



Newsletter of the Australian Geoscience Council Inc

Update on activities within working groups

of the National Geotourism Strategy

Newsletter 22-01

PURPOSE

To provide intermittent periodic updates of activities and achievements of the National Geotourism Strategy (NGS) Working Groups

CURRENT STATUS

Working Group 4 relates to establishing national criteria for geoheritage listings suitable for geotourism.

In a submission to an ACT Tourism Strategy discussion paper, the AGC urged the promotion of tourism through:

- visits to geological features (geosites) within and outside of national parks and nature reserves;
- the use of geotrails and viewpoints, guided tours, geo-activities (such as geological time trails and fossil walks, rock gardens, rail trails, skywalks etc.); and
- patronage of local visitor centres and museums.

In this regard, the 'Canberra GeoRegion' hosts several geoscience attractions, noting that the nature reserves and other protected areas managed by the ACT Government highlight non-abiotic (that is, essentially physical) elements of natural heritage and cultural heritage features. The submission referred specifically to the following sites.

- The Geological Time Walk at Geoscience Australia's headquarters in Symonston. <https://www.ga.gov.au/education/classroom-resources/geological-time>
- The National Rock Garden <https://www.nationalrockgarden.com.au>
- The National Mineral and Fossil Collection, also located at Geoscience Australia's headquarters. <https://www.ga.gov.au/data-pubs/nmfc>
- The National Dinosaur Museum located at Nicholls. <https://nationaldinosaurmuseum.com.au/>

- Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve
<https://www.tidbinbilla.act.gov.au/>
- Other selected protected areas managed by Parks ACT
<https://www.parks.act.gov.au/find-a-park>

The submission pointed out that the ACT offers a plethora of significant geosites, many of which can be linked by establishing new geotrails outside of and, where appropriate, linked to existing protected or publicly managed, non-protected areas. These protected areas are managed by Parks ACT and include, as examples, [Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve](#) and [Namadgi National Park](#). The submission offered the assistance of the NGS Working Groups to develop these concepts for the ACT Government.

Working Group 5 relates to developing geotourism in regional mining communities with potential geoheritage and cultural heritage sites.

The AGC, through the auspices of the NGS, and the organisers of the [Central Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Listing Bid](#) intend to explore entering into a collaborative arrangement that enables the [Listing Bid](#) to be assisted by the working groups implementing the NGS. In this context, it is mutually recognised that the development of geotourism within those regional communities with potential geoheritage and cultural heritage sites can contribute to realising the socio-economic benefits offered by a successful Listing Bid.

Both parties also understand that the Action 7.5 of the Australian Government's recently released [THRIVE 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy](#) is to grow and develop high-quality products and experiences around unique Australian locations and themes, including approaches which integrate sustainable nature tourism with economic opportunities for traditional owners, and reflect emerging tourism trends such as geotourism, an aspiration which can be accommodated by both the Listing Bid and the NGS.

The organisers of the Listing Bid also see merit in a collaboration offering the opportunity for NGS interest groups to contribute to a high-level strategic advisory group. To facilitate the collaboration, as a first step, it is further agreed that both parties will work together to produce an article which describes the Listing Bid and its relevance to geoscience and cultural heritage interests, with content signed off by both parties. This article can then be published in media controlled by the AGC and member societies such as the Geological Society of Australia and the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy.

AGC Geotourism Information Bulletin

The latest issue of the AGC Information Bulletin, which sets out all the background to the development of geotourism, GeoRegions, geotrails and geoparks, has been updated to include all recent developments (particularly relating to access to a range of external listings such as geotrails and rail trails etc). The bulletin can be accessed at https://www.leisuresolutions.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/AGCInformationBulletin_23September2022.pdf

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