Everyday World Heritage: disengagement, lost opportunities and business as usual in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area

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Candidate’s Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university. To the best of the author’s knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

Kristal Lara Coe

Date
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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mum and dad

Gisela Coe (1946-2015) and John Coe (1936-2000)
Abstract

The World Heritage Convention is currently implemented in over 1,000 cultural, natural and mixed heritage sites around the world including Australia. Motivations for World Heritage nomination are varied and though these reasons often affect the way World Heritage is implemented, there is little contemporary, ethnographic, site-specific research on what happens at sites after World Heritage inscription.

Acknowledging traditional sociology's environmental 'blind spot' this thesis investigates the effects of 'natural' World Heritage implementation through practicing a 'sociology of associations'. By using the analytical tools of Actor-network theory (ANT) it traces these associations between actors in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area; a 'natural' World Heritage site in Australia. This thesis exposes the effects of World Heritage implementation by 'following the actors', human and non-human, and gathering empirical evidence through interviews, observations and documentary analysis. The 'post-humanist' tenets of ANT allow the researcher to shift the locus of power and analytical primacy to reimagine the ordering of actors in the World Heritage area.

World Heritage is reimagined not as a fixed concept or homogeneous unit of analysis but as a heterogeneous assemblage of actors whose narratives constitute a World Heritage network. The three narratives that emerged in this research, of disengagement, lost opportunities and business as usual, provide a powerful insight into the effects of World Heritage implementation and the associations and ordering of actors that negotiate and configure a specific translation of World Heritage.

These three narratives 'speak' for World Heritage in specific and unexpected ways. The narrative of disengagement suggests that World Heritage is overshadowed by more pressing life concerns. The narrative of lost opportunities suggests that hope for the potential of World Heritage implementation has turned into disappointment or frustration. The narrative of business as usual suggests that
implementation is strongly influenced by corporate exigencies, and shrinking resources.

These narratives reveal the process by which World Heritage is translated from inscription to implementation and from concept to practice. This translation of World Heritage through the ‘everyday’ associations of human and non-human actors provides rare insights into how World Heritage is conceptualised and implemented in Australia. More broadly, these insights highlight the consequences of communicating World Heritage values. This thesis makes an important contribution to our understanding of how these values are translated and how it can impact World Heritage implementation.
Table of contents

Candidate’s Declaration ........................................................................................................................................... ii
Acknowledgements ...................................................................................................................................................... iii
Abstract ........................................................................................................................................................................ v
Table of contents .......................................................................................................................................................... vii
Tables ........................................................................................................................................................................... xi
Figures ........................................................................................................................................................................... xi
Boxes ............................................................................................................................................................................ xi
Introduction ................................................................................................................................................................... 1
Part One: Research context ....................................................................................................................................... 11

Chapter 1: World Heritage .................................................................................................................................. 12
  The Convention............................................................................................................................................................ 13
  World Heritage Committee ....................................................................................................................................... 16
  The List ....................................................................................................................................................................... 17
  Nomination and Outstanding universal value ........................................................................................................... 18
  Advisory bodies ......................................................................................................................................................... 22
  Site Monitoring ......................................................................................................................................................... 22
  List of World Heritage Sites in Danger ...................................................................................................................... 24
  Research on populated World Heritage sites ......................................................................................................... 25
  World Heritage Themes .......................................................................................................................................... 30
  Australia and World Heritage ................................................................................................................................ 41
  Conclusion ................................................................................................................................................................. 53

Chapter 2: Sociology and researching society and the environment ................................................. 55
  Sociology and the non-social .................................................................................................................................. 56
  The old paradigm ....................................................................................................................................................... 56
  The new paradigm - environmental sociology: ....................................................................................................... 60
  Persistent problems in Environmental Sociology .................................................................................................. 63
  Human ecology .......................................................................................................................................................... 65
  Cultural geography and the production of nature and agency .............................................................................. 66
  Introducing a second dichotomy and Actor-network theory .................................................................................... 70
  Following the Actors ............................................................................................................................................... 76
  Analytical symmetry ............................................................................................................................................... 78
  Redefining power .................................................................................................................................................... 79
  Criticisms ................................................................................................................................................................. 80
Conclusion .............................................................................................................................. 81

Chapter 3: Research design ........................................................................................................ 83
Qualitative research .................................................................................................................. 84
Methodologies .......................................................................................................................... 86
Sociology .................................................................................................................................. 86
Human Geography ..................................................................................................................... 86
Actor-network theory (ANT) .................................................................................................... 87
Research methods .................................................................................................................... 91
Grounded theory ....................................................................................................................... 91
Case study ................................................................................................................................ 92
The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area .................................................................. 94
Interviews and observation ...................................................................................................... 95
Observation .............................................................................................................................. 98
Data analysis ............................................................................................................................ 99
Researcher role ........................................................................................................................ 101
Challenges and limitations ...................................................................................................... 102
Conclusion ................................................................................................................................ 104

Chapter 4: Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area case study .......... 106
The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area ................................................................. 108
Inscription ............................................................................................................................... 110
Outstanding universal value ................................................................................................. 112
Other values .......................................................................................................................... 113
Geodiversity .......................................................................................................................... 113
History .................................................................................................................................... 114
Indigenous connection ........................................................................................................... 116
Recreation and tourism .......................................................................................................... 116
Artistic inspiration .................................................................................................................. 117
Management .......................................................................................................................... 118
Blue Mountains National Park ........................................................................................... 120
The Residents ........................................................................................................................ 125
Towns Surveyed ...................................................................................................................... 127
Katoomba ............................................................................................................................... 127
Bullaburra .............................................................................................................................. 128
Megalong Valley ..................................................................................................................... 129
Local Government ............................................................................................................... 130
Conclusion .............................................................................................................................. 133

Part Two: World Heritage Narratives ..................................................................................... 134

Chapter 5: A narrative of disengagement .............................................................................. 135
Chapter 6: A narrative of lost opportunities .........................................................169
Local Government and environmental responsibility ....................................... 171
A "City within a World Heritage Area National Park" ....................................... 175
Conservationists .................................................................................................. 182
Bushcare - Bringing back the bush .................................................................... 186
Vignette: A morning with Valley of the Waters Bushcare group ....................... 188
Tourism .............................................................................................................. 196
The Great Western Highway .............................................................................. 202
Conclusion ......................................................................................................... 206

Chapter 7: A narrative of business as usual .........................................................208
Introducing 'business as usual' .......................................................................... 210
NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Katoomba Regional Office ............. 211
day-to-day work ................................................................................................. 211
'A long and proud history in natural and cultural heritage conservation' .......... 214
Wither World Heritage? ..................................................................................... 219
Negotiations and local networks ....................................................................... 221
World Heritage Unit .......................................................................................... 223
Vignette: Prince Henry Cliff Walk, June 2011 .................................................. 229
Vignette: Fishkill ................................................................................................. 233
Communicating World Heritage values .............................................................. 235
Residential areas ............................................................................................... 239
Conclusion ......................................................................................................... 247

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusion ...............................................................249
The network of narratives ................................................................................... 250
Disengagement .................................................................................................... 250
Lost opportunities .............................................................................................. 252
Business as usual ............................................................................................... 253
Translating World Heritage .............................................................................. 254
The World Heritage network ............................................................................. 259
Closing the ‘Great Divide’: the society/nature dichotomy

Conclusion

Bibliography

Appendix 1: prompting questions for resident interviews.

Appendix 2: example Contact Summary Form

Appendix 3: participant information sheet and consent form

Appendix 4: interview schedule

Appendix 5: research participant flyers
Introduction

Walking through the labyrinthine streets of the Fez Medina in Morocco, North Africa I knew nothing about World Heritage yet something seemed strange about what I was seeing. There was construction going on everywhere, in the name of World Heritage conservation, yet the residents and merchants seemed to be going about their daily affairs without any pause. They did not seem particularly moved by their World Heritage status. While being pushed aside by strings of passing donkeys with overloaded packsaddles or pulling carts of dung, the smells and sights and crush of people and animals threatened to overwhelm my, wholly Australian, views on personal space. Feeling simultaneously delighted, disgusted, scared and totally captivated by the chaos of stalls crammed with spices, silks, slippers, amber and turquoise jewellery, tooled leather and meat I noticed the people going about their ordinary, everyday business in their remarkable environment.

In 2004 during my visit, parts of the Medina were being restored. Buildings were clad in scaffolding and building materials were being carted in and out by donkeys or mules, causing havoc in the already constricted spaces. Laneways were closed barring access to shops and houses. The residents of the Medina carried on around the disruption though it was clear that some had needed to vacate their homes and shops and set up elsewhere - wherever they could find the space. At the main entrance to the Medina was a sign that declared the area a UNESCO Cultural World Heritage site. It explained that the Medina, thanks to World Heritage inscription, was now under a ‘rehabilitation program’ which included the restoration of monuments and buildings as well as the improvement of drainage and widening of access-ways. The program had only just begun and was already causing disruptions for Medina residents.

Later, from a high vantage point outside the walls of the city I marvelled at the architecture of the residential buildings, the spires of the minarets and the world’s oldest university. But I was only able to do this from the lofty views afforded me by the rooftop of my hotel where a large chunk of the city was
observable, from a distance. On the ground, inside the Medina I was enthralled by the crowds of men, women and children talking, yelling, and bartering in the souks. The unfamiliar sound of the muezzin calling Muslims to prayer, workers ankle and knee-deep in dye at the tanneries, the exquisitely embroidered clothing and butchered camel’s heads hanging from hooks had occupied my attention. I had not noticed the architecture or monuments at all. I had visited World Heritage sites before my visit to Fez but this was the first time I really thought about the effects of World Heritage.

While the Medina was inscribed for its outstanding cultural value, the residents of the walled city seemed to be, not only less important than the cultural objects, but also a threat to their integrity. It would seem that World Heritage status had brought funding and expertise to restore the cultural objects, but I wondered what World Heritage had brought to the residents of the Medina. Did UNESCO take the same lofty, remote view of culture in the Fez Medina that I had from my hotel rooftop and fail to notice the people? I couldn’t help but wonder if World Heritage meant the same thing to all the people I saw in the Medina. Were residents, UNESCO workers, tourists, architects and other experts working toward the same goal? And what about the non-humans, such as the donkeys, the trader’s wares and the buildings and other materials? What role did they play in the conservation of World Heritage? Did all of these human actors in the Medina have a similar understanding of World Heritage? Was universal consensus even possible and did it really matter? In a nutshell, I wondered what the effects of World Heritage were. Over a decade later, as I write this thesis, I am grateful to this place that inspired so many questions that have intellectually sustained me for seven years.

The context for this thesis is, literally, half a world away from Morocco. My case study is The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWHA) in Australia. The GBMWHA was listed in 2000 for its natural outstanding universal value, rather than cultural and it has only a small adjacent population. It has a whole different set of pressures, threats and problems to a cultural site in Morocco and yet my question, and the central question of this thesis, is the same.
What are the effects of World Heritage implementation? Since visiting the Fez Medina 12 years ago, I now know that this is a deceptively simple question that, as this research progressed, multiplied into more questions. Even with the benefit of a case study in my home country, this PhD ‘journey’ was not dissimilar to unpacking a set of Russian dolls. Every question seemed to lead to another, equally intractable question.

This proliferation of questions demonstrates a fundamental characteristic of World Heritage: it is bureaucratically, temporally, spatially, and philosophically complex. This complexity makes World Heritage a challenging and exciting research subject and, at the same time, one that is in critical need of investigation. The World Heritage Convention is the most widely ratified international heritage conservation instrument in the world. Universal by its very nature, the World Heritage Convention was established in order to unify the international community in the safeguarding and transmitting of heritage of outstanding universal value (OUV) to future generations (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2007).

The World Heritage Convention is being implemented in over 1,000 World Heritage sites all over the world and this number increases every year. Aside from representing places of OUV, World Heritage sites have innumerable other values and uses and many are places where people live, work and play. This ‘human factor’ (Thorsell & Sigaty 1998), along with natural disasters, poses the biggest and most problematic threat to the OUV of world heritage sites. It is people that are at the heart of efforts to preserve World Heritage sites (Millar 2006) yet there has been little research about what it means for people to live in a World Heritage site and how their lives are directly and indirectly affected by the implementation of the World Heritage Convention (Hall 2006; Smith 2002).

