

# Management of non-indigenous cultural heritage values in the forests of south-west Western Australia

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper describes a project to develop the systems used by the Department of Conservation and Land Management to improve the management of non-indigenous cultural heritage values in the forests of Western Australia. Objectives of the project were to improve attention to and management of cultural heritage values by assessing cultural heritage resources, to develop databases to record locations and other details of cultural heritage resources, and to integrate consideration of cultural heritage values into planning and management processes and practices.

The methodology included a review of information sources, a program of awareness raising sessions in centres throughout the south-west, the design and development of databases, a review of planning and management processes and practices to identify mechanisms that could be used to improve integration with the principles for protection of cultural heritage values, drafting of new documents and amendment of existing documents within the Department's management system, development of training packages and the training of Department staff to assist implementation of the proposed new system.

The project has resulted in a new draft policy Management of Non-Indigenous Cultural Heritage on Lands and Waters Managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management, a new draft procedures manual Guidelines for the Management of Cultural Heritage Values on Lands and Waters Managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management, draft revisions to an administrative instruction, one new draft administrative instruction, a new draft database and manual, and a cultural heritage training package.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

During 1996-1998 comprehensive regional assessment studies were conducted in the South-West Forest Region of Western Australia in order to develop a Regional Forest Agreement (Steering Committee 1998a). The assessment of National Estate values formed part of this comprehensive regional assessment, and extended the earlier joint work of the Australian Heritage Commission and the Department of Conservation and Land Management (Australian Heritage Commission & Department of Conservation and Land Management 1992), that identified 160 places of indicative national estate value and also noted a need for further identification of historic cultural values (Steering Committee 1998b). The RFA work built on the outcomes of the 1992 study and noted via the assessment of Ecological Sustainable Forest Management (ESFM) that an improved system to record and integrate cultural heritage place management into forest management plans was required

(Ferguson *et al.* 1997). The Regional Forest Agreement included a commitment to the improvement of the cultural heritage management system for the south-west forests (Commonwealth of Australia and State of Western Australia 1999).

In 2000 a project brief was negotiated between Environment Australia and the Department with the purpose of assisting CALM to develop a cultural heritage management system to cover the protection of places of historic, social and aesthetic value. The system was intended to provide clear direction for the identification, protection and conservation of cultural heritage places and provide resources for CALM officers to use in the practice of cultural heritage management. It would also provide direction for implementing cultural heritage management procedures in forest management planning and codes of practice.

The project was required to cover the geographic area of the South-West Forest Region but was able to be extended to other CALM-managed areas. The project covered the assessment of cultural heritage resources, development of databases and development of procedures to integrate the conservation of cultural heritage values into the forest management and planning processes through training, guidelines and other processes.

## 2 HISTORY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

The Department has relied very heavily on local knowledge to manage and protect cultural heritage values on its estate, and Departmental staff have traditionally known about and informally managed a wide range, and a relatively large number of sites across the State. The recognition and management of these cultural heritage values in the south-west forests has developed over time. This development can be subdivided into a number of recognisable periods, which can be characterised by the management mechanisms, technology and organisational structures of the day.

Prior to 1975 the capacity to collate, store and manage “corporate” information was very limited, and the attention to cultural heritage information was an informal, locally managed, process within the Forests Department on State forest.

In the early 1970’s the Forests Department developed a paper-based information system of folders for each forest block, called the Hardwood Operations Control System (HOCS). This system was used to collate and store silvicultural and other forest management information for State forest. The system was based on thematic format for recording information, and was used between 1975 and 1990.

In 1984 the State government established the Department of Conservation and Land Management, with responsibility for State forest, national parks, nature reserves, marine reserves etc. This extended management responsibility meant that the management information system was not available across all land managed by the Department, and resulted in the need to review the information management system that was to be used for the future.

In 1990 HOCS was replaced by the CALM Integrated Management and Control Information System (CIMCIS). The new system was also a paper-based system of folders but incorporated a new map base, and an expanded number of themes. The CIMCIS was used to store all area-based stand history and treatment records for the native forests, and remained in use until 1995. During this period there was no centralised map-based system or process to collate and record management information for the CALM land outside the original extent of State forest in the south-west.

