major step in heritage practice by the service, and reflects the continued preparedness of NPWS heritage and field staff to be guided by the Burra Charter.

The case study of the Kosciuszko huts also demonstrates the importance of engaging community and key stakeholders when making decisions about the management of historic places. Although the relationship was not always harmonious, the involvement of the KHA in the management of many Kosciuszko huts is an example of a successful working relationship between NPWS and a community group.

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330 *Kosciuszko National Park Hut Rebuilding/Reconstruction Report 07–08*
331 *Kosciuszko National Park hut rebuilding/reconstruction report 07–08*
332 'Plans to rebuild Kosciuszko historic huts on the table', NPWS Media Release, 10 September 2007

Delaney's hut in 1970. The hut was built in the early years of the twentieth century. (DECC)

Delaney's hut, destroyed by bushfire in 2003 (Andy Spate, DECC)

The rebuilt Delaney's Hut in 2007 (Jo Caldwell, DECC)

In recognition of the role played by KHA, the park's hut conservation strategy recommended that a formal agreement between that group and the NPWS be developed:

> The KHA has been an integral part of hut management for over 30 years. It currently has over 500 members. While the working relationship between the NPWS and KHA is good, there is, nevertheless, a pressing need for a formal agreement that would be of strategic value for both of the organisations. There is a need to formalise volunteer relationships within the context of increasing risks of litigation and the pressure on individuals' ability to contribute voluntary time.
>
> Ideally, the KHA should be recognised as an 'umbrella' body with associated groups as caretakers working under that umbrella, but direct agreements between associated groups and the NPWS should also be provided for. In having this role there is a clear responsibility on the KHA to respect associated communities and to conserve all the values of the huts, not just the physical fabric.[333]

The NPWS is also making progress in improving its relationship with previously alienated community stakeholders – both Aboriginal and settler Australians. The 2006 Kosciuszko National Park plan of management marked a milestone in this process, acknowledging 'the social history, the current social significance, and the ongoing links which these people have to the land.'[334]

Jane Lennon, who worked with Sharon Sullivan on the statement of values for that plan, says that:

> … partnerships with local communities, families and individuals with strong connections to places not only acknowledge the legitimacy and authenticity of their histories, they also provide the best means of ensuring that the diversity of cultural values associated with the park survive.[335]

333 *Kosciuszko National Park: huts conservation strategy* [draft] (2005) p163

334 Sharon Sullivan notes to author, May 2008; *Kosciuszko National Park plan of management* (DEC: Sydney, 2006)

335 Jane Lennon, 'The Evolution of Landscape Conservation in Australia: Reflections on the Relationship of Nature and Culture' in Jessica Brown, Nora Mitchell and Michael Beresford (eds.) *The protected landscape approach linking nature culture and community,* (IUCN: Gland and Cambridge, 2005), p211

Conclusions

This publication has explored the management by the NPWS of its historic heritage places and landscapes through the eyes of a small number of staff. This heritage is all located within the NSW park system and yet is extraordinarily diverse. Dispersed across the state, these landscapes, places and items represent different types of heritage, different periods of time, different themes of the state's history, and different levels of heritage significance.

For most of the period covered by this history, there was no single policy or defined process for managing this collection. Some places were specifically protected as historic sites while, particularly from the 1980s, many more have been conserved as part of the broader landscape of the reserves in which they exist.

The history of the management of historic heritage within the park system tells of the challenges which confronted many service staff over the years.

Early heritage specialists not only pioneered the service's approach to historic heritage, but as some of the country's first and most prominent cultural heritage practitioners, they helped to conceive and define cultural heritage practices and policies in Australia more generally. As the sole heritage professionals in an organisation otherwise populated by nature conservation staff, Sharon Sullivan and Michael Pearson were initially challenged by a culture which questioned the allocation of tight resources to historic heritage conservation in national parks.

The cultural heritage education and training for rangers initiated by Sullivan and Pearson were the first steps towards creating an organisational culture where historic heritage places might not be seen as a threat to national park 'wilderness' values. But although we see a gradually increasing appreciation of the service's historic assets, the work of later heritage specialists in the 1980s and '90s was no less challenging.

Geoff Ashley, Denis Gojak and Joan Kent continued to face underfunding for heritage maintenance, occasional lack of enthusiasm for historic heritage by park managers, and inconsistencies within service policies regarding historic heritage conservation. Ultimately however, most of the park system's historic heritage did survive, and this was due largely to the sheer hard work and dedication to heritage principles demonstrated by these heritage specialists and their supportive colleagues in the field, of whom Neville Burkett, Eric Claussen, Ross McDonnell and Alistair Henchman are just a few.