As has been argued in detail elsewhere (Hølleland 2013), World Heritage is a more extensive and complex process than can simplistically be attributed to ‘UNESCO’. The process involves intergovernmental relations, advisory bodies, administration, documents, procedures, ‘decisions’, lists and other materials.
There is considerable research on these aspects of World Heritage. The scale and complexity of World Heritage processes allows for a certain plasticity in how World Heritage is interpreted and subsequently implemented and it is how this interpretation occurs that is less studied (notable exceptions are Hall 2006; Hølleland 2013; Ronström 2014; Turk 2005 and Van der Aa 2005). However, generalising about the implementation of World Heritage is difficult. Countries desire site inscription for many reasons. There is often a lack of base-line information prior to inscription and there is a large number and variation of World Heritage sites globally. These variables and the growing number of World Heritage sites signify a need for specific, detailed and descriptive studies on World Heritage sites and the effects of implementation.

Inspired by my Moroccan World Heritage encounter and guided by the need for comprehensive research on World Heritage processes and practice, this thesis addresses some of this complexity. Specifically, it aims to investigate the effects of World Heritage and provide critical insights on World Heritage implementation in Australia where the effects of implementation are relatively understudied.

Australia, with 19 World Heritage sites, is no exception to the problems discussed in the broader literature. Competing interests, controversy, conflict, divided communities and politicking (Bentrupperbäumer and Reser 2006) have been recorded in several sites in Australia, such as Tasmania's Wilderness (Russell and Jambrecina 2002), Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park and Queensland's Wet Tropics (Hall 2006; Pannell 2006), Willandra Lakes Region (Sullivan 2004) and Kakadu National Park (Aplin 2004; Maswood 2000). These controversies in Australian sites demonstrate the potential volatility of heritage conservation. If we consider heritage as a ‘multilayered performance ... that embodies acts of remembrance and commemoration while negotiating and constructing a sense of place,

1 Some recent examples are Labadi 2005 on the representativeness of the World Heritage List and 2007 on the motivations for nominations; Cameron and Rössler 2013 for a historical analysis of the ‘early years’ of the Convention; Turtinen 2000 on the institutional aspects of World Heritage and Rao 2010 on the effectiveness of the nomination and listing process.
belonging and understanding in the present’ (Smith 2006: 3), it is easy to see how World Heritage implementation can struggle to please everyone. The elements of past, present, different knowledges, sense-making and belonging can lead to a World Heritage that is conceptually cluttered, subject to numerous, sometimes conflicting, interpretations and, subsequently, various implementations.

In order to investigate the effects of World Heritage, the empirical basis for this research is a case study of a natural World Heritage site in Australia – the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWHA). The GBMWHA consists of more than one million hectares of sandstone plateaux, escarpments and gorges dominated by temperate eucalypt forest. It was inscribed as a World Heritage area in 2000, under natural criteria, as an outstanding example representing evolution and adaptability in Australia’s post-Gondwana isolation and represents important and significant natural habitats, in the form of endemic eucalyptus habitats (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2000). The GBMWHA is one of 19 World Heritage sites in Australia and the only natural site located next to a major Australian city. There are two major urban corridors running through the World Heritage area which accommodates a population of 80,000. As a result, the GBMWHA is under considerable pressure from adjacent land use, including water flow from catchments originating outside the area and impacts from invasive species, agri-industry, coal mining, tourism and urban development. Neighbouring rural and semi-rural land is under pressure to urbanise, and councils are under pressure to allow more subdivision. The empirical basis for this thesis is drawn from interviews and observation undertaken when I ‘lived’ in the Blue Mountains for three months in June-August 2011 and two additional short field trips in January and August 2012.

The methods and analysis used in this research are guided by qualitative, sociological methodologies. Researching environment and society or aspects of the ‘natural’ and ‘social’, in World Heritage or otherwise, are problematised throughout this thesis and actor-network theory (ANT) is offered as a potential solution. By using ANT this thesis makes a determined effort to overcome the either/or approach to the study of society and nature (Murphy 1995; Buttel 2002;
Catton 1994; Dunlap and Catton 2002) or what Murdoch terms sociology's environmental 'blind spot' (2001: 111). Instead it looks at society and nature as an actor-network with associations as the unit of analysis. Through these associations we can explore the hybridity of society/nature as something other than social or natural (Latour 2005). ANT allows us to ‘reimagine’ society/nature (Castree and McMillan 2001: 210) as something completely distinct, and in the reimagining World Heritage too becomes a distinct hybrid that is natural, cultural, concept and object. The outcome is that this thesis advances the current knowledge in expressing the contemporary World Heritage site as a site of sociological investigation.

ANT is the ideal companion to investigate the effects of World Heritage in a populated ‘natural’ World Heritage area through its ability to give both humans and non-humans a voice in the research. Critical to determining the effects of World Heritage is exploring and determining how World Heritage has been translated (Callon 1986). In the World Heritage literature, discussed in Chapter 1, there are constant tensions between conservation and development as well as outstanding universal value and local values. The contradictory meta-narrative is that people are at the heart of heritage conservation, yet they remain the biggest threat to site integrity. This thesis, through tracing the unexpected ways humans and non-humans intervene in the process of translation, reveals a network of relationships that provide a more nuanced and intricate picture of World Heritage implementation. The three narratives that emerged in this research, of disengagement, lost opportunities and business as usual, provide a powerful insight into the effects of World Heritage implementation and the associations and ordering of actors that negotiate and configure a specific translation of World Heritage.

ANT’s tenet of ‘following the actors’ requires the researcher to follow ‘the traces left behind by their activity’ (Latour 2005: 29). Following only observable traces leads, inevitably, to actors, who, by leaving no visible traces, are omitted from the research. In this case study, following the traces had the unintentional consequences of omitting Indigenous people in this thesis. While the GBMWAHC
has been home to at least six Aboriginal language groups for between 14,000-20,000 years and the area remains important to contemporary Aboriginal groups (DECC 2009), they mostly live outside the GBMWHA in Sydney or other surrounding towns (Taçon, Hooper, Brennan, et al. 2007). Consequently, I did not knowingly come across any Indigenous actors or their traces to ‘follow’. For this reason, rather than attempt to synthetically insert Indigenous issues into the thesis, I have focused on the stories of contemporary non-indigenous people.

This choice provides an opportunity for this thesis to contribute to an understudied area of World Heritage sites. As has been noted elsewhere the World Heritage literature, both internationally and in Australia, on Aboriginal heritage values and connection to ‘natural’ heritage places is substantial (Harrington 2004). Comparatively, the literature on contemporary non-indigenous people’s values and attachments to ‘natural’ World Heritage is negligible (see for example Russell and Jambrecina 2002 and Harrington 2004). The GBMWHA is no exception. Although there is ongoing research into contemporary Indigenous heritage values in the area, albeit sporadic and underdeveloped, there has been even less research on contemporary non-indigenous heritage values since World Heritage inscription in 2000. It is for this reason that, while fully acknowledging Indigenous heritage connections to the GBMWHA, I have made a deliberate methodological choice to emphasise non-indigenous relationships. By adding to the small literature on non-indigenous relationships to ‘natural’ heritage places, I hope to uncover fresh cultural expressions and social importance of ‘natural’ heritage within a World Heritage context in contemporary non-indigenous Australia.

In order to explore the effects of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in a ‘natural’ area with an adjacent population this thesis addresses a number of sub-topics. These sub-topics are essentially derived from breaking down the thesis question. Thus, the thesis looks at the World Heritage Convention and its associated administration and processes and documented effects of implementation. It looks at ‘nature’ and ‘society’ as units of analysis in social research and, importantly, questions the validity of these practices and
explores an alternate approach. It then explores the network of human and non-humans in the GBMWH. Discovering that a visible World Heritage presence is largely missing from the GBMWH, it interrogates the less-visible processes that reveal how World Heritage is translated in the GBMWH. It probes these translations, or narratives, to determine the effects of World Heritage implementation, and concludes that they are something specific to and contingent on the actor-network.

To logically organise these sub-topics, this thesis is divided into two parts. Part one provides a context for this study consisting of four chapters. Fundamentally, the question of what effects World Heritage has cannot be answered without first taking a closer look at the World Heritage system and its application in World Heritage sites. Thus, Chapter 1 looks at World Heritage as a process and an aspirational concept designed to safeguard the world’s outstanding natural and cultural heritage. It introduces the World Heritage Convention and the process for nomination and inscription. The second half of the chapter looks at how World Heritage has been implemented by thematically organising the World Heritage literature on how World Heritage is understood and practiced. The chapter concludes with an introduction to the, somewhat impoverished, World Heritage literature in Australia.

Choosing a ‘natural’ World Heritage site as my case study meant that I needed to examine my ‘native’ discipline of sociology to determine its suitability for the task of doing ‘social’ research in a ‘natural’ World Heritage area. Thus, Chapter 2 provides an historical account of sociological research in society and nature. In light of studying a ‘natural’ World Heritage area, with an adjacent population, it problematises persistent dichotomies such as society/nature in sociological research. Acknowledging the limitations of sociology, the chapter discusses a way to augment sociological investigation with more suitable analytical equipment. It then introduces Actor-network theory as a possible alternative. In response to Chapters 1 and 2, Chapter 3 describes an appropriate qualitative research design. It details the disciplinary framework in which this study is situated and further explores Actor-network theory as a suitable method of enquiry for a ‘natural’
World Heritage area. It describes the methods used in conducting this study. It introduces the case study method and a suitable case study. This Australian case study, the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, is then discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Part two of the thesis draws on the background information introduced in Part one to move towards an understanding of the effects of World Heritage implementation. Part two consists of three results chapters and provides a discussion/conclusion to the thesis. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 discuss the major findings of this research, the effects of World Heritage implementation, presented as three narratives. Chapter 5, a narrative of disengagement, is mainly based on interviews with Blue Mountains residents. While residents appreciated their World Heritage surroundings, they were largely unaware, or interested, in the reasons for inscription or plans for implementation. This narrative of disengagement points to the broader consequences of the World Heritage processes when residents have little involvement in nomination, inscription and implementation.

Nevertheless, some residents were involved, more or less, in the nomination and many of them expressed disappointment in the implementation of World Heritage in the GBMWHA. This disappointment is discussed in Chapter 6, as a narrative of lost opportunities. The chapter is based on interviews with a range of actors who were implicated in enthusiasm for the prospect of World Heritage, but frustrated or dissatisfied, in some way, by the outcome. The ‘outcome’ of World Heritage implementation in the GBMWHA is, to a large extent, the responsibility of the managers. Chapter 7 discusses the approach to managing the GBMWHA as a narrative of business as usual. The chapter is based on interviews with the managers of the World Heritage area whose approach reflects the broader bureaucratic and economic limitations of national parks management.

Chapter 8 discusses the implications of these three narratives for a broader understanding of the effects of World Heritage implementation. It considers the possibility of the GBMWHAs World Heritage network as a ‘black-boxed’ actor-
network and explores the efficacy, and practicalities, of ANT as a method for bridging the society/nature dichotomy in sociological investigation. It concludes with some implications for World Heritage practitioners and further research.
Part One: Research context
Chapter 1: World Heritage

The cultural and natural World Heritage is among the priceless and irreplaceable assets, not only of each nation, but of humanity as a whole. The loss, through deterioration or disappearance, of any of these most prized assets constitutes an impoverishment of the heritage of all the peoples of the world. Parts of that heritage, because of their exceptional qualities, can be considered to be of “outstanding universal value” and as such worthy of special protection against the dangers which increasingly threaten them (UNESCO World Heritage Convention 1972, section 1.B (4)).

The 1972 UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was established to safeguard cultural and natural heritage of ‘outstanding universal value’ for future generations (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2007). The Convention is the most widely accepted international legal instrument in the field of heritage conservation, having been ratified by 192 countries in over 1,000 World Heritage sites with new sites added to the list every year (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2016). This thesis examines the effects of World Heritage in an Australian case study after inscription. However, in order to understand how World Heritage comes to be and how it is conceived and implemented, it is necessary to first understand the processes of World Heritage. Thus, this chapter begins with an overview of these World Heritage processes, including the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, overseeing committee and advisory bodies, how properties are inscribed on the list, required reporting and sites in danger.