The Silviculture Recording system (SILREC) replaced CIMCIS as silvicultural recording and management system in 1995. During the period from 1995 to 1999, CIMCIS remained available but was not required to be centrally maintained. It was used and maintained informally, and to variable standards, by District personnel. The silvicultural records are still available on paper prints, and have progressively been converted to digital format. All information regarding field operations was captured by digitizing field boundaries in Microstation. Importantly, SILREC was not designed to store or retrieve cultural heritage information, and therefore there was no identifiable Corporate system for recording or storing heritage information available during this period.

In 1999, the Department commenced the development of the Recreation and Tourism Information System (RATIS). This web-based system included a Cultural Heritage database, as part of the original structure.

### 3 REVIEW OF INFORMATION SOURCES

The project undertook a survey of cultural heritage information available from RFA public consultation workshops, heritage lists, registers and other sources. It was recognised that a field survey of the project area was not feasible as part of this project, and the survey was to involve a review existing formal databases, other informal lists and information available on cultural heritage places, and a collation of cultural heritage information from Departmental staff and other sources.

The information sources and databases used included the Heritage Council of Western Australia, Heritage Register and Places Database (Reference: [www.heritage.wa.gov.au/](http://www.heritage.wa.gov.au/)); the National Trust of Australia (WA), the Department of Environment and Heritage, Australian Heritage Database (Reference: [www.deh.gov.au/heritage/index.html](http://www.deh.gov.au/heritage/index.html)); the Report of the Western Australia Comprehensive Regional Assessment – Community Heritage Program (Non-Indigenous) (Pearson *et al.* 1997); Large Timber Structures in Western Australia Volumes 1-5 (Institution of Engineers, Western Australia Division 1998); and interviews and personal communication with CALM staff.

### 4 AWARENESS TRAINING

The project included the provision of cultural heritage awareness sessions to Departmental staff to give them an introduction to cultural heritage values and their conservation. These sessions also encouraged the cooperation of forest officers in relation to the identification of local sites requiring cultural heritage management. Twenty-two cultural heritage awareness sessions were presented to Departmental staff in the four administrative regions in the south-west that contained parts of the RFA area. These cultural heritage awareness sessions involved a total of 344 staff.

### 5 DATABASES

The cultural site database developed during the project is the Department of Conservation and Land Management Cultural Heritage Sites database. This database forms part of the Recreation and Tourism Information System (RATIS), and comprises three distinct sections, the Indigenous, Non-Indigenous, and Movable Heritage. The RATIS database has undergone major redesign, and development as a result of the non-indigenous cultural heritage project. The major components of this have included the introduction of improved spatial information, use of thematic structure, and the inclusion of movable cultural heritage as a component. Departmental staff are currently incorporating the existing cultural heritage information from HOCS / CIMCIS, and new information into the system as part of the ongoing maintenance of RATIS. The Non-Indigenous, and Movable Heritage sections were populated with data through this project, and they provide a list of identified heritage places or values that are managed by the Department. These lists include reference to relevant places listed in the WA Register of Heritage Places, local Government Municipal Inventories, and in other non-statutory lists, whether or not these places are given legal protection. The database is available on the Department's internal website.

The RATIS databases only contain spatial information where this is available from the Heritage Council of Western Australia's records, or where Departmental staff have provided it. Where Departmental staff are required to identify and locate a 'place' the spatial information should be collected, and the database updated. This will eventually lead to the Department being able to produce a map showing the location of known cultural heritage values.

## 6 REVIEW OF PLANNING / MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS

The aim of this part of the project was to develop a process for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage values and integrate this into the forest management and planning process.

The Department of Conservation and Land Management uses a range of documents to manage the planning and implementation of activities in the field. A number of these documents were reviewed as part of the project, and recommendations and changes made to improve their effectiveness in identifying and protecting cultural heritage values during field operations, including the Pre-burn Checklist, Pre-harvest Checklist and the Dieback Cell Interpretation Report.

## 7 REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF DOCUMENTATION

The project involved the development of management guidelines for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage values, and has resulted in the a new draft policy *Management of Non-Indigenous Cultural Heritage on Lands and Waters Managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management*, a new draft *Guidelines for the Management of Cultural Heritage Values on Lands and Waters Managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management*, draft revisions to an administrative instruction, one new draft administrative instruction, and a new draft database user's manual.