The memories and observations of the former and current NPWS employees interviewed for this study have highlighted the conflicted history of historic heritage conservation in the state's park system. The conservation and protection of historic heritage was seen by some to compete with the service's responsibilities for the natural heritage of the parks, and specialist heritage staff consequently recalled some conflicts with colleagues in the field.

But the non-supporters of historic heritage in the reserve system increasingly became a minority, and this history also relates many of the successful cooperative ventures between staff with different areas of expertise and interests. For most NPWS field staff, historic heritage was not disliked or unappreciated, but was seen as a drain on limited funding which could otherwise be spent on natural resources. The experiences of the

rangers, architects and senior managers interviewed here attests to the substantial contribution many non-heritage field staff have made to the preservation and maintenance of the service's historic heritage.

Indeed, many innovative approaches to historic heritage management emerged out of an attempt by those with very limited resources and funding to do what they could for keeping historic heritage places. The use of labour funded by government employment programs, the research on sites made possible by working cooperatively with universities to provide sites for student archaeological excavation training, and the use of heritage funding to train field staff in heritage conservation practices are just a few examples of this innovative thinking, replicated in many ways throughout the state over the decades.

We have also seen that this is not the story of an organisation working in isolation. The service's heritage practices and principles were shaped by external factors such as State and Commonwealth heritage legislation, shifts in community attitudes, public pressures and the growing status and influence of Australia's Burra Charter. Over the period covered in this history, the service's responsibilities for historic heritage conservation have increased and become more defined with the passage of heritage legislation that required the service to create and maintain its own heritage lists, and adopt a more structured approach to historic heritage conservation and maintenance.

Ultimately however, the increasing education of park managers in ways of managing historic heritage and of the value in adopting a cultural landscapes approach, the funding of heritage maintenance programs, and the flexibility of the service in adopting management plans which vary from adaptive re-use to, more recently, completely rebuilding damaged historic structures, all demonstrate the substantial advances made by the agency. Together with improvements by the service in other areas, such as community consultation, and a continued commitment to Burra Charter principles, we have seen the service continuing, to take a lead in heritage practice across New South Wales.

Afterword

In 2000, the historic and Aboriginal heritage specialists who had previously constituted the Aboriginal Heritage Division and Cultural Heritage Services Division were integrated into the newly formed Cultural Heritage Division (CHD) of NPWS.[336] The new division bought together for the first time cultural heritage research, policy and programs, information systems, and regionally based Aboriginal heritage staff.

In 2003, when the NPWS was integrated into the new Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), CHD sat alongside the Parks and Wildlife Division (inheritor of NPWS on-park functions) as one of seven major divisions in the department. The role of director CHD was elevated to executive director, and made part of the new department's senior executive team.

The CHD was created as part of a major restructure of the NPWS implemented in 1999 and 2000. But the idea of re-integrating Aboriginal and historic heritage functions into a single division had emerged earlier out of *Visions for the new millenium,* a major review of the role and future of the NPWS – conducted largely by external stakeholders – commissioned in the service's thirtieth year (1997).

The report by the *Visions* steering committee argued that bringing together the Aboriginal and historic heritage functions of the NPWS would 'foster a more inclusive approach to Australia's cultural heritage and the interpretation of the stories in our landscapes'.[337] Underpinned by this integration of historic and Aboriginal heritage, the creation of CHD was also designed to strengthen the cultural heritage capacities of the service, by creating a division that was completely separate to, and independent from, the rest of NPWS. It can be seen as an attempt to lift cultural heritage from its marginal status, so that it was no longer a minority voice within an agency whose main mission would always be nature conservation.

The creation of CHD instituted a shift in the service's approach to cultural heritage. The division itself subsequently took the lead in researching and disseminating new cultural heritage methodologies, practices and policies, driving a shift within the cultural heritage approach of the service more generally. Although the extent to which the recommendations of *Visions* were formally implemented by NPWS management is not discussed here, there is a visible correlation between the directions for cultural heritage research and practice which were forecast and discussed in *Visions*, and the subsequent priorities of CHD.

The focus of CHD's new research section particularly reflected this new approach to the cultural heritage of the parks system.