Along with listing the main elements of the World Heritage process, I signal some of the more familiar shortcomings of these elements. My aim is not to arbitrarily criticise World Heritage, but rather to present World Heritage for what it is – a constantly evolving work-in-progress that encourages internal and external processual assessment. I use the term ‘processual’ in this case because
the World Heritage establishment regularly takes stock of its most fundamental processes of World Heritage nomination and inscription. What happens after inscription, although there are UNESCO/World Heritage publications on this matter, is largely the focus of academic literature to which this chapter subsequently turns. It specifically examines the body of literature that focuses on World Heritage sites, especially, relationships between site conservation and people who live within or adjacent to sites. It then provides a thematic synthesis of the academic World Heritage literature that demonstrates the various ways World Heritage is conceptually interpreted as well as practiced. The chapter concludes with an introduction to World Heritage in Australia, including a list of the current 19 properties inscribed with World Heritage status and research on these sites to date.

The Convention

The foundation of the World Heritage system is the Convention for the Protection of the World’s Cultural and Natural Heritage (referred to as the World Heritage Convention or the Convention). The Convention was adopted by UNESCO in 1972 and became operational in 1975 (Pressouyre 1996). The first draft of the Convention was the culmination of an idea to develop a world heritage trust in the USA in 1965 (Slatyer 1984) which was the first international agreement to address the safeguarding of both natural and cultural heritage considered to be of ‘outstanding universal value’ (Slatyer 1984; Manz 2004). To date there are 192 signatories to the Convention which are called ‘States Parties’, of which 165 have World Heritage sites. Only the States Parties to the Convention are eligible to nominate a property for World Heritage listing. The States Parties can only nominate sites within their boundaries unless the nominated site crosses one or more boundaries, in which case States Parties can jointly nominate a property (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2007). It is the duty of the States Parties to help identify, protect, conserve and present cultural and natural heritage as well as aid in the transmission of the heritage to future generations with the financial, artistic, scientific and technical resources it has available or is able to obtain through international assistance (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2007).
By signing the Convention, States Parties agree to several obligations regarding how the World Heritage sites are managed. First and foremost, they must not damage the heritage site and develop methods to counteract potential threats and take the appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary for the site’s protection. The Convention requires that States Parties adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning (World Heritage Convention 1972, articles 4, 5 and 6). Additionally, States Parties are expected to make bi-annual financial contributions, as well as encouraged to make voluntary contributions, to the World Heritage Committee thereby also contributing to the World Heritage Fund used to provide advice and technical assistance to States Parties in the form of International Assistance. This International Assistance is aimed primarily to assist ratified developing countries. However, there is some scepticism about the benefit of these funds in practical terms.2

The Convention is, intentionally, rather vague on the specifics of World Heritage processes.3 A nearly universal ratification hinges on the ability of the Convention to appeal to a wide philosophical spectrum. A certain level of abstraction is necessary in this case and so the specifics or the ‘rules’ of World Heritage are

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2 In 2010 there were 186 requests, around US$3 million, for specific assistance to help prepare nomination files yet only 62 requests (representing around US$1 million) led to a successful inscription or extension of an existing property (Rao 2010: 165). Rao’s concern, aside from the obvious waste of time and money, is that these sites that do not make it to the nomination stage are contributing to the unbalanced nature of the World Heritage List, a concern further discussed below.

3 For example, when referring to States Parties’ obligation the Convention contains qualifying phrases like a State Party ‘will do all it can ... to the utmost of its own resources’ (Article 4) and each State Party ‘shall endeavour, in so far as possible, and as appropriate for each country’ (Article 5). The flexibility of these obligations is a potential loophole that Australian Commonwealth and state governments have tried to wriggle through on more than one occasion. See the Report by the House of Representatives Committee (1996) Managing Australia’s World Heritage for examples of High Court rulings over the Tasmanian government’s flexible interpretations of Australia’s obligations under the Convention (only available in HTML).
spelled out in the Operational Guidelines which serves as the working document for the Convention. The principles of the Convention are implemented through provisions in the Guidelines (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2015). Specifically the Guidelines provide procedures for:

a) the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger;

b) the protection and conservation of World Heritage properties;

c) the granting of International Assistance under the World Heritage Fund; and

d) the mobilization of national and international support in favour of the Convention.

While the Convention may be vague, being a widely ratified legal instrument, the text in the document is, essentially, ironclad. Thus, the processes, procedures, concepts and definitions of World Heritage that are subject to ‘integration and evolution’ are listed in the Operational Guidelines (Badman, Dingwall, and Bomhard 2008: 2). Unlike the Convention, the Guidelines text is revised and updated regularly. To say it has grown since its first iteration in 1977 would be an understatement. The first Guidelines was a modest document of 16 pages and 28 paragraphs (provisions). By comparison, 26 iterations later, the current 2015 version is 175 pages and 290 paragraphs. This growth reflects the conceptual evolution of World Heritage since its inception in 1972.\(^4\) While the World Heritage concept has evolved, its processes are essentially unchanged. The World

\(^4\) World Heritage has experienced several modifications since 1972, most notably, the introduction of ‘cultural landscapes’ as an additional category to ‘natural’ and ‘cultural’ sites, the Nara document on Authenticity which encompassed a broader view on what constituted authentic heritage and the Global Strategy which addresses the imbalanced nature of the World Heritage list (Cameron and Rössler 2013). Additionally, in 2002, the World Heritage Committee adopted the Budapest Declaration on World Heritage which stresses the need to ‘ensure an appropriate and equitable balance between conservation, sustainability and development, so that World Heritage properties can be protected through appropriate activities contributing to the social and economic development and the quality of life of our communities’ (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2008).
Heritage Convention depends on administration, primarily through the World Heritage Committee, as well as the unique components at the heart of the Convention, including the List, nomination and inscription, advisory bodies, site monitoring, World Heritage in danger and outstanding universal value.

World Heritage Committee

The Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the Cultural and Natural Heritage of Outstanding Universal Value (also known as the World Heritage Committee or the Committee) administers the World Heritage Convention. The Committee is composed of 21 States Parties which meet in yearly sessions, as well as extraordinary sessions when required. Committee members have six-year terms and are elected by the General Assembly of States Parties which meets every two years. The Committee’s day-to-day work is managed by the World Heritage Bureau and World Heritage Centre, located in Paris, provides secretariat support. The Centre manages the activities related to the Convention and implements the decisions of the World Heritage Committee. As well as implementing the World Heritage Convention, the Committee allocates International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund. The Committee examines reports on the state of conservation of inscribed sites and decides on any actions that need to be taken by States Parties. It decides on the inscription or removal of sites on the List of World Heritage in Danger and ultimately decides which properties to inscribe on the World Heritage List. The Committee ostensibly makes its decisions based on the recommendations of Advisory Bodies (discussed below). However the Committee can, and does, inscribe properties against Advisory Body recommendations. There has been an increase in the number of properties inscribed in this manner, bringing into question the scientific and technical rigour of the decision-making process (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2011). It has been argued that the basis of these decisions has shifted, since the early years of the Committee, from technical facts to diplomacy and politics (Cameron and Rössler 2013) ‘which leads to the suspicion that [Committee] work may be sometimes ruled by political trade-offs, rather than by

5 Australia also served on the Bureau in 1980-81, 1981-82, 1982-83, 1984-85 and 1988-89
professional judgement’ (Von Droste 2012: 37). This shift constitutes a ‘very worrying evolution for the credibility of the [World Heritage] List (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2011: 38). Nevertheless, compared to other World Heritage documents, it is arguably the List that most powerfully embodies the popular conception of World Heritage.

The List

However, the official purpose of the World Heritage list is nobler than its common perception as a list of ‘must-see’ tourist sites. According to UNESCO, the World Heritage List acts as a kind of trust whereby World Heritage sites are kept safe in order to pass them on to ‘generations of the future as their rightful inheritance’ (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2005: 5). Once a country becomes a State Party to the Convention, they are eligible to nominate sites for inclusion in the World Heritage List. There are currently over 1,000 sites on the List, the composition of which has been the subject of much discussion. The List is intended to be a collection of properties that balance natural, cultural and mixed categories, as well as being representative of the diversity of States Parties. However, the List has evolved with large regional and categorical gaps. Almost half the World Heritage properties are located in Europe and there are 814 cultural sites compared to 203 natural and 35 mixed. The World Heritage Committee has adopted several strategies to address these gaps, most notably the Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List, however there are doubts as to how successful these strategies have been (Labadi 2013; Steiner and Frey 2012). While some regional areas, such as Africa and Asia, are gaining greater representation on the list (Cameron and Rössler 2013) it has been suggested that attention should shift away from further expanding the List to the more urgent matters of protecting sites already inscribed (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2011).

Another strategy to address the imbalance of the List is the requirement of all States Parties to submit to the Committee an inventory in the form of a Tentative List of heritage sites which they plan to nominate over the next five to ten years. Sites must be included on the Tentative List before they can be nominated for
World Heritage. The purpose of the Tentative List is to provide the World Heritage Committee with an idea of future nominations so they can determine gaps in representation and make comparative analyses of ‘themes, regions, geo-cultural groupings and bio-geographic provinces’ (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2005: 51). A main issue with the Tentative List, as precursor to a more balanced list, is that the geographical and categorical composition of the Tentative List differs little to the properties already inscribed (ICOMOS 2004). In other words, the regions and categories under-represented on the World Heritage list are also under-represented on the Tentative List. Without identifying unrepresented regions and categories, it is impossible to identify properties for future nomination that may fill the gaps in representation. In any case, the Tentative List is only the first step in a lengthy and costly process towards getting a property inscribed on the World Heritage list.

**Nomination and Outstanding universal value**

Once a property is included on a State Party’s Tentative List, they can then nominate that property for World Heritage status, subject to a strict timetable set by the World Heritage Centre. Nomination documents follow a prescribed format that requires comprehensive site information including:

- the identification and description of the Property including the boundaries and buffer zone and history and development of the site;
- justification for inscription including the relevant World Heritage criteria, statements of OUV, authenticity and integrity of the site, and a comparative analysis of comparable sites;
- State of conservation and factors affecting the property including its physical condition and possible threats; protection and management including legislative, regulatory, contractual, planning, institutional and/or traditional measures relating to the protection of the site with a detailed analysis of how these protection mechanisms operate as well as a detailed management plan;
- and monitoring including information on measureable criteria, conservation measures, frequency of assessment and responsible authorities (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2005).
Based on reports from the Advisory Bodies, the World Heritage Committee may decide to inscribe the property, refer it back to the States Parties for further information, defer it for more in-depth study or decline the nomination. Declined properties will only be accepted for re-nomination in exceptional circumstances (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2007).

The information in nomination files is used to evaluate the nominated site against a set of criteria to determine a site’s outstanding universal value (OUV). Although OUV is the cornerstone of the Convention, it is the Operational Guidelines that contains its definition. OUV, as outlined in the Operational Guidelines, is defined as:

[C]ultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. As such, the permanent protection of this heritage is of the highest importance to the international community as a whole (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2015: 11, paragraph 50).

However, like many universalising concepts, OUV is not immune from relativistic interpretations (Labadi 2013). Thus, despite being the basis of the World Heritage Convention, an international consensus on the meaning of OUV remains ambiguous. That OUV is vulnerable to interpretation, jeopardises the very idea of a standardised global register of heritage sites. The potential interpretation of the standards of quality by which a site can be measured is an issue UNESCO is aware of. In a recent external audit of the World Heritage Convention, the auditors found points of contention mostly pertaining to Westernised versions of heritage overshadowing more sacred, symbolic aspects of (particularly natural) heritage (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2011). They noted that the existence of subjective differences between the concept of OUV and its application and the evolutionary nature of the Convention are still to be fully addressed. Indeed, values are assessed according to different locations, scales and through particular experiences and historical, cultural and political influences over time. In other words, an OUV that can be applied universally needs to be a mutable concept
capable of withstanding the diversity of universal and local heritage values and significance (Titchen 1995).

