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. 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). 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.

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.

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

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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
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

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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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193 Zilber, p69
194 Pearson interview
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

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
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.

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.\(^{207}\)

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\(^{204}\) Mayne (2003), pp134–5

\(^{205}\) Pearson interview


\(^{207}\) 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.\textsuperscript{215} In the 1950s and ’60s, there were close to 500 huts in areas which now constitute the park.\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{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)

\textsuperscript{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 grazer 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 park218, 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

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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
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

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222 Ashley (1994), p27
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’. The acting regional director, C.J. Burrell, supported Pearson’s request, ordering that the building be protected from vandalism pending receipt of the report.

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.

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.

229 Memo, Michael Pearson to Superintendent, Royal National Park, 23 May 1980, cited in Werksman, p54
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
Illustrations showing the gradual decline in the number of huts at Bonnie Vale (Geoff Ashley, *Royal National Park cabins: draft conservation plan* 1994)
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

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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
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.  

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.  

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.  

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.  

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.  

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. 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. 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.’

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.’

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.

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.’

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, 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.
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

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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 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
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.

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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.’

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.’ 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.

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.

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261 Sydney Harbour National Park: North Head Quarantine Station conservation management plan, volume 1 (NPWS: Sydney, April 2000), p89
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

265 Pearson interview
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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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’. 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’.

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.

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’. Although the site was still being managed by the NPWS, including conservation works, guided tours and a conference centre, 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.

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’. 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 of the revenue required for its conservation.

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’.

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

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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. The lease would be for a period of 45 years and would be subject to a full environmental impact statement (EIS). 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.

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.

The NPWS recommended ‘that the activity should be approved subject to conditions’, 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.

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.

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
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 …?'\(^{294}\)

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\(^{293}\) 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 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.

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.\textsuperscript{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’\textsuperscript{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’\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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:

\begin{quote}
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).\textsuperscript{301}
\end{quote}

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’:

\begin{quote}
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.\textsuperscript{302}
\end{quote}

These categories were based on those identified by Michael Pearson in his 1980 review of the historic and architectural values of the huts.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{297} Ashley, Kosciuszko National Park huts review (1993), p2
\textsuperscript{298} Ashley, Kosciuszko National Park huts review (1993), p3
\textsuperscript{299} Zilber (2001), p73
\textsuperscript{300} Ashley, Kosciuszko National Park huts review (1993), p13
\textsuperscript{301} Kosciuszko National Park plan of management (NPWS: Sydney 1974) p38
\textsuperscript{302} Kosciuszko National Park plan of management (NPWS: Sydney, 1982), p33
\textsuperscript{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
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
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

318 Sullivan interview
319 Sharon Sullivan, notes to author, May 2008
321 Kosciuszko Huts Association Newsletter (no 77, winter 1992) cited in Werksman, p40
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.

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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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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].

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.

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.

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.

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

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
Conclusions

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 brought 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.

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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. 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’. 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. 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.”

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. Rodney Harrison’s Shared landscapes 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, pl00
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), plii
342 Sharon Veale, Remembering country: history and memories of Towarri National Park (NPWS: Sydney, 2001)
NPWS management. 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.’ 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.

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].’ 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.

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)
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


350 Michael Pearson, ‘Climate Change, Fire and Cultural Heritage in Australia’ in Michael Petzet and John Ziesemer (eds), Heritage at risk: ICOMOS world report 2006/7 on monuments and sites in danger, www.international.icomos.org, accessed 21/10/08
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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/Archeologist

1976–1984

- Site identification
- Site protection and conservation
- Community consultation
- Sites register

- Policy development
- Acquisition research
- Conservation advice
- Site identification, surveying and recording
- Archaeological surveys
- Educating park managers

- 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**
- Media
- Publications
- Visitor Centres
- Information centre (Different role to current Information Systems Section)

**Aboriginal Heritage**

**Historic and Archaeological Services**

**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

**Historic and Archaeological Services**

**Historic Resources Unit**
Historical Archaeologist
Research Historian
Conservation Architect

**Cultural Heritage Divison (1991–92)**
Mgr: Jeanette Hope/Helen Clemens

**Cultural Heritage Conservation Division (1993–94)**
Mgr: Helen Clemens

**Cultural Heritage and Information Services Division (1987–90)**
Mgr: Jeanette Hope

**Cultural Resources and Information Services Division (1987–90)**
Mgr: Jeanette Hope

**Cultural Resources Section (1984–86)**
Mgr: Sharon Sullivan
Evelyn Crawford (Acting, 1986)

**Bibliography**

1984–1994

- 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
- Site identification/recording
- Conservation research and advice
- Site restoration
- Archaeological surveys
- HAMP research and administration
- Policy development

**Cultural Heritage Divison (1991–92)**
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**Cultural Heritage Division (1991–92)**
Mgr: Jeanette Hope/Helen Clemens

**Cultural Heritage Conservation Division (1993–94)**
Mgr: Helen Clemens
1995–1999

NPWS Director-General


Aboriginal Heritage Division (1996–1999) (Mgr: Evelyn Maher)

Cultural Heritage Services Division (Mgr: Susan McIntyre)

- Aboriginal Sites Register
- Historic Places Register
- Heritage research
- Heritage Asset Maintenance Program
- Conservation advice

Specialists:
Conservation Architect
Research Historian
Historical Archaeologist
Aboriginal Sites Registrar

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)