

## **Geological Society of Australia Inc**

### **Heritage Policy**

## **GEOLOGICAL HERITAGE IN AUSTRALIA**

### **3.1 Objectives**

The objectives of the Society's Standing Committee for Geological Heritage (formerly Geological Monuments) are to:

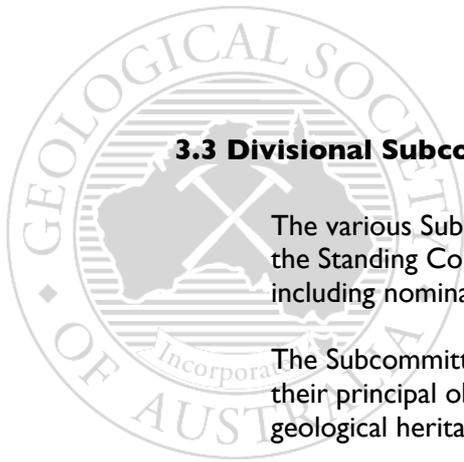
- (a) Promote the understanding and conservation of the geological heritage of Australia;
- (b) Liaise with Divisional Subcommittees in the formulation of criteria to be used for the selection of geological features worthy of protection and preservation in the national interest;
- (c) Identify, document and evaluate the significance of geological features through the various divisional Subcommittees;
- (d) Maintain liaison with the Australian Government and Australian bodies on matters such as the National Estate;
- (e) Make recommendations to the Society's National Executive Committee on geological features proposed by the Divisions for National Estate listing; and
- (f) Collect and collate annual reports of divisional Subcommittees and present regular reports to Council.

### **3.2 Sites, features, monuments**

Sites and features have both been used in Australia to describe respectively areas of small or large extent, or aspects of geology and geomorphology such as a fossil locality, a type section, a landform or other geological features that may have no particular extent. The term geological monument has been used for sites and features that have been recognised as significant. The Society now uses the following definition:

"Significant geological features (SGF) are those features of special scientific or educational value which form the essential basis of geological education, research and reference. These features are considered by the geological community to be worthy of protection and preservation."

There is no reference in this definition to the extent of the feature, which may be as small as a single road cutting, exposure or outcrop, but for management purposes may need to be surrounded by a buffer zone of sufficient size to protect its integrity.



### 3.3 Divisional Subcommittees

The various Subcommittees in each Division are Subcommittees of and report to the Standing Committee. They liaise with Divisional Committees on various matters including nominations to the Register of the National Estate.

The Subcommittees concerned with geological heritage in each Division have as their principal objectives promotion of the understanding and conservation of the geological heritage in their state or territory by:

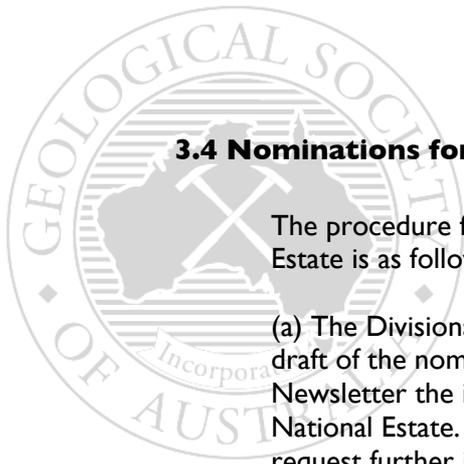
- identification of sites and features;
- documentation of such sites and features, in a suitable form;
- evaluation of sites and features in terms of their significance, normally assigning a level of significance from local, through regional, to national and international; and
- assisting in the management of sites, by monitoring and promoting their protection for geological reference and research, and for education.

The Subcommittees in each Division maintain for their state or territory a separate published and unpublished inventory of sites and features and where assessed their significance levels, whether local, regional, state, national or international. This also involves the recognition of new sites and features, and the reassessment of sites and features in the inventory from time to time. Reassessment is required by the changing nature of geology as a science as new concepts develop, by the changing needs of the geological community, and because sites and features may undergo changes in their values due to natural and human activities. The preparation and distribution of reports on this work, either covering the whole state or territory, or as a series of regional reports, is the responsibility of each local Subcommittee. In addition a current list of sites and features of National and International significance with short descriptions is maintained by the Convener of the Standing Committee, and draws on the work and recommendations of the Subcommittees.