Up until 2003 there were two separate lists for judging the OUV of natural and cultural properties. Following discussions to take a more holistic view toward the representation of natural and cultural heritage and open up possibilities for properties not previously nominated or properties with both natural and cultural elements there is now a single list of 10 criteria. To be eligible for World Heritage inscription, nominated properties must meet at least one of the following:

1. represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
2. exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
3. bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
4. be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
5. be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
6. be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria)
7. to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
8. to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
9. to be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;

10. to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2008: 14).

Compiling nomination dossiers requires the coordination and cooperation of several organisations and a ‘strong multi-disciplinary team’ with specialist, technical and scientific skills and, preferably, an understanding of the World Heritage process (Badman, Dingwall, and Bomhard 2008: 19). Collecting and compiling information on the site and producing a complete nomination dossier takes considerable time and resources. The process of assessing the nomination takes, on average, 18 months, assuming there are no major revisions that may require the State Party to resubmit the following year. The high standards of the nomination dossier is clearly challenging, especially for developing countries who may struggle to pull together the needed resources and expertise. Many dossiers are considered incomplete by the World Heritage Committee or fail their evaluation of OUV by the Advisory Bodies. Somewhat surprisingly, the Advisory Bodies, who have the expertise and experience necessary to compile a successful nomination, cannot assist States Parties with their nominations due to a perceived conflict of interest (Rao 2010). Despite this ‘arms length’ approach of the Advisory Bodies, they provide a critical role in the World Heritage process.

Both the IUCN and ICOMOS have Australian branches that comment on proposed nominations. Both are actively and publically involved in Australian World Heritage issues though neither of these bodies provides formal advice on managing Australian World Heritage areas their work informs the broader international discussion on heritage matters (House of Representatives Committee 1996).
Advisory bodies

The Convention identifies three Advisory Bodies - International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM). IUCN and ICOMOS, among other undertakings, are charged with the responsibility of evaluating sites nominated for inscription and reporting to the Committee, as well as monitoring the state of conservation of existing World Heritage sites and reviewing applications for international assistance. As mentioned above, in most cases the World Heritage Committee observes these recommendations, however, it can and does inscribe properties not recommended by the Advisory Bodies. The specific role of ICCROM, in relation to the Convention, includes being the priority partner in training for cultural heritage, monitoring the state of conservation of cultural World Heritage properties, reviewing requests for International Assistance submitted by States Parties, and providing input and support for capacity-building activities (ICCROM 2012). The Advisory Bodies also play a significant role in assessing the state of conservation of World Heritage properties through their involvement in site monitoring.

Site Monitoring

The World Heritage Committee requests that States Parties prepare Periodic Reports in cycles of every six years according to a phased timetable that is categorised by region. The first phase of periodic reporting began in 2000 and

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7 For example, the IUCN's assessment of a potential World Heritage property, which takes roughly 12 months, is based on the States Parties' World Heritage nomination dossier; a global comparative analysis performed by the UNEP-WCMC (United National Environment Program and World Conservation Monitoring Centre) - nominated properties that have been identified as gaps on the World Heritage List through recognised global strategies or thematic studies are also acknowledged as part of this process; an external review by experts on the various natural themes proposed as having OUV or experts who have detailed knowledge of the properties; and a field mission to assess the integrity and adequate protection of the nominated property. The IUCN panel then reviews the nomination dossier, comparative analysis and field mission report and makes a recommendation to the World Heritage Committee.
was completed in 2006. States Parties are encouraged to use the Periodic Reports to record changes to the sites and forecast any potential threats to the conservation of sites. The Periodic Reporting on the application of the World Heritage Convention is intended to serve four main purposes:

1) to provide an assessment of the application of the World Heritage Convention by the State Party;
2) to provide an assessment as to whether the World Heritage values of the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List are being maintained over time;
3) to provide up-dated information about the World Heritage properties to record the changing circumstances and state of conservation of the properties;
4) to provide a mechanism for regional co-operation and exchange of information and experiences between States Parties concerning the implementation of the Convention and World Heritage conservation (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2005: 85).

The World Heritage Committee uses Periodic Reports to compile information on the state of conservation of specific sites and across regional areas, as well as make decisions regarding measures to maintain the OUV of sites, or inscribe sites on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Reports are also presented in the World Heritage Committee report to the General Conference of UNESCO. At the request of the Committee, IUCN and ICOMOS, together with UNESCO, may undertake site assessments to monitor the state of conservation. These Reactive Monitoring missions report on the state of conservation of specific World Heritage sites under threat.

The World Heritage Centre describes the two reporting systems as:

‘tools [that] perform different, albeit complementary functions: Reactive Monitoring is a policy guidance tool, aimed to provide benchmarks, orientations and deadlines to the actions of the States Parties and Periodic Reporting provides an assessment of national
policies and capacities to ensure site conservation’ (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2007: 20).

However, UNESCO has noted that there are flaws in the current reporting system. Both reporting mechanisms are complex and expensive and there is no clear functioning relationship between the two (one reporting tool does not necessarily inform the other), particularly where properties have no formal management plan that includes monitoring and evaluation procedures (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2007, Hocking et al. 2008). The Committee, once alerted to the imminent loss of OUV, integrity or authenticity, are able to consider all possible corrective measures to save the property (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2005).

List of World Heritage Sites in Danger

Ideally, when problems are identified, Reactive Monitoring is used as a measure to prevent sites from being inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. However, in some cases, the World Heritage Committee, acting under the World Heritage Convention inscribes a property on this list. This action is rarely taken and only if the property is ‘threatened by serious and specific danger’, where ‘major operations are necessary for the conservation of the property’, or where assistance has been requested by the States Party (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2005: 80). A property may be placed on this list because of ascertained danger, such as ‘serious deterioration of materials’ or ‘important loss of cultural significance, as well as potential danger, such as the ‘threatening effects of town planning projects’ or the ‘gradual changes to geological, climatic or other environmental factors’ (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2005: 80).

Following inscription on the World Heritage List in Danger the Committee and States Party develop a set of corrective measures and the state of conservation of the property is reviewed annually, whereby the Committee may determine to take the property off the list, recommend further corrective measures or remove the property from the World Heritage List in Danger or the World Heritage list (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2005: 83). According to UNESCO, having a site inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger can be perceived by States Parties
as a kind of sanction or dishonour. Conversely, some States Parties consider the list to be an expedient way to save a property (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2008: 17). International financial aid is prioritised to properties under threat and so States Parties may be able to garner the resources they need to implement corrective measures. Currently, there are 55 sites (out of 1,052) on the World Heritage List in Danger and two sites, Germany’s Dresden Elbe Valley and Oman’s Arabian Oryx Sanctuary, have been deleted from the World Heritage List.

While the World Heritage Convention sets out the obligations of States Parties and embodies the spirit of World Heritage, it is clear that, in its entirety, World Heritage is more than the Convention. It is a complex process that, along with the Convention, depends on the Operational Guidelines, World Heritage Committee, States Parties, The Lists and Advisory Bodies in order to function. It depends on a system to categorise, create and implement procedures and facilitate reports and monitoring. Not least of all, it depends on heritage sites with the potential for outstanding universal value. This section has provided a brief overview of these major elements of the World Heritage process, and associated difficulties, that deal primarily with nominating and inscribing heritage sites, along with their associated deficits. Having established an understanding of World Heritage at the international level and the relevant processes, this chapter turns to the literature that focuses on World Heritage after inscription at the national, regional or local level.

Research on populated World Heritage sites

*When all is said and done, conservation is about people. It is about the balance that must be struck between humans and nature and between generations* (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2004: 24).

The following is divided into two sections: international, and Australian World Heritage sites. First I turn briefly to the publications, before introducing the academic literature, most recently represented by critical heritage studies, which I have grouped into themes that demonstrate the motivations for, and uses of, World Heritage status. After a discussion on Australia’s current association, as a State Party, with World Heritage there follows a section on recent literature on
Australian sites. This section is brief, reflecting the small body of publications specific to contemporary World Heritage issues in Australian sites. It is important to note that I make a distinction between literature that focuses on any range of issues present in World Heritage sites and literature on World Heritage sites. That is to say, the literature that focuses on issues that happen to exist within a World Heritage area (like coral bleaching in the Great Barrier Reef) is not included here. This thesis is interested only in the literature that identifies and discusses issues specific to World Heritage implementation. I have also omitted much of the literature that merely describes the characteristics of World Heritage sites without providing any deeper analysis. Or, in other words, I have included literature based on primary research and excluded research that relies on secondary sources or desk reviews. Many UNESCO publications fall under this descriptive category. To begin, this section takes a closer look at the consequences of World Heritage implementation in populated World Heritage sites. Internationally, the literature indicates tensions in World Heritage sites between aims to conserve the sites and the people who live in or near the site (see for example Bianchi 2002; Black and Wall 2001; Evans 2002; Smith 2006). Australian research, too, tends to be the subject of conflicts over resources (see Aplin and Masswood 2000) or indigenous people and heritage values (see Smith 2006; Harris 2012) and frequently it tends to be a mixture of both. Some exceptions are Witcomb 2012; Harris 2012; Sullivan 2004. The controversial events in Kakadu National Park have been well documented (Aplin 2004; Maswood 2000). Put simply, a proposed uranium mine within the World Heritage area almost put Kakadu on the World Heritage in Danger List. Australia eventually retracted the proposal, but the protracted and expensive negotiations designated Kakadu as possibly the most controversial World Heritage site of all (Aplin 2004). It is in the wake of such controversy over World Heritage sites that we see what effect World Heritage can have on people. This particular controversy had a direct effect on management and tourism in the park. From relative obscurity Kakadu managers suddenly found the park and themselves the subjects of daily press releases and tourism demand exceeded the manager's capacity, placing pressure on already stretched park resources (Haynes 2009). Although tourism has since stabilised to a more manageable number, there remain concerns regarding how Kakadu is promoted. The park has been cleansed of its complex and political history through its promotion as a mythical, “edenic” destination; a stereotypical World Heritage destination more easily consumed by tourists (Harris 2012).
Contrary to popular belief, World Heritage lacks enforcement capacity and despite the spirit of universal trusteeship over the protection of sites the protection that World Heritage affords can best be regarded as theoretical (Pressouyre 1996). The onus falls on the nominating country to implement the Convention, and in practice, to ensure the site’s preservation. This resultant miscellaneous mix of management strategies across 1,052 sites makes it difficult to generalise about how World Heritage sites are managed, how the Convention is being implemented or what effects it has on site residents. Like any universal convention, World Heritage is not a perfect system (see table 1.1 for a summary of the Convention’s strengths and weaknesses). Arguably, its most notable impact has been its influence on standardising heritage values and conservation strategies, not only for World Heritage sites but also for heritage in general. It has ‘contributed to an extraordinary international dialogue on heritage matters, fostering a new understanding of heritage theory and practice’ (Cameron and Rössler 2013: 221). Framing a universal understanding of heritage is the Convention’s strength, and, controversially, one of its biggest weaknesses. The conception and consequences of an all-inclusive ‘world’ heritage is the subject of much discussion, reflection, and revision by World Heritage supporters and critics.

While most conflict in Australian World Heritage areas involves the commercial use of natural resources, there have been disputes over more domestic matters. Sullivan’s (2004) exploration into the World Heritage Willandra Lakes Area revealed that local sheep graziers and Aboriginal traditional owners were insufficiently informed on the consequences of World Heritage Listing. The graziers found that they were not permitted to use certain areas of their land for grazing which, in turn, devalued the farmer’s properties. The traditional owners lost control over their local burial ground, including their ancestor’s remains and found their traditional heritage superseded by universal heritage values. Planning has since been redeveloped with the full collaboration of local people. Likewise, Russell and Jambrecina’s 2002 research on the management of Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage area revealed radical rethinking by the managers. Local communities protested that the newly drafted management plan ignored local people. Subsequent negotiations between managers and the local community resulted in an alteration of the management plan to include local values.
Table 1.1 World Heritage Convention implementation: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Source: UNESCO World Heritage Centre (2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An intergovernmental agreement/strong consensus</td>
<td>Budget limitations especially given increasing demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near universal membership</td>
<td>Differing local interpretations of OUV and management standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide range of members from developing and developed countries</td>
<td>Limits of administrative oversights</td>
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<tr>
<td>40 years of operation</td>
<td>Slow to enact change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of the UN family</td>
<td>Few mechanisms for industry and private sector engagement</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use better structures, plans and practices for business</td>
<td>Emphasis on inscription as an end in itself rather than conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase civil society support</td>
<td>Increasing politicisation of functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen relationships with other international instruments</td>
<td>Increasing Committee, secretariat and Advisory Body workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room to grow diversity of properties</td>
<td>Number of new competing organisations/lists and brand confusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the inscription of a site on the World Heritage list, communication between UNESCO and States Parties and site managers on implementing the Convention is facilitated primarily through texts. In theory, given that there are over 1,000 World Heritage sites, the work that States Parties do in sites regarding implementation, management, communication and interpretation can be manifested in over 1,000 different ways. For this reason, UNESCO publishes a host of papers and guides on the implementation and management of World Heritage sites. Beginning in 2002, UNESCO has published over 40 papers, reports and manuals aimed at helping States Parties implement the World Heritage Convention. Much of the UNESCO generated literature is directed at sites where there are more likely to be tensions between conservation and local people. For UNESCO, linking universal and local values in World Heritage sites is considered critical to successful management (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2004), as is involving local communities in all aspects of the heritage process. Successful implementation of the Convention through the consultation, collaboration, awareness raising, capacity building and training/education of local communities
can ultimately lead to economic and social benefits and a sense of local stewardship.