### 7.1 Policy document

*“Department of Conservation and Land Management Policy Statement (Draft) – Management of Non-indigenous Cultural Heritage on Lands and Waters Managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management”*

The draft document is intended to assist Departmental staff to identify, record and manage cultural heritage on lands and waters managed by the Department in accordance with the Department's existing commitments, and national best practice. The draft policy will need to be monitored and updated as the particular needs and peculiarities of the Department's needs are revealed.

The policy is heavily influenced by the recommendations generated from the 1998 ANZECC workshop and subsequent report (Hague Consulting Limited and Kelly 2000).

### 7.2 Guidelines

*“Guidelines for the Management of Cultural Heritage Values on Lands and Waters Managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM in prep.)”*

The guidelines relate specifically to non-indigenous cultural heritage and aim to document the processes and expectations for the management of these values on lands and waters managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management. The document will be periodically reviewed to incorporate new information and amendments resulting from developments in policy and operational procedures. The main features of the guidelines are described in the series of heading below.

#### 7.2.1 Background and context

This section provides a range of information about cultural heritage principles, issues relating to “significance” and some background about why the conservation of cultural heritage is important to the Department. This information helps to set the context for the subsequent sections of the Guidelines, and introduces the definitions of scale and a glossary of terms that is important in understanding and communicating about cultural heritage.

#### 7.2.2 Legislation and policies

The context for public and private land, as well as a summary of the State and federal legislation, including a summary of the relevant sections that directly affect the Department are provided in

this section. In addition this section contains a summary of the various policies, guidelines, procedures and planning documentation that apply or are available in the various jurisdictions, and affect the management of cultural heritage places.

#### 7.2.3 *Finding out about known cultural heritage places*

This section outlines how to obtain information on known cultural heritage places for the purposes of planning and supervising activities and operations in lands and waters managed by the Department. The various databases, registers and other records that are available to staff for identifying and locating non-indigenous and natural cultural heritage values are identified and summarised.

#### 7.2.4 *Identifying cultural heritage places*

This section outlines the expectations for pre-operations and other field survey opportunities, and outlines the requirements for reporting sites or values that have been located as part of the planning or completion of an approved Departmental activity.

#### 7.2.5 *Assessing cultural heritage places*

The processes that the Department will use to assess the significance of cultural heritage values are described in this section. This section reinforces that Departmental staff will use the principles of the Burra Charter as the basis for cultural heritage conservation and will manage known culturally significant values where possible by conserving them *in situ*. This enables the aspects of setting and context to be maximised, and to be used as part of the process of presentation of the cultural heritage values.

There are a range of assessment types outlined starting with preliminary assessments that can be undertaken relatively quickly and easily by local staff and the Regional Manager. Depending on the decision following the initial assessment, a new site may be referred for an intermediate assessment. The intermediate assessment is to be undertaken by a Regional Assessment Team, comprising staff from the Department, the Heritage Council of Western Australia, and other appropriate experts. These Regional Assessment Teams will provide advice on the appropriate action for sites referred to it following initial assessment, and will periodically review all sites or values that have been identified by the Department.

Where a site or value is considered to be suitably significant by the Regional Assessment Team, the guidelines provide for a process for it to be formally assessed for possible inclusion on the State Register of Heritage Places.

#### 7.2.6 *Managing cultural heritage places*

This section outlines the processes that are available to the Department to prepare management plans, and conserve cultural heritage values. These options include surveys, requirements and opportunities for liaison with State and federal government agencies. Information is also provided about a range of administrative issues including conservation management, management plans, maintenance plans, public access, public use, interpretation of sites, protection of cultural heritage, allocating resources, and public involvement.

#### 7.2.7 *Disposing of cultural heritage places*

The process required for the disposal of Departmental property with identified cultural heritage value are covered in this section. This includes reference to the “Government Heritage Property Disposal Process”, and the associated record keeping requirements.

#### 7.2.8 *Monitoring cultural heritage places*

This section outlines the monitoring requirements for cultural heritage places that are managed according to a Conservation Plan. These are to be monitored annually, and a documentary record of their condition is required to be maintained.

### 7.2.9 *People skills and training*

The options for establishing, enhancing and maintaining cultural heritage management skills and knowledge within the Department are covered in this section. It addresses issues including the use of external courses and trainers, awareness training, integrating cultural heritage training into relevant in-house courses, and the training of contractors.

### 7.2.10 *Policy monitoring, compliance and review*

This section outlines the intentions to ensure that the protection, conservation, and presentation of cultural heritage are undertaken effectively, and the mechanisms by which this will be achieved.