336 In 2007, the Cultural Heritage Division was renamed the Culture *and* Heritage Division

337 *Visions for the new millennium: report of the steering committee to the Minister for the Environment* (NPWS: unpublished, November 1998), p29

A boost for research

It was argued during *Visions* that it was crucial that the NPWS conduct its own cultural heritage research in order to sustain or increase its credibility in the field of cultural heritage, to ensure it remained 'on the cutting edge of knowledge', and to ensure detailed research was conducted in areas which were of particular relevance to the service.[338] At around the same time, the Cultural Heritage Services Division was beginning to develop a cultural heritage research program which was designed to provide a strategic direction for the research being conducted by staff of the CHSD.

With the formation of CHD, a Research Section was formed to further develop the division's research capacity. The section produces strategic research which provides a knowledge base for the division and wider department, by building new bodies of knowledge, constructing new models, and piloting methodologies for conceptualising and managing cultural heritage.

From the time of its formation, the Research Section took a lead in researching and promoting the new directions for cultural heritage outlined in *Visions*. There were a number of closely inter-related elements to this new approach. Firstly, the call for a new emphasis on the Aboriginal heritage of the post-contact period was an attempt to address an over-emphasis on pre-1788 Aboriginal heritage, an emphasis which 'seems to imply that authentic Aboriginal culture belongs to the past rather than the present'.[339] Secondly, it was an acknowledgement that the heritage of the post-contact period represented a history that was shared by Aboriginal and settler Australians. Closely related to this concept was a call for a greater emphasis on the 'cultural landscapes' of the park system, and for more attention to be paid to the ways in which people form attachment to place, or the 'social significance' of landscapes and heritage places.

Social significance, a discussion paper published in 2001 argued that a greater emphasis should be placed on community involvement in the significance assessment process of heritage places within NPWS reserves.[340] Executive director of CHD Jason Ardler identified the significance of this publication in light of the new direction the service was heading with CHD:

> This and other research projects currently being conducted by the service are designed to move cultural heritage management in NSW away from its traditional paradigm of *Aboriginal* and *historic* ('white') heritage being separate and discrete categories or fields. This move is underpinned by the principle that any one place in the landscape may hold significance for many different people for many different reasons.[341]

In the same year, Sharon Veale's *Remembering country*, a history of former landholders' connections to the landscape which now forms Towarri National Park in the Hunter Valley, explored the cultural landscapes of the park through an examination of its shared history in the post-contact period.[342] Rodney Harrison's *Shared landscapes*[343] examined the shared, cross-cultural history of the NSW pastoral industry, mapping 'the memories and social attachments of pastoral workers and their descendants to former pastoral lands under

338 Workshop 9: *Visions for the new millennium,* p98
339 Workshop 9: *Visions for the new millennium*, p100
340 Denis Byrne, Helen Brayshaw, Tracy Ireland, *Social significance: a discussion paper* (NPWS: Sydney 2001)
341 Jason Ardler, Foreword to Byrne, Brayshaw, Ireland, *Social significance* (2001), piii
342 Sharon Veale, *Remembering country: history and memories of Towarri National Park* (NPWS: Sydney, 2001)
343 Rodney Harrison, *Shared landscapes: archaeologies of attachment and the pastoral industry in New South Wales* (UNSW Press: Sydney, 2004)

NPWS management.'[344] He argued for a broad understanding of 'landscape' as 'the context in which human history occurs, as well as being an integral part of that history.'[345] Denis Byrne and Maria Nugent also employed a 'landscape' approach to researching Aboriginal post-contact heritage, producing a book which mapped Aboriginal attachment to place in 2004.[346]

Although CHD has been demonstrating the importance of a landscape approach to park management since the early 2000s, by 2006 it was still being reported that 'while there has been increasing recognition of the cultural landscape concept as a tool for integrating and managing all heritage interests in a place … there has been *very little actual on-ground management* [of cultural landscapes].'[347] Consequently, since 2005, the CHD Research Section has been undertaking a 'cultural landscapes' project. The project explores how the history and heritage of protected area landscapes might be better managed through the adoption of a cultural landscapes approach. Based on field studies and work with staff at Yuraygir, Washpool and Culgoa national parks, a key output of the project will be the publication of a practical cultural landscape guideline for use by park managers.[348]

The strength of *Visions*, then, was that it provided the service with an opportunity to evaluate its past and present achievements and directions, and to consider the direction it wanted to take in the future. It indicated the future direction of cultural heritage research and policy, and of the NPWS approach to historic heritage. Under CHD the research, policy and field support responsibilities of the staff previously situated in the Historic Resources Unit during the 1980s and '90s were separated, enabling individual historic heritage specialists to conduct more specialist work.