It is clear that UNESCO is promoting World Heritage as something more than a tool for conserving heritage sites. At its most aspirational, it is a tool for sustainable, community development. However, it was not always considered in this way. Indeed, the original 1972 Convention deliberately omitted the involvement of communities in the nomination process, as a means to avoid embarrassment, should the States Parties’ nomination fail to gain World Heritage status (Rössler 2012). However successful the Convention may seem to appear, in the 44 years since coming into force ways of thinking and doing heritage conservation have undoubtedly changed. The global popularity of the Convention raises complex and continual challenges for making the Convention both flexible enough to be implemented universally, while maintaining its credibility (Turtinen 2000).

These challenges are reflected in a number of changes to the Operational Guidelines over the last four decades that trace the path of a World Heritage striving to become socially, culturally and environmentaly ethical. This ethical heritage was publically declared in the theme chosen for the 40th anniversary celebrations. The theme, ‘World Heritage and Sustainable Development: the Role of Local Communities’ established the importance of the connection between people and heritage and the potential benefits to both, through sustainable development. Some issues have provided ongoing challenges for the Convention. While sustainable development is the ultimate goal, there are arguably issues that need addressing before people and heritage can mutually benefit. As discussed in the first section of this chapter, there are elements inherent to World Heritage that allow for certain agendas to creep in, and potentially corrupt, the process. States Parties must act in the best interests of heritage sites and potentially affected communities when deciding to nominate a site. The World Heritage Committee and Advisory Bodies must do likewise when deciding to inscribe a site. Ultimately, there are many reasons for nominating and inscribing sites that may include site conservation and sustainable community development.
There are, however, many other reasons that motivate a nomination for World Heritage, or inscribe a property on the List, as the following will discuss.

**World Heritage Themes**

*There is, really, no such thing as heritage* (Smith 2006: 11)

Through my unsuccessful attempts to find a single definition of a populated World Heritage site in the literature I have discovered that World Heritage sites consist of a complex of factors and phenomena, some of which are common across all populated sites. This view of heritage as a 'multilayered performance' must take into account the various ways heritage is created, used and managed across time and space (Smith 2006: 3). Narrowing down this complexity to one defining explanation is neither possible nor appropriate, though I have identified nine broad themes of authority, sustainable regional development, conflicting values, resentment and resistance, revitalisation, ideologies, museumification, power, and commoditisation. These themes are by no means exhaustive, nor are they mutually exclusive. They are interconnected and aspects of some categories may be present in others. Moreover, some categories which I have chosen to keep separate, like power and resentment/resistance, could be considered analogous or conflicting concepts depending on one's perspective. The act of taking information from the literature and grouping it in orderly, synthetic categories is purely an exercise in abstractive interpretation and presentation for the purposes of this thesis, although I do feel that the categories are useful in demonstrating both the variability and consistency of themes across World Heritage literature. I have neglected to include politics as a separate category, as all of my nine categories are inherently political.

**Authority**

In accordance with the World Heritage Convention, all World Heritage site nominations must include either an existing management plan or guidelines for site management until a plan is developed (2008). A general issue with this requirement is that people who live in or near World Heritage sites 'do not usually have the authority, capacity or legitimacy to manage World Heritage properties' (Edroma 2004: 41) and as such, heritage planning and management
documents are often developed by outside 'experts'. These documents, as well as many generic heritage management guidelines, embody a specialised *lingua franca* for the way heritage is understood and managed. Over time, this language becomes 'scripted' or 'regulated' (Smith 2006: 79) and thus intrinsically exclusive of all but heritage experts. This exclusive interpretation of heritage (not only World Heritage) becomes the dominant discourse, or what Smith (2006) has coined the ‘Authorised Heritage Discourse’, which is institutionalised and regulated. This institutionalisation can even apply to competing discourses (Smith 2006) over time where it is the discordance between both that becomes established to the point where the differences are no longer 'examined, evaluated, or criticised' (Innes 1995: 186). Although there are attempts to make the heritage management process more inclusive (Johnston and Buckley 2001), this 'discursive construction', particularly of key heritage conservation documents, undermines these innovations (Waterton, Smith and Campbell 2006: 351). The constituted discursiveness of heritage lends rigidity to how heritage is known and understood and also to how it is managed. It muffles the various other perceptions, knowledges, stories and interpretations of heritage and obstructs attempts to keep discussions about the meaning of heritage ongoing and accessible.

**Sustainable Regional Development**

The nomination of a World Heritage site is essentially a pledge by the nominating country to protect the World Heritage site from ‘the dangers which increasingly threaten them’ (2008: 2). However, some countries lack the finances and the technical expertise to ensure ongoing conservation and maintenance of the site (Van der Aa 2005). Indeed, World Heritage inscription is often mistakenly expected to automatically generate financial assistance (Williams 2005). UNESCO has attempted to address this dilemma by promoting the benefits of World Heritage as a means of sustainable, economic regional development (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2004). The notion is that sites, when managed accordingly, can generate the necessary funds to maintain and protect the site, generate economic prosperity to site areas and alleviate poverty through planning and development for tourism (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2007). Specifically, the Convention reinforces the social and economical
utility of World Heritage sites in stating that ‘each State Party to the Convention shall endeavour … to adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community’ (Article 5).

This ‘function’ in the life of the community has been elaborated in the Budapest Declaration adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 26th session in 2002 which states that the Committee will:

‘[S]eek to ensure an appropriate and equitable balance between conservation, sustainability and development, so that World Heritage properties can be protected through appropriate activities contributing to the social and economic development and the quality of life of ... communities and will seek to ensure the active involvement of ... local communities at all levels in the identification, protection and management of ... World Heritage properties’ (2002, 3c).

Difficulties in implementing this ideal use of World Heritage properties arise when site planning is still firmly entrenched in traditional planning systems. Community involvement in World Heritage becomes difficult when technical or scientific experts (often from outside the site) control much of what is selected as being ‘heritage’ and when the management of the site ultimately involves the compliance of local people to these externally imposed rules and regulations (Wall and Black 2004). Possibilities of promoting sustainable regional development at the same time as conserving the site are questionable too, when, in practice, the impacts of World Heritage listing on a site’s preservation are limited. The extent of site preservation mainly depends on the efforts of national and local activities (Van der Aa 2005) and, such efforts notwithstanding, the direct local economic benefits from investing in heritage are often exaggerated or simply unattainable (Bowitz and Ibenholt 2009).

Nevertheless, nominations for World Heritage inscription are often motivated by potential socio-economic gains (Kausar and Nishikawa 2010; Su and Teo 2008;
Wiesmann, Liechti and Rist 2005; UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2004; Loulanski 2006). In particular, discussions of heritage tourism development feature prominently in the cultural heritage literature (Hampton 2005; Wall and Black 2004; Su and Teo 2008; Pedersen 2002). Wojno (1991) claims that historic preservation, in particular, is a developmental strategy and cultural landscapes are directly linked to sustainable regional development (Wojno 1991; see also Pedersen 2002). The World Heritage Convention is considered to represent 'best practice of the UN's efforts to support ... sustainable development' (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2007: 9) and World Heritage sites are often the receivers of international funding from donors and development banks (Van der Aa 2005), most notably the World Bank (see Cernea 2001). Nuryanti (1996: 257) argues that for developing countries the problems of heritage conservation (community relocation, compensation and disruption) 'are fundamentally the problems of development'.

Conflicting Values

Outstanding universal value is the most important factor in successfully nominating a property for World Heritage inscription. However, even UNESCO concedes that the OUV used as justification for inscribing a property on the World Heritage list may not coincide with the values of the local people who inhabit the property (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2004). Indeed, Wall and Black (2004) revealed that the values of local people in World Heritage sites in Indonesia were different from those of the authorities, experts and government officials typically directly involved in preparing a World Heritage nomination. Furthermore, they found that local values were under-represented in official planning and management of the sites to the detriment of both the sites and the local populations (Black and Wall 2001; Wall and Black 2004). Typical official language used to communicate values in World Heritage planning and management is often inadequate in expressing the way World Heritage is locally identified and interpreted, as well as causing confusion and disunity between official 'values' and the everyday 'values' (Bentrupperbäumer, Day and Reser 2006). Values can also reflect the expectations for World Heritage sites and the assumed differences inscription will make to an area. For example, in a natural
World Heritage area in the Swiss Alps, Wiesmann et al. (2005) found that residents expected increased conservation and revenue reflecting their values, both as custodians and potential beneficiaries of the site.

Much has been written on the values of heritage. Some suggest that conservation strategies should work to foster and integrate diverse values in order to more accurately reflect the reality and complexity of people’s lives (Allendorf 2007). Others focus more on conflicting values where village architecture may be seen as the major valuable attribute by one party, yet traditional forms of hospitality may epitomise what is valuable to those who live in the village (Allerton 2003). Yet others provide accounts of how neglecting to incorporate local knowledge and values may result in resentment (Sanz and Sullivan 2008) or outright acts of hostility (Bianchi 2002). Mason (2002) suggests that heritage values are typically either sidelined by one predominant value or all values are condensed into one notion of significance. Heritage value typologies have also been developed as a practical tool for managing heritage sites (see Mason 2002 and Labadi 2007 for a summary of these typologies) including Australia’s Burra Charter (ICOMOS 2013: 2) which lists aesthetic, historic, scientific, social and spiritual values. On examination of 106 World Heritage nomination dossiers, Labadi (2007) found that the prevalent values for nomination were history and potential development of the properties, as well as the description of their architectural and aesthetic characteristics. Less than a quarter of the nominations mentioned the active involvement of local communities.

An example of a community’s fight against unrecognised values is found in Australia in the Tasmanian Wilderness. Russell and Jambrecina’s 2002 research on the management of Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage area revealed radical rethinking by the World Heritage managers resulting in a willingness to engage meaningfully with local people and subsequently alter the management plan for the World Heritage area. Based on, sometimes hostile, local resentment toward management by the local communities for ‘shutting them out of the park’ they sought the expertise of an anthropologist, Joan N Knowles, to help find a solution. Knowles (1997) suggested that the manager’s strong cultural
commitment to conservation was both its strength and weakness. According to Knowles, management struggled to implement conservation and community engagement as complementary activities. According to Russell and Jambrecina (2002: 135), the publication of the anthropologist’s report not only lead to alterations of the management plan, but also to ‘a huge shift in orientation in natural area management in Tasmania’. The management plan now recognises cultural landscapes as part of the World Heritage area that, innovatively, includes European traditional uses of the park.

Resentment and Resistance
Restrictions on land and site use imposed by managers and other authorities, can lead to resentment from residents who may be motivated to perform acts of resistance. Everyday actions may reveal contradictions, ambiguities or ambivalence within and among local groups at World Heritage sites. Ortner (1995) describes these actions as the ‘articulations and disarticulations’ that exist among residents and local authorities. Resentment and resistance can be manifested in other ways, for example, through actions of indifference – a topic understudied in the World Heritage literature (Bianchi and Boniface 2002). For example, Scott’s (1985) acts of ‘every day forms of resistance’ consist of such behaviour as foot-dragging and non-compliance, which are different from institutionalised, political resistance in that they are an ‘implicit disavowal of public, symbolic goals’. Every day resistance is ‘informal, often covert, and concerned largely with immediate, de facto gains’ (Scott 1985: 33).