## 7.3 *Instructions and procedure documents*

In addition to the Policy and Guideline documentation, the Department of Conservation and Land Management has a range of instructions and procedures that refer to, and provide information about, the management of cultural heritage values on the lands and waters it manages. These documents vary considerably in their focus, and in the level of detail provided and required, and in many cases will rely on some specific staff training to enable them to be effectively implemented. The documents include:

### 7.3.1 *“Administrative Instruction 39 - Necessary Operations – A Guide For Managers” (revised)*

Necessary operations apply to national parks, nature reserves, and conservation parks when there is no approved management plan. They are defined in section 33(4) of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act) as “those operations that are necessary for the preservation or protection of persons, property, land, flora or fauna, or for the preparation of a management plan”. The review of the document incorporated a more systematic and formal review of the cultural heritage values that were associated with the land, and provided a more structured approach to addressing these as part of the work approval process.

### 7.3.2 *“Administrative Instruction (draft) - Management of Movable Cultural Heritage” (draft)*

This Administrative Instruction provides an outline of the requirements for the management of movable cultural heritage. This will enable Departmental staff to systematically identify the various items of movable cultural heritage, to record these, and to address any management issues or implications that are linked to these.

### 7.3.3 *RATIS – Users Manual*

This document provides an outline of the requirements for the use of the RATIS database on the CALMWeb and provides a range of background information including: how to enquire about existing records, how to add new records, guidance on the context of database components, and thematic lists for both heritage sites and movable cultural heritage.

## 8 CULTURAL HERITAGE TRAINING

As a final stage of the cultural heritage project a short training package was developed for operational staff in relation to the conservation and protection of cultural heritage values. This package was presented at five sessions to Departmental staff in the four administrative regions in the southwest that contained parts of the RFA area. One hundred and one staff, who were involved in the management and implementation of cultural heritage, attended these sessions. The training sessions incorporated a general introduction into cultural heritage management, training on the policy, guidelines, Administrative Instructions and planning systems that had been developed during the project, and how to use them.

## 9 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE MANAGEMENT CULTURAL HERITAGE?

The project has resulted in a significant change in the cultural heritage expectation and management by the Department. The development of a policy and supporting documents means that this aspect of management now has a solid base from which to be implemented and further improved. It has clearly identified the legislative requirements and provided a structure for corporate and operational activities, for the first time. Prior to the completion of the project there was no corporate statement of intent, no clear expectation for the management, and no clear process for identifying and recording cultural heritage values, resulting in an “ad hoc” and highly variable outcome.

### 9.1 *How will cultural heritage management be improved?*

The RATIS database has provided a central register in which cultural heritage values on Departmental land can be identified and recorded. This database allows the available information to be used for management planning and reporting. It also provides an opportunity to refer to information held on databases, records or publications from other government and private organizations, so that the user can be aware of, and interrogate the more detailed information, without it needing to be duplicated.

### 9.2 *What is new?*

The mechanism to collect and manage information about movable cultural heritage is a significant new initiative in cultural heritage management. In the past the focus has generally been on “places” and “built heritage”, and the attention to other items has been mostly considered to be more appropriate to museums or collections. This has often been inappropriate, and has led to many items being lost or not adequately recorded because they are not in museums. Whilst there were a number of attempts made to address this issue in the past, none of these resulted in a comprehensive list, or management process. However in recent years the expectations of Government have become clearer, and since the election of the Labor Government in February 2001, the requirement for a comprehensive and repeatable process has been established as described in the “Labor. heritage for the new millennium” policy statement (Australian Labor Party, 2001). The attention to movable cultural heritage now enables the Department to record items that comprise the “fabric” of places or buildings, machinery, tools and equipment, written record and artifacts.

The Regional Assessment Committee process is a new initiative between the Department and the Heritage Council of Western Australia. This is important because of the Departments intention to record all sites or values as they are found, and to avoid any sifting or prioritisation of these prior to them being entered into RATIS. This Regional Assessment Team proposal is aimed at ensuring that the relatively large number of new sites or values (mostly of limited significance) that are likely to be located in the course on CALM’s activities are assessed, without adding to the current backlog of assessments that the Heritage Council has to complete. The process allows sites to have an initial assessment by the Committee, and only those considered as “significant” to be progressed for a more detailed assessment, and from that through the formal process.

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