Policy, planning and HAMP funding

While the Research Section delivers strategic cultural heritage research, the Policy and Planning Section employs archaeologists, historians, conservation architects and policy writers to deliver historic heritage guidance and support for operational staff working in the park system. The Policy and Planning Section also coordinates the Heritage Assets Maintenance Program (HAMP) in conjunction with park managers. The strict criteria for HAMP funding has led to a greater transparency in the expenditure on planning and works projects.

Since 2000, the process for allocating HAMP funding has also become more strategic with the establishment of a program coordinator, the establishment of a HAMP Advisory Committee (including managers, planning and coordination sections, from each of the four NPWS branches), the implementation of a decision support tool ('Expert Choice') to prioritise HAMP project applications, the adoption of two-to-three-year funding cycles and the development of NPWS regional cultural heritage management strategies. These developments have increased the levels of collaboration between specialist CHD heritage staff and NPWS field operation staff in determining NPWS-wide historic heritage management priorities. Since its inception in 1995, HAMP has allocated almost $30 million to historic heritage planning, works and maintenance projects to parks across NSW.

344 Rodney Harrison, *Pastoral lands and the NPWS estate: a cultural heritage discussion paper* (NPWS: Sydney, 2002), p32
345 Harrison, (2004), p13
346 Denis Byrne & Maria Nugent, *Mapping attachment: a spatial approach to Aboriginal post-contact heritage* (Department of Environment and Conservation: Sydney, 2004), pp73–133.
347 Lennon, quoted in Brown (2007), p37 (original emphasis)
348 *DECC Annual report,* 2007, p88; http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/chresearch/CulturalLandscapesProject.htm, accessed 11 June 2008

Part of the National Pass walking track in Blue Mountains National Park. Extensive conservation works based around preservation, restoration, reconstruction and sympathetic adaptation were co-funded by HAMP and the High Exposure Maintenance Liability capital works program. (DECC)

Since 2008, there has been a drive to shift the emphasis of HAMP from historic fabric 'maintenance' (now linked to an assets maintenance system) to the 'revitalisation' of significant heritage places. The Heritage Assets Revitalisation Program (HARP) will include a capital and recurrent component in its budget so that it is not restricted in its capacity to partner with park managers and external stakeholders on significant showcase projects at historic heritage places identified as a high priority for revitalisation.

HARP (which has now replaced HAMP) is designed to encourage sensitive and sustainable adaptive reuse, interpretation and to support increased visitation to significant heritage places. A priority under the new HARP structure is to provide heritage funding through HARP for components of larger park-based projects and more flexible funding for smaller, innovative heritage revitalisation projects.

In 2002, HAMP funded the development of a database of historic places, called the Historic Heritage Information Management System (HHIMS). HHIMS incorporated information from the 1995 Historic Heritage Maintenance Survey, the Historic Places Register and the comprehensive regional assessments (CRAs) which had been developed to guide the regional forest agreements (RFAs) between the State and Commonwealth governments in the late 1990s. The CRAs identified large numbers of historic heritage places on forested landscapes across New South Wales, many of which were subsequently acquired as the service picked up substantial new reserves through the RFAs. However since the CRAs were conducted in order to inform acquisition decisions, and therefore prior to acquisitions, HHIMS also retains information on historic heritage places which have not been incorporated into the park system.

In 2002 the CHD executive director was delegated certain Heritage Council approval functions in relation to historic heritage management in the park system. This included the authority to approve conservation management plans for places listed on the State Heritage Register (SHR), approve minor works on SHR listed items, and approve applications for archaeological excavation permits.

The decision to invest delegation authority in the CHD was a significant development and a recognition by the Heritage Council of the expertise of DECC's historic heritage professionals, who process the delegations and provide advice to the executive director. It also demonstrated a confidence by the Heritage Council in CHD's abilities to maintain an appropriate distance from DECC's park-based operations and properly evaluate and determine approvals which potentially affected the historic heritage of the park system.

The creation of the Cultural Heritage Division was the latest chapter in the ongoing story of historic heritage conservation in the NSW park system. The service continues to face many of the challenges discussed in this publication – ways of effectively managing historic heritage places with limited funding and resources, for example, and the challenges of preserving significant remnants of past uses of the landscape, while managing that same landscape for its biodiversity values.