Existing land tenure agreements found in World Heritage sites and the general confusion of local people as to how World Heritage listing impacts on them (Gillespie 2009) can cause resentment. Guimbatan and Baguilat Jr (2006) recall the irony of local people becoming restricted in land use practice through World Heritage inscription because of the recognition that those same people had sculpted the landscape. They mention that, for local people, protecting rice terraces in the Philippines because of ‘aesthetic, anthropological, historical, and ethnological’ reasons is incomprehensible since the area is locally valued traditionally for its food production. This cultural rift in conservation practice has
caused 'confusion, resentment, and outright resistance to external impositions' in the local people (Guimbatan and Baguilat Jr 2006: 61). Regulations imposed on local residents in both cultural and natural World Heritage sites can disconnect sites from the local people weakening physical and spiritual links to places (Russell and Jambrecina 2002, Kato 2006, Pannell 2006). Governments may be reluctant to impose harsh conservation regulations on residents of World Heritage sites because of the restriction on local development and potential economic gains, particularly in poorer areas (Ashworth 2002). Restrictions on development in protected areas may promote a reticence in locals to wade through complex planning legislation before constructing buildings for personal or business purposes (Bianchi 2002). Fear and personal relationships can also prevent authorities from enforcing restrictions in protected areas (Bianchi 2002).

Revitalisation
A marginal perspective in the heritage literature focuses on how residents have adapted to and benefited from World Heritage inscription through revitalising customs and traditions and boosting the economy. For example, Di Giovine (2008) provides an account of the ways in which local people living in the cultural World Heritage site of Hoi An in Vietnam took pro-active and inventive steps to engage tourists through the re-establishment of traditional customs and practices and the introduction of new cottage industries. Di Giovine used the theory of 'revitalisation' to explore how the locals had embraced their newfound heritage listing by balancing the re-creation of a traditional atmosphere with modern innovations within the restrictions and changing character of their town. Similarly, Su and Teo (2008: 165) used the 'intersection of heterogeneous discourses' to describe power relationships in the World Heritage town of Lijiang in China. Rather than become disassociated from their heritage through state led tourism development, locals not only capitalised on the economic potential of their World Heritage status they 're-created' their attachment to the areas developed primarily for tourists. They have meaningfully reclaimed these areas and, as well as exploiting the new tourist facilities for their own enjoyment, profit socially and economically through pro-active, inventive means (Su and Teo 2008: 164).
Ideologies
Conserving heritage of OUV for future generations is an ideological construct inspired by a variety of motivations beyond the physicality of the World Heritage sites. Heritage can be used by nations as a cultural adhesive to symbolise the binding together of different cultural groups (class, ethnicity) under the auspices of 'harmony' and cultural plurality and social cohesion, as well as validating the nation-state (Breidenbach and Nyiri 2004; Long and Sweet 2006). Heritage sites can also be used for 'maintaining certain elements of social memory' (Teather and Chow 2003: 114) or 'depoliticising representation of the nation and its many cultures' (Hevia 2001: 237). UNESCO is often considered to be a 'modernist' organisation that espouses 'universalist and modern' frameworks (Labadi 2007: 153) which aim to 'establish common patterns of “civilised” political, economic and social behaviour across the world' (Logan 2001: 53). Scott (1998) too, might consider the World Heritage committee to be a manifestation of ‘high-modernist ideology’ where state action is required to realise plans to produce ‘rational order in remarkably visual aesthetic terms’ (Scott 1998: 4).

Even where there is national consensus over the meaning of sites the World Heritage process can be politically fraught (Scholze 2008). This can be illustrated in cases where World Heritage nominations repeatedly fail due to corruption, civil conflict and weak cultural policies (Scholze 2008). The ideological nature of World Heritage is also demonstrated through the few countries which have not ratified the World Heritage convention, such as Saudi Arabia, which fears a weakening of its authority over religious monuments, particularly Mecca (Pocock 1997) or sites of obvious OUV, such as the Old City of Jerusalem and its Wall which had no State Party with accepted authority to nominate the site (Aplin 2004).

Museumification
Turning sites into museums affects not only the physical area, but also site residents by creating 'living museums' (Galla 2002). Museumification happens, in part, as a result of the need to maintain the authenticity of a heritage site, which
is often focussed on the past (Nasser 2003; see also Ronström 2014) according to the terms of the Convention. This freezing of culture is often in conflict with the needs of site residents (Alberts and Hazen 2010) and is unsympathetic to the changing nature of the landscape (Guimbatan and Baguilat Jr 2006). The popularity of heritage sites as displays of the past packaged as a 'visual day-trip experience' differs from museums, in that they are theme, rather than collection based (Sterry 1998: 23). Nevertheless, visitors to some theme based heritage sites are more interested in merely looking at the sites, rather than in learning about them (Abelson 2001; Nasser 2003). The focus on “putting on a show” places enormous pressure on site managers to maintain the look of heritage at a site, especially if the site is populated. Site integrity is essential to OUV, but the integrity of a heritage site must also include its setting (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2008). This visual integrity can potentially be threatened by any natural or human based alterations to the site setting meaning, essentially, that sites must remain static once inscribed on the World Heritage list, irrespective of a dynamic nature of a landscape.

Freezing heritage in time and space has enormous consequences for the social and cultural quotidian of sites, which becomes scrutinised under the public gaze and is subject to cultural objectification (Handler 1987). If 'heritage is created through a process of exhibition' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995:369), then the residents of heritage sites find themselves likewise on display and their relationships with their environment materially changed (Handler 1987). A secondary effect of living in or near a rarefied World Heritage site is that residents may be 'priced out' of their neighbourhood through the process of gentrification (Evans 2002; Smith 2002: 148).

Power
When attempting to conserve an area, there will inevitably be power struggles between planners, residents, and other interest groups. Power is garnered in various ways through persuasion, reward, compromise, trade-off, manipulation, exclusion and alliance making (Few 2000). Decisions to conserve heritage raise questions regarding whose heritage and how to interpret it and frame it (Alberts
and Hazen 2010). Generally, decisions are exclusionary. They are made at the central level long before people are consulted (Hampton 2005). Heritage narratives can automatically exclude the presence of people or practices that are considered to be untraditional (Pannell 2006; Porter 2003). In this way, decisions about heritage are ‘inherently political, focusing as they do on shaping particular narratives about the past for contemporary purposes’ (Shepherd 2006: 248). Deciding what is authentic heritage and defining ‘authenticity’ in heritage sites is performed by heritage authorities and can also influence land use and tenure within World Heritage sites (Lane and Waitt 2001).

For example, Pannell (2006) reveals how the World Heritage listing of the Komodo National Park as an example of outstanding ‘natural’ universal heritage has had devastating impacts on the 20,000 inhabitants living in and adjacent to the park. Pannell argues that the park management’s preoccupation with the scientific universal importance of the Komodo Dragon led to the inaccurate and pejorative account of local social and cultural history, which has preferred the perceived customary rights of indigenous people at the expense of people who migrated to the island. This, in turn, has led to the relocation of certain groups, the rearranging of residential areas and the prevention of any further migration to the island. Similarly, Sullivan’s (2004) exploration into the World Heritage Willandra Lakes Area in Australia revealed that local sheep graziers and Aboriginal traditional owners were insufficiently informed on the consequences of World Heritage Listing. The graziers found that they were not permitted to use certain areas of their land for grazing which, in turn, devalued the farmer’s properties. The traditional owners lost control over their local burial ground, including their ancestor’s remains and found their traditional heritage superseded by universal heritage values (Sullivan 2004).

Commoditisation
The literature on heritage and tourism is vast. This alone strongly suggests that heritage sites are popular tourist destinations and that heritage sites are a consumable good, or at least that is the expectation (Hall 2006), and, as such, are vigorously promoted by States Parties. On a more conceptual level, Nasser (2003)
states that heritage cannot exist without consumers and therefore it is consumers that define heritage. There have been various attempts to determine the economic value of World Heritage sites. While it remains arguable whether World Heritage sites do definitively increase economic benefits to site areas, there is no doubt that tourism is inextricably linked to the 'heritage industry', whereby heritage converts locations into destinations and tourism makes them economically viable as exhibits of themselves (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995: 731).

Heritage conservation is the creation (Nasser 2003) or invention (Handler 1987; Waitt 2000) of historic facts, rather than the preservation of existing objects. Through heritage, these objects become a 'marketed', 'commercially sanctioned', 'commodified', and 'contrived' version of the past (Waitt 2000: 843, 845).

An example of this commodification, is Evans’ (2002) research on the residents of the World Heritage Historic Centre of Quebec, Canada which revealed a complex of issues relating to the commoditisation of the town. At the heart of these issues is the fact that the ‘World Heritage’ elements by which the Historic Town gained World Heritage status, are at odds with that of the local community. This conceptual divide increased with the relocation of sections of the community due to infrastructure development and the outmigration due to increased property prices and taxes. High numbers of tourists visiting the Historic Town resulted in traffic and pedestrian congestion, rubbish spill-over and noise, as well as the proliferation of major retail chains and fast-food outlets. Due to the high numbers of package tourists over the summer months, the smaller catering establishments are overlooked in favour of restaurants capable of catering to busloads. The short tourist season means that retailers and services often shut down for four to five months of the year. Much of the town’s problems are blamed on the absence of a single body or committee that can coordinate World Heritage related planning and management decisions. Instead, the decisions are made on an ad-hoc basis and are spread over several groups at the federal, provincial and local levels.

Following Smith’s (2006) definition of a multilayered performance, these themes highlight the complexity of World Heritage sites where heritage creation, use,
management and actions and reactions based on the past and present interweave to create a dense fabric. It is the layering of geographical objects or ‘places’ and the multiplicity of human values and meanings (Waterton 2005) that make heritage sites ‘meaning-full’ places where the interactions between people and places create identities (Osborne 2001: 3). In Australia, where World Heritage is predominantly natural, it is easy to see how heritage and identity are often linked. That natural heritage has ‘played a major role in shaping Australians’ own sense of identity’ is seldom disputed (Logan 2007: 214; see also Smith 2006). Indeed, Australia’s natural beauty is considered by many Australians as an intrinsic aspect of Australian identity. Nevertheless, protecting heritage is a fairly recent phenomenon in Australia and though it may rank ‘well below development, growth, progress and the economy in national priorities’ (Aplin 2007: 20), Australia has 19 World Heritage sites and a long, and somewhat chequered, relationship with the World Heritage Convention.

**Australia and World Heritage**

Indeed, Australia was the seventh country to ratify the World Heritage Convention. The Australian government became a signatory in 1974 and served on the World Heritage Committee in 1976-83, 1983-89, 1995-2001 and 2007-2011. The World Heritage Convention became a familiar concept in Australia, largely through several political battles over World Heritage properties in the late 20th century. The battles were between state/territory and federal government over World Heritage properties in the Northern Territory, Northern Queensland and Tasmania over issues of mining and forestry. Corbett and Lane 1996 summarise the issue thus:

> Nomination of properties to the list has been used as a means of settling resource disputes with State governments; it has been a convenient mechanism to provide protection to areas which would otherwise be threatened by pro-development state governments. As a consequence of this dynamic, consultation with land management agencies and local residents has often been poor, resulting in considerable hostility toward the property and problems with
cooperation and collaboration in management between different levels of government. (Corbett and Lane 1996: 42)

All nominations in this case were successful, however, nominating a World Heritage property is no longer a unilateral decision for the federal government. The current Australian policy requires agreements between federal and state/territories before nominations can proceed. In Australia, the division of responsibility between the Commonwealth and the states and the various land tenures of World Heritage sites can create a complex situation and so legislation that that requires cooperation and agreement between the two levels of government is necessary.¹¹ Most Australian World Heritage properties are subject to state jurisdiction, however the Commonwealth must be able to fulfil its obligations to the Convention. Australia has been an early and enthusiastic supporter of the World Heritage concept with its first three World Heritage properties, Great Barrier Reef, Willandra Lakes and Kakadu National Park, inscribed on the list in 1981. Australia’s current World Heritage properties and management arrangements are summerised below in table 1.2.