The assessment of significance of geological sites and features is carried out by each Subcommittee using criteria developed within their state or territory over many years of work. These criteria may vary in detail in each Division, but they are basically similar to those used by other divisions, by the Standing Committee and by the Australian Heritage Commission. Criteria include geological type, geological age, use, representative or outstanding nature, rarity and current condition.

Promoting the management of sites and features includes activities such as the distribution of information, the preparation of descriptive material and the provision of advice to owners and managers. The rights of private owners must be taken into account when promoting management activities. Listing in the Register of the National Estate does not give automatic access to such places.

The individual Subcommittees, and the Standing Committee as a whole, welcome inquiries, comments and suggestions from members of the Society, and invite interested society members to participate in the work of the Subcommittees, by nominating themselves to a local Subcommittee at the Division elections held annually, or offering themselves for co-option at other times.



### **3.4 Nominations for the Register of the National Estate**

The procedure for nominating geological features to the Register of the National Estate is as follows:

(a) The Divisional Committee shall solicit opinions of members in the State on a draft of the nomination. This will be done by announcing in the Divisional Newsletter the intention of nominating the named site for the Register of the National Estate. Members shall have one month from the date of publication to request further information and to make written comments. Comments will be referred to the divisional geological monuments Subcommittee for resolution. When this has been done to the satisfaction of the Divisional Committee, the final nomination using the Australian Heritage Commission proforma will be prepared by the Subcommittee and submitted to the Divisional Committee.

(b) The relevant Divisional Committee shall provide written recommendations, together with the Subcommittee documentation, to the Convener of the National Standing Committee for Geological Heritage. The Convener will submit all the documentation, and any additional written comments, to the Society's National Executive Committee.

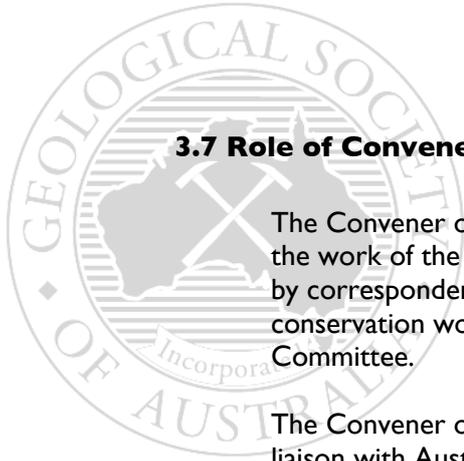
(c) The National Executive Committee shall be the body to approve, sign and submit a nomination for the Register of the National Estate.

### **3.5 Liaison with Australian Government bodies**

The Society collaborates with the Australian Heritage Commission in the process of identification and evaluation of sites of geological significance. The identification, documentation and evaluation of sites and features by each Subcommittee is generally carried out under state or federal funding, which required nominations to the Australian Heritage Commission's Register to be prepared as part of the work. Membership of Divisional Subcommittees is honorary. Work under grants is carried out by contractors on behalf of the Society. Such grants will be sought in the future to allow the compilation of documentation, the publication of reports and the preparation of nominations. The granting agency will be made aware of the policy on geological heritage under which the Society operates.

### **3.6 World Heritage nominations**

The Australian Government is responsible for the nomination of Australian geological sites for World Heritage Listing. The Society is willing to provide geological advice to the Australian Government upon specific issues. Requests from relevant government departments for comments on the geological significance of sites being considered for nomination by the Australian Government to the World Heritage List should be directed to the executive or Council of the Society, which will then request comments from the Convener of the Standing Committee, and through the Convener from the other members of the Standing Committee representing each of the Society's Divisions.



### **3.7 Role of Convener of the Standing Committee**

The Convener of the Standing Committee has a co-ordination role with regard to the work of the Subcommittees, maintains contact with the Subcommittees, usually by correspondence, and organises opportunities for discussion and co-ordination of conservation work in seminars, workshops and business meetings for the Standing Committee.

The Convener of the Standing Committee is the society's contact for day-to-day liaison with Australian Government bodies, and in particular with the Australian Heritage Commission.

Regular reports of the activities of the Subcommittees are made to the membership of the related Division. The Standing Committee reports to the Executive and Council of the Society. Information is also regularly supplied for publication in *The Australian Geologist*.