Although there is a far greater understanding of what 'cultural landscape' means, the cultural landscapes approach is yet to systematically inform park management practices across the park system. Another challenge is that of fully and adequately incorporating Aboriginal perspectives into post-contact heritage places and stories. The historic heritage of the park system faces other challenges similar to those within the Australian heritage sector generally, particularly its current low political profile.[349]

There is no question that additional issues will arise in the future. One potential challenge, already emerging, involves the incorporation of additional cultural layers, such as multiculturalism, into significance assessment processes. Furthermore, as campsites and other recreation sites are closed to promote vegetative regeneration, retaining the heritage of park-based recreation might pose a future challenge for park managers.

Finally, global climate change is likely to pose new and unknown difficulties for the conservation and maintenance of the historic heritage places and landscapes of the park system. Larger, more intense and more frequent fires may mean the challenges of the 2003 Kosciuszko fires may be replayed throughout the state, while a more pronounced cycle of prolonged drought and heavy rains, more severe wind speeds and a change in ocean currents will all present new challenges for the terrestrial and underwater historic heritage of the park system in New South Wales. [350]

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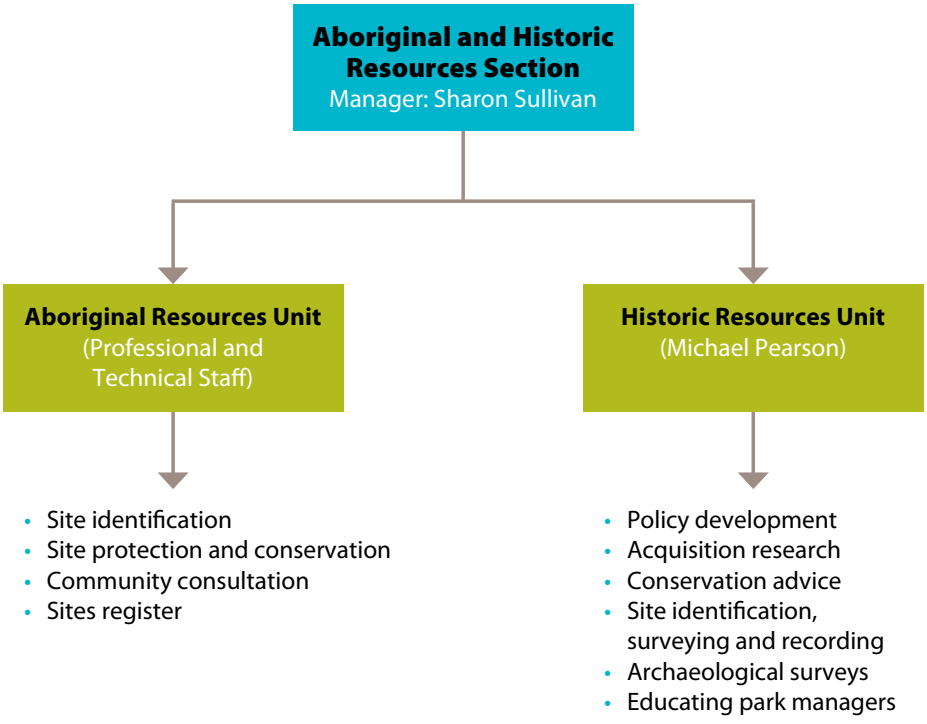
Appendix: NPWS corporate structures

The following tables illustrate the place of historic heritage staff within the broader NPWS structure over four periods covered by this publication. They are largely drawn from NPWS annual reports and have been fleshed out by former and current NPWS/DECC staff. For ease of design they consciously overlook some minor shifts which occurred during each of the periods illustrated. However they are indicative of the make-up and position of historic heritage units within NPWS at different stages of its history. Collectively, they demonstrate the growth in cultural heritage staff and historic heritage staff specifically. They show the ways the corporate relationship between historic heritage staff and those employed in the Aboriginal heritage field shifted over time, as well as their shifts in the context of the overall NPWS structure.