¹¹ For example, Article 5(a) of the World Heritage Convention requires States Parties to integrate the protection of World Heritage areas into ‘comprehensive planning programmes’. In Australia this obligation falls to the Commonwealth Government, as the State Party to the Convention. However, in World Heritage areas that are owned by a state government it is that state’s agencies that are responsible for integrating World Heritage area into management and planning programs.
Table 1.2 Australian World Heritage sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sites and Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural sites</td>
<td>Australian Convict Sites (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sydney Opera House (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australian Fossil Mammal Sites (1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fraser Island (1992)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gondwana Rainforests of Australia (1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Great Barrier Reef (1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greater Blue Mountains (2000)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heard and McDonald Islands (1997)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lord Howe Island Group (1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Macquarie Island (1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shark Bay, Western Australia (1991)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Ningaloo Coast (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wet Tropics of Queensland (1988)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed sites</td>
<td>Kakadu National Park (1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tasmanian Wilderness (1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uluru – Kata Tjuta National Park (1987)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Willandra Lakes Region (1981)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a State Party to the Convention, Australia fulfils its obligations through the ‘backbone’ of Australian environmental legislation: the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (as summarised in the World Heritage section: 8-9) and the Australian Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment 1992 (Schedule 8, World Heritage). There are no overarching national guidelines for the management of World Heritage properties, though the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (sanctioned through the Intergovernmental Agreement) is currently developing a set of national management principles and standards (Figgis et al. 2013). The Committee is developing a World Heritage Management Framework to help with management consistency across all World Heritage properties. Given the scope and variability of properties (see table 1.2 and 1.3), it raises the question of whether such a framework is even possible, however, the framework is intended to be a basis for meeting Australia’s obligations under the World Heritage Convention. Currently,
Australia’s management objectives for World Heritage properties align with the general obligations under the World Heritage Convention which are:

- to protect, conserve and present the World Heritage values of the property
- to integrate the protection of the area into a comprehensive planning program
- to give the property a function in the life of the Australian community
- to strengthen appreciation and respect of the property’s World Heritage values, particularly through educational and information programs
- to keep the community broadly informed about the condition of the World Heritage values of the property
- to take appropriate scientific, technical, legal, administrative and financial measures necessary for achieving the foregoing objectives (Department of the Environment and Energy 2016).

Management arrangements vary according to individual World Heritage sites (see table 1.3). The majority of sites are managed by government agencies within the respective state governments. Sites like the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics of Queensland are overseen by Commonwealth based management authorities with state agency on-site management. Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park is owned by an Aboriginal community and leased to the Director of National Parks and Wildlife to be managed as a National Park and Kakadu National Park is owned, in part, by Aboriginal people with the sections owned by Commonwealth Government under current land claims. The Park is co-managed by the Aboriginal owners and Parks Australia as a national park. The Heard and McDonald Islands Group is an Australian Territory which is managed on-site by the Australian Antarctic Division (Department of the Environment and Energy 2016).

Table 1.3. Management arrangements of Australia’s World Heritage properties. Source: Adapted from the Department of the Environment and Energy (2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World Heritage Property</th>
<th>Management Authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willandra Lakes Region, Gondwana Rainforests of Australia, Lord Howe Island, Shark Bay, the Australian Fossil Mammal Sites</td>
<td>State Government agency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Riversleigh/Naracoorte), Tasmanian Wilderness, Macquarie Island, Greater Blue Mountains Area, Purnululu, Fraser Island, Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens, and the Sydney Opera House

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics of Queensland</th>
<th>Commonwealth/State managed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park</td>
<td>Director of National Parks and the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Board of Management (owned by the Aboriginal community and leased to the Director of National Parks and Wildlife as a National Park).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kakadu National Park</td>
<td>Commonwealth (Parts of Kakadu Aboriginal owned and the remaining Commonwealth-owned land is currently subject to land claims. Parks Australia is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Park).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heard and McDonald Islands Group</td>
<td>The Heard and McDonald Islands Group is an Australian Territory with day-to-day management being the responsibility of the Australian Antarctic Division.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The extent to which research is conducted in Australian World Heritage sites depends on a number of factors and the most recent research has, to a large extent, dictated the examples illustrated here. World Heritage celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2012 and, consequently, there was an international flurry of World Heritage related research. The Australian Committee for the IUCN convened in Cairns to acknowledge the anniversary with the symposium Australia’s World Heritage: Keeping the Outstanding Exceptional. A chapter from the resulting book provides a ‘snapshot’ of the management issues in most of Australia’s World Heritage areas. As it is the only such report to provide information on most, if not all, World Heritage sites, I have included it below. As discussed above, UNESCO facilitates regional, generic research into site management through the World Heritage Centre Periodic Reporting mechanism every six years. Australia participated for the first time in the Centre's second round of Periodic Reporting in 2011 and so I have included the outcome of this report below. The intensity of
published research on individual sites would appear to be correlated to the level of controversy that particular sites generate\textsuperscript{12}. This correlation can also be seen, though in a less comprehensive manner, in increasingly popular alternative professional and academic media.\textsuperscript{13} Individual site research is sometimes conducted through the World Heritage Centre in the form of Reactive Monitoring Missions (RMMs). These RMMs are considered necessary when there is a threat to a World Heritage site’s outstanding universal value and they often provide a detailed report on the site issues and, as there are two recent RMMs to Australian properties I have summarised two reports below. The aim of the following information is to demonstrate the kinds of information generated about Australian World Heritage sites, and highlight its deficiencies, as well as provide a picture of some of the more pressing World Heritage issues for Australian sites at the national and individual level.

In a ‘snapshot’ report commissioned by the Australian Committee of the IUCN in 2012, the authors Razian and Zischka presented the results of a survey capturing managers’ responses regarding key obligations of the World Heritage Convention. It is perhaps the only report that has surveyed the managers of Australian World Heritage properties on these matters \textsuperscript{14}, however, it is a ‘snapshot’ and thus the information is unavoidably superficial. So, while it does provide some general insight into World Heritage specific issues in 14 out of the (then) 16 World Heritage sites in Australia, it also raises many questions for further investigation. For example, the report examined sources of funding and capacity building in the

\textsuperscript{12} See, for example, Aplin 2004; Davis and Weiler 1992; Masswood 2000 and Harris 2012 on Kakadu; Sullivan 2004 on Willandra Lakes; Russell and Jambrecina 2002 on Tasmanian Wilderness.

\textsuperscript{13} For example, The Conversation is a university funded online source that publishes on a wide range of topical issues. See recent articles on the Tasmanian Wilderness by Fairman and Keenan 2014; Kiernan 2014; Mosley 2014 and Bowman and Janos 2014. For articles on the Great Barrier Reef, see Day 2015, 2016; Day and Hughes 2015, and Brown 2015.

\textsuperscript{14} It is certainly the only report in recent history. A Senate Committee into the Management of Australian World Heritage properties conducted the only, more comprehensive, report in 1996. The report was undoubtedly motivated by several controversial cases involving Australian World Heritage properties in the late 20\textsuperscript{th} century, two of which are discussed below.
14 surveyed sites and found that the Commonwealth and state governments were the major players. Given that most properties are either managed through Commonwealth or state authorities, this finding is hardly surprising. The outstanding issue is how funding sources are distributed at the individual sites; particularly the proportion of Commonwealth funding provided to the state-owned properties. The table included in the report indicates a drastic, and noteworthy, variation in funding sources across the 14 sites. In the site’s total budgets, Commonwealth funding ranges from 100% to less than 5% across the 14 sites, state funding ranges from 98% to 12% and revenue ranges from 56% to 4%. One site received funding from ‘private’ and ‘partnerships’ and five of the 14 sites recorded funding from ‘other’ sources. Unfortunately, the individual sites are deidentified.

The report found that tourism proved to be a popular option for increasing funding, as well as assisting in education and training initiatives with managers noting the involvement of the tourism sector in addition to government departments. Managers further reported that World Heritage listing had a positive impact on scientific and technical research and monitoring. Although the report found successful innovative forms of community engagement and partnerships at some sites, it found that there is still potential for greater uptake of these kinds of projects to increase the ‘function of World Heritage in the life of the community’.15 Regarding the community, the majority of managers indicated that they were more likely to ‘involve’ the community in decision-making processes, rather than collaborate or give them direct power in the process. However, this was not the case if the community was indigenous. Managers indicated that they would likely consult indigenous stakeholders or empower them to be involved in decision-making.16 In giving the World Heritage site a

15 Article 5, section (a) of the Convention requires State Parties to ‘adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes’.

16 It should be noted that there are problems with interpreting these results. For this section of the report the managers were asked to indicate, as a sliding scale, the likelihood of and extent to which they would involve stakeholders in decision-making. The scale categories were 1. Inform 2.
function in the life of the community, the reported opportunities and challenges seem slightly contradictory. While managers state an opportunity to build capacity through partnerships, they simultaneously acknowledge the challenges in creating such partnerships. Perhaps this contradiction is the outcome of attempting to generalise responses from 14 different managers across 16 vastly different World Heritage sites. Whatever the case, it does underline the challenge of making meaningful generalisations about a wide-ranging assortment of World Heritage sites. It is this issue of simplifying a complex situation that had the World Heritage Committee grappling with how to develop a suitable system of reporting on World Heritage sites for over 20 years (Cameron and Rössler 2013). Eventually, the Committee agreed on the current system of Periodic Reporting.

As mentioned above, the World Heritage Centre undertook the first round of Periodic Reporting of World Heritage sites in 2000. Australia took part in the second round of reporting which began in 2008.

Results from the second round of Periodic Reporting for the Asia Pacific region (of which Australia is a part) were released in 2012. Results are compiled from self-administered, standardised on-line surveys which each World Heritage site manager in the region is encouraged to complete. The usefulness of the report for States Parties like Australia, where conservation standards are generally sound, is, however, limited. The report is a broad overview of World Heritage in the Asia Pacific region. As such, it provides only some individual State Party information and very little site-specific information. More specifically, comparisons between other Asia Pacific nations and Australia (and New Zealand) are less than meaningful when Australia tends to be an outlier in most categories.¹⁷

Consult 3. Involve 4. Collaborate and 5. Empower. While there is an indisputable preference for involving indigenous over non-indigenous stakeholders, these categories are confusing. All five categories replicate category 3; that is, they all necessarily ‘involve’ stakeholders and there are no definitions or criteria provided for the categories making it difficult to determine their meaning or significance (e.g. what is the basis for ‘involve’ or at what point does collaboration become empowerment?).¹⁷

¹⁷ As World Heritage sites in Australia and New Zealand are more numerous and well established their data were analysed and presented separate to Pacific Island states.
Nevertheless, according to the final report on the second cycle of Periodic Reporting Australia fared well on all accounts of implementing the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2012). Aside from the need to increase private sector funding (a need reflected in Razian and Zischka 2012 above), Australian World Heritage sites reported favourably on legal framework, human resources, visitor management, capacity building and training, awareness of World Heritage, and effective management and co-management. Reported threats to Australian World Heritage sites included feral animals (Macquarie Island), exotic plants and animals (Queensland Wet Tropics), climate change, development pressure (Great Barrier Reef, Tasmanian Wilderness), pollution from mining (Kakadu), mining proposals and tourism (Purnululu) and unauthorised removal of fossils (Australian Fossil Mammal Site).

While the Periodic Reports help to position Australian World Heritage sites within a regional or sub-regional framework, detailed research on individual Australian sites is largely the domain of discrete research projects that vary in topic, quality and scope. It is safe to suggest that the more controversial World Heritage sites, such as Kakadu, Tasmania and more recently, the Great Barrier Reef attract more research attention than the majority of more unexceptional sites. It is likely for this reason that much of the research focuses on the negative or more sensational aspects of World Heritage implementation, particularly in the case of Reactive Monitoring Missions; two of which are discussed below. However, the extent to which World Heritage is considered a cause for celebration or concern is, of course, a matter of perspective. In sites like Kakadu, Tasmanian Wilderness and the Great Barrier Reef, World Heritage can be considered as a saviour: from a conservation perspective. However, from a development perspective World Heritage can be viewed as an unwelcome impediment. For World Heritage in Australia, these conflicting perspectives have created something of an ambiguous atmosphere. A brief account of two recent

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18 For examples of PhD dissertations see Harrington 2004; Ingram 2008; Hølleland 2013 and Farrier 2011.
Reactive Monitoring Missions in Tasmania and the Great Barrier Reef demonstrate this tense and sometimes volatile atmosphere.

