

THE NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (NEW SOUTH WALES) POLICY ON WILDERNESS CONSERVATION

PREAMBLE

For the purposes of this policy 'wilderness' is an area of natural land (usually large) which is relatively free from human impact, relatively remote and where genetic diversity and natural cycles remain essentially undisturbed. The *Wilderness Act 1987* further defines such areas as being, "together with their plant and animal communities, in a state that has not been substantially modified by humans and their works, or is capable of being restored to such a state; an area of a sufficient size to make its maintenance in such a state feasible, and capable of providing opportunities for solitude and appropriate self-reliant recreation".

In 1978 the Trust's Landscape Conservation Committee considered a reportⁱ which recommended the endorsement of a document, "Wilderness in Australia, Eastern N.S.W and S.E Queensland"ⁱⁱ, prepared by a team from the University of New England, and funded under the National Estate. It defined wilderness as it relates to Australian conditions and sought to identify wilderness areas using criteria specifying minimum requirements. It looked at wilderness as being dynamic and evolving with its management providing some degree of control over human impact.

In 1986, the Trust's Landscape Conservation Committee, produced a Policy Paper – "National Trust Policy on Wilderness Conservation"ⁱⁱⁱ which was adopted by the then Trust Council in November, 1986. At that time, the Trust had closely studied the Report of the Wilderness Working Group^{iv} submitted to the Minister for Planning and Environment (May, 1986). The Trust urged the N.S.W. Government to protect and manage appropriately those wilderness areas in the state identified as being essential components of the State's conservation reserves, and recognised that such wilderness areas are best protected by legislation. The Trust strongly supported the introduction of the *Wilderness Act 1987* to enable wilderness areas under the control of the N.S.W. National Parks and Wildlife Service to be better protected and managed.

Since 1976 the Trust has listed nine Landscape Conservation Areas on the National Trust Register that now contain or include parts of twelve Wilderness Conservation Areas, e.g. Washpool Landscape Conservation Area (1982), Border Ranges Landscape Conservation Area (1978) and Kosciusko Alpine Areas Landscape Conservation Area (1977).

The Trust strongly supports the listing of wilderness on the State Heritage Register, the National Heritage List and the World Heritage List. The Trust notes with concern a 2014 proposal by the Tasmanian Government to amend the Management Plan for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area to remove the term 'wilderness' and permit a range of uses contrary to the concept of 'wilderness' and the general management of a 'Wilderness Area' and a World Heritage Area.

POLICY

1. The Trust strongly supports the conservation and careful management of lands having wilderness values.
2. Recognising the recreational value of wilderness, the Trust stresses the nature conservation and scientific values of wilderness which must take precedence
3. The Trust advocates the continuing undertaking of a full survey of wilderness areas by the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service as part of a general review of nature conservation land acquisition priorities.
4. The Trust considers that land with wilderness values are best managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service as part of the State's nature conservation reserve system.
5. The Trust would strongly oppose the removal of the term 'wilderness' or the approval of activities inimicable with 'wilderness' in NSW wilderness areas, and in National Heritage and World Heritage listed areas in Australia.

6. The Trust will continue to identify and list Wilderness Areas on the National Trust Register.

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ⁱ "Wilderness Conservation" The National Trust of Australia (NSW) – Landscape Conservation Committee. Jane Nicholls, November 1978

ⁱⁱ "Wilderness in Australia" Eastern N.S.W and S.E Queensland. Helman, P.E. et al. November 1976

ⁱⁱⁱ "National Trust Policy on Wilderness Conservation", The National Trust of Australia (NSW), November, 1986

^{iv} "Report of the Wilderness Working Group", unpublished, 1986