Historic heritage: where it fits in the structure

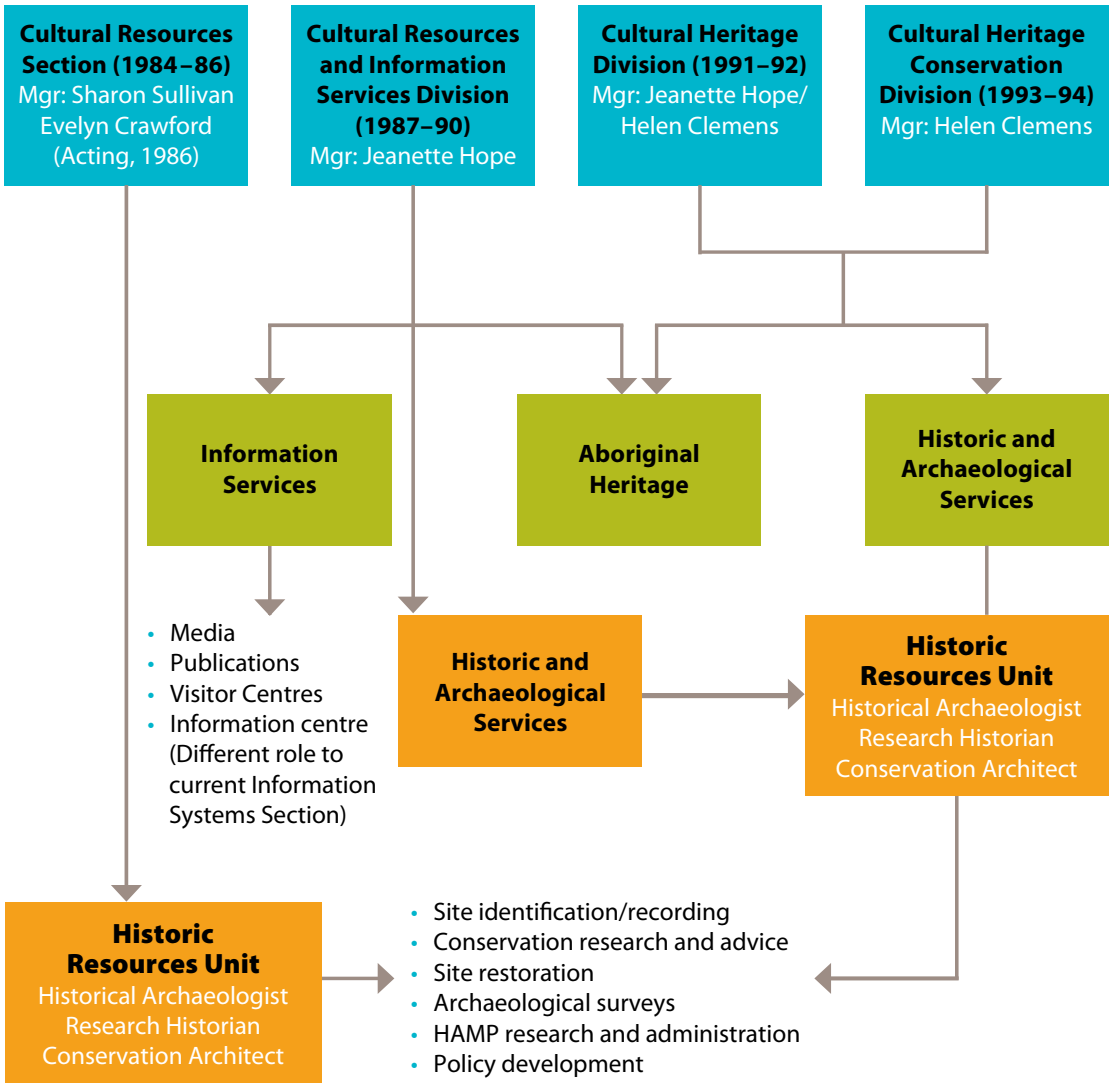
1969–1975 – Sharon Sullivan, Historian/Archaeologist

1976–1984

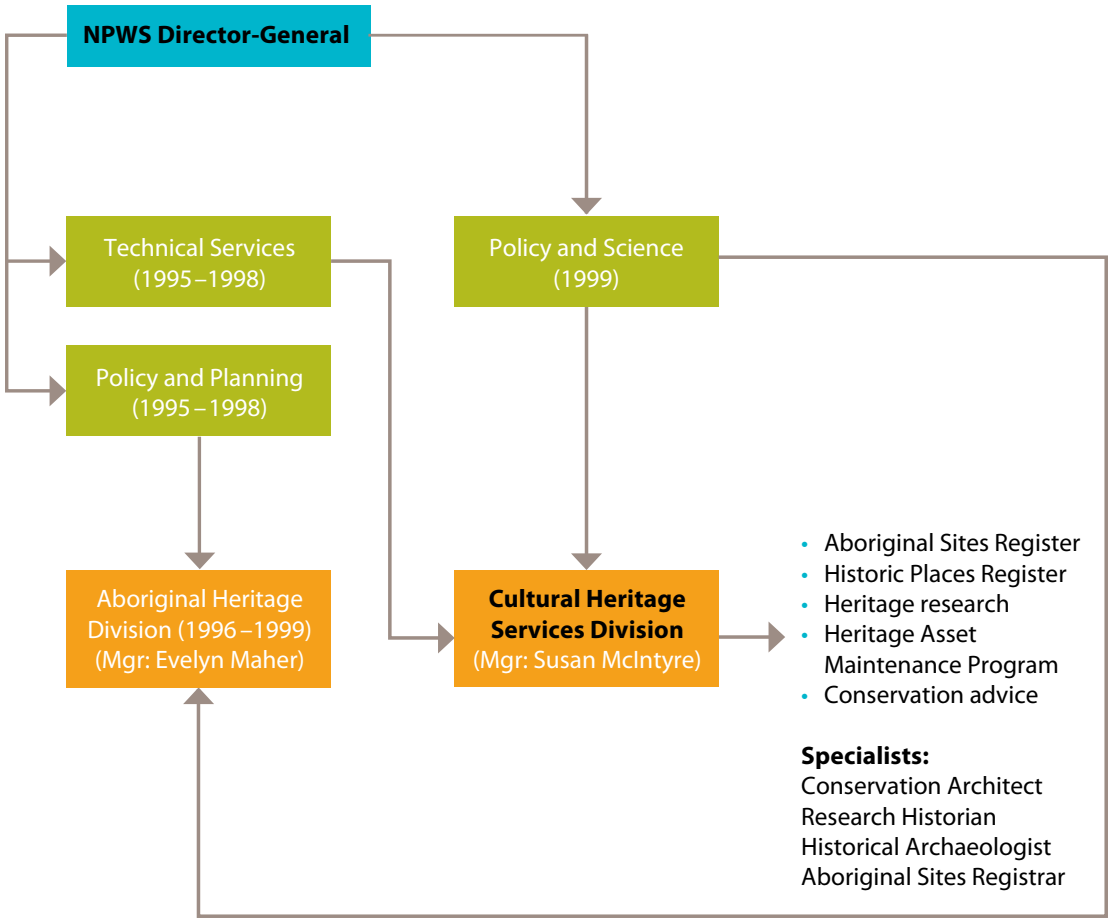


- Late 1970s – Conservation architects employed in Technical Services Section
- Heritage professionals employed for specific projects, such as Anne Bickford at Hill End 1976–77

1984–1994


Cultural Resources Section (1984–86)
Mgr: Sharon Sullivan
Evelyn Crawford (Acting, 1986)
Cultural Resources and Information Services Division (1987–90)
Mgr: Jeanette Hope
Cultural Heritage Division (1991–92)
Mgr: Jeanette Hope/ Helen Clemens
Cultural Heritage Conservation Division (1993–94)
Mgr: Helen Clemens
Information Services
Aboriginal Heritage
Historic and Archaeological Services
• Media
• Publications
• Visitor Centres
• Information centre (Different role to current Information Systems Section)
Historic and Archaeological Services
Historic Resources Unit
Historical Archaeologist
Research Historian
Conservation Architect
Historic Resources Unit
Historical Archaeologist
Research Historian
Conservation Architect
• Site identification/recording
• Conservation research and advice
• Site restoration
• Archaeological surveys
• HAMP research and administration
• Policy development

1995–1999



1995–1999

- No individual units within Cultural Heritage Services Division
- In-house architectural and heritage expertise downsized: heavy reliance on consultants
- 1996 – Aboriginal Heritage Division created as a separate Division to CHSD following grievance by Aboriginal staff

2000

- Cultural Heritage Division (CHD) created with two branches: Aboriginal Heritage Operations Branch roughly continued from Aboriginal Heritage Division; Policy and Knowledge Branch roughly continued from Cultural Heritage Services Division
- Cultural heritage policy development moved from Environmental Policy Division into Cultural Heritage Division (as its own section)