The most recent World Heritage areas at the epicentre of World Heritage tensions in Australia, are the Tasmanian Wilderness and Great Barrier Reef. Both sites have recently attracted Reactive Monitoring Missions (RMM) to assess alleged threats to OUV and whether Australia is fulfilling its obligations under the World Heritage Convention. The Tasmanian Wilderness was the site of conflict before World Heritage listing with the proposed damming of the Franklin River in 1978. Since World Heritage inscription in 1982 (extended in 1989) the conflict has continued largely as a result of disagreements between Commonwealth and state governments, the local communities and the Tasmanian timber industry. The area was the focus of a Reactive Monitoring Mission in 2008 as a response to concerns over nearby logging practices and again in 2015 over the area’s revised management plan. In the most recent 2015 Mission, the World Heritage Committee, ICOMOS and IUCN sent experts to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage area primarily to contribute to the revised management planning processes. The following story of World Heritage tensions is summarised from their Mission Report (Jaeger and Sand 2016).

The original 1999 management plan was long overdue for revision and was in the process of being updated in 2014. The role of the RMM was to assess and report on stakeholder responses to the new 2014 draft. It may have been clear to the RMM that they were facing a vigorous and vocal community when, during the 63 days the draft was available for public comment, it received an astonishing 7,500 submissions. While extraction of minerals and gravel within the World Heritage area were minor concerns raised by the RMM in the report, the harvesting of timber within the area was the main area of investigation. Commercial logging has been an ongoing and contentious issue in the area affiliated with disputes over World Heritage boundary modifications and changes in Tasmanian timber industry legislation that allow for some logging in reserves. However, the RMM identified several other issues, including inconsistently planned and poorly managed tourism and recreation activities and the need for cultural surveys.
The Tasmanian Wilderness is over 1.5 million hectares (almost a quarter of Tasmania’s total land mass) inscribed for seven out of 10 World Heritage criteria. It is one of four Australian sites to be inscribed for both natural and (Indigenous) cultural values generating much discussion on the paradoxical use of the term ‘wilderness’ (see Langton 1996 for a discussion on the origin of the wilderness ideology debate). It is no state secret that ‘Large-scale hydropower schemes, mining and logging, as well as associated infrastructure have been subject to polarized and often emotionally charged debate for decades’. Indeed, the proposed damming of the Franklin River facilitated a turning point in Australia’s environmental law (see Hølleland 2013 for a World Heritage related account) though it is now timber extraction that fuels the current debates. At the heart of the debate is ‘special species timber’ and whether it should be extracted from the World Heritage area. Legislation passed in 2013 argues that it can indeed be extracted from protected areas and reserves and, more controversially, the ambiguous definition of special species timber essentially applies to ‘any woody species in Tasmania’. This ambiguity hints at a much larger problem with updating the management plan that is systemic in nature. Management issues include lack of Indigenous cultural surveys, lack of systematic and coordinated tourism and recreation activities, or logging and other resource extraction. Despite the World Heritage area being in a good state of conservation, the biggest threat appears to be that agreements on these issues are bogged down by the large number of stakeholders complicated by entrenched historical and institutional opposition and mistrust.

From Australia’s temperate south to tropical north Queensland and from National Park to Marine Park, the Great Barrier Reef is a very different World Heritage area to the Tasmanian Wilderness. The reef, which meets all four ‘natural’ World Heritage criteria, extends over 2,000 kilometres along the coast of Queensland and is the world’s largest coral reef ecosystem. The Reef piqued international attention for possible threats to its OUV and subsequently in March 2012, the World Heritage Committee sent two experts to assess its state of conservation. The following information is summarised from the resulting Reactive Monitoring Mission Report (Douvere and Badman 2012). The report
found several areas of alarm, specifically development pressures, declining water quality and climate change that, if Australia did not act immediately to correct, would likely place the Reef on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Like the Tasmanian Wilderness, the management and planning for the Reef involves a range of stakeholders, including commercial marine tourism, fishing, ports and shipping, recreation, scientific research and Indigenous traditional use. Serious threats to the area include climate change, catchment runoff, coastal development, ports and shipping and direct extractive use and, particularly, the as yet unknown combined and cumulative effects of these threats. These threats epitomise the conservation versus development debate. The area has several residential areas, is a rich natural source of coal and gas, as well as fish and other comestible marine creatures, all of which contribute to local and state derived revenue. The Reef is confusingly managed under two separate legal frameworks as a Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, managed by a Commonwealth agency, and as the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park, managed by the Queensland Government. To ensure cooperative management between the two governments, the Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement was jointly endorsed by the Prime Minister and Queensland Premier in 2009. However, it is unlikely that all stakeholders ‘outside’ of the bureaucratic departments comprehend such complex management arrangements as the RMM report suggests:

The overlapping jurisdictional arrangements together with the scope of impacts from activities in these areas require complementary legislation and management agreements which is often confusing to stakeholders, industry and the wider public.

With a large number of stakeholders, confusing and overlapping management jurisdictions and, additionally, no clear articulation of how to conserve the area’s OUV, it is hardly surprising that the RMM report noted that there was no overall plan for the Reef’s future sustainable development. It would seem that the threat of ‘World Heritage in Danger’ provided the motivation necessary to develop such a plan. Only two years after the RMM report, the Australian and Queensland governments released the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan.
As stated above, this section on Australian World Heritage sites is brief, reflecting the limits of existing literature. The more general research on management issues and periodic reporting suggest that sites are well maintained. Yet case studies such as Tasmania and GBR suggest that World Heritage is struggling to unite the various expectations and values and consequently these sites are suffering. Overwhelmingly, the research on Australian World Heritage sites suggests a need for further research on the effects of World Heritage implementation.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has introduced the World Heritage system where it is argued that World Heritage is a process that relies on many separate, yet overlapping committees, organisations and procedures. Furthermore, it suggests that this process is not immutable. It shifts and grows and evolves in resonance with the changing global environment. These elements of the World Heritage process, or ‘communities of practice’ (Hølleland 2013: 18) strongly suggest that World Heritage can be usefully conceived as a network of actors, or more applicably an *actor-network*. It is through the assemblage of these actors that World Heritage is forged as a near universally popular concept. Likewise, a reading of the themes in the academic literature suggests a network of actors that is connected to the international World Heritage process through nomination and inscription and then, possibly, transposes to form more regional or local networks that are charged with implementing the World Heritage Convention. The objective of the Convention is clear – to safeguard the outstanding natural and cultural heritage for future generations. World Heritage should, in theory, be interpreted and implemented individually by States Parties in ways that work toward meeting this objective. Yet the different themes in World Heritage go some way to demonstrating that there are many other ways to interpret World Heritage and consequently many ways to practice World Heritage at individual sites.

Many of the problems identified in the literature are a consequence of differing values and perceptions of heritage. Australia has more natural World Heritage
sites than any other country. As mentioned in the thesis introduction, the case study for this research is a World Heritage site in Australia inscribed for natural values. The examples in this chapter have provided some indication of the issues of values and meaning in natural World Heritage areas and has hinted at how we tend to separate notions of culture or society and nature. These separate notions are inscribed in the Convention and pertain to the separation of criteria against which cultural or natural property nominations are judged. But this culture/nature binary goes deeper into our everyday perceptions of and behaviour regarding the natural environment. Research into environmental phenomena, too, has tended to keep the cultural or the social, or society, separate from the natural, or nature as discussed in the next chapter. Chapter 2 seeks to analyse this separation of society and nature and perceptions, particularly through the discipline of sociology and suggests Actor-network theory as a method to explore relationships between actors in the World Heritage area and address the analytical polarity between society and nature.
Chapter 2: Sociology and researching society and the environment

[W]e are not, in our hearts, part of the natural process (White 1967: 155).

Sociology as if nature did not matter is theory in a vacuum, interactive and interpretive work having nothing to work with, on, or against. It is a sociological theory of Disneyworld: a synthetic world inhabited by artificial creatures, including humans, constructed by humans (Murphy 1995: 693).

Sociology has an environmental ‘blind spot’ (Murdoch 2001: iii). Thus, this chapter provides a necessary insight into the disciplinary impasse faced by the sociologist when undertaking research on the environment. To help clarify this impasse, its twin aims are to introduce the society/nature dichotomy and to discuss how this dichotomy is, or is not, addressed through the discipline of sociology. The case study for this thesis is a ‘natural’ World Heritage area with an adjacent population and so a central issue of the thesis is how to conduct a sociological study in an area classified as ‘natural’. To begin tackling this issue, this chapter first addresses one of the epistemological ‘great divides’ between society and nature and how this society/nature dichotomy has been debated in the sociological literatures. Understanding these debates is important if this thesis is to perform a sociological analysis of the effects of World Heritage. In order to perform sociologically, we also need to know the limits of sociological theory, particularly regarding ‘nature’ or the environment. Understanding the philosophical and disciplinary context in which sociology was forged is important in understanding its limitations today, including the persistent problems of sociology’s breakaway sub-discipline: environmental sociology. Thus this chapter provides a history of the way the natural environment has historically been considered by Sociology. There are brief interjections from other disciplines, such as human ecology and cultural geography that, while demonstrating a better
‘track record’ with ‘nature’ or environmental issues, remain problematic according to some. The chapter concludes with an alternative sociological approach to analysing society and the environment: Actor-network theory. As will be discussed, some of the more radical aspects of Actor-network theory do not sit comfortably within the discipline. Perversely, it is these more radical aspects, the almost limitless flexibility on who or what has agency - be it ‘natural’ or ‘social’, which may help sociology address its environmental ‘blind spot’.

**Sociology and the non-social**

As Murphy’s quote at the beginning of this chapter suggests, Sociology, aside from, primarily breakaway sub-disciplines like environmental sociology, deals poorly with non-social factors, such as the environment (Murphy 1995; Buttel 2002; Catton 1994; Dunlap and Catton 2002). One of the reasons for this apparent neglect is the human-centric era in which sociology was forged as a “serious” discipline (Catton and Dunlap 1980; Freudenburg et al. 1995). This era, and how it has affected the sociological treatment of the environment, is discussed next as the ‘old paradigm’.

**The old paradigm**

The society/nature distinction is largely an academic, or even theoretical, debate, but the separation of people and planet has very real consequences on the way humans conceive of, and interact with, the natural environment. A Westernised concept of the natural environment is similar to an object to come into contact with, or have encounters with, in planned and predictable ways such as walking or camping in the ‘bush’ or picnicking in ‘parks’. Many encounters with nature in this way are a conscious choice to see and experience something peripheral to an, often, urbanised existence. We can also choose to experience nature in different ways using different mediums. Our encounters can be physical when on a Saturday afternoon we choose to drive to the national park and do a coastal walk, or virtual if we choose to sit inside a climate controlled cinema to watch a film on the life-journey of emperor penguins in the Antarctic. Nature, one way or another, will have affected our lives in a minutia of ways – some of which are not immediately apparent as walking, camping or picnicking in the bush or on the
beach. For the human population, the natural environment has featured in several roles in human history that have drastically changed the way we live. This thesis is written in the arguably ‘post-modern’ 21st century from an economically dominant country and primarily Western philosophical point of view. But the human place in the natural environment varies enormously across cultures and across periods of time.

Throughout the early ages, humans had a far less ‘scientific’ relationship with nature. Natural artefacts and phenomena were connected spiritually to humans and nature was considered powerful, unpredictable and much time and energy was spent negotiating with the spiritual elements of nature to bring about favourable conditions for human survival and prosperity (White 1967). The dominance of Christianity over Pagan animism had the greatest effect on this cultured and counterbalanced relationship between humans and nature and firmly established the concept of human dominance over the environment (White 1967). This fundamental relational shift was exacerbated in the 16th and 17th centuries with the advent of new academic disciplines such as physics, mathematics and astronomy where the material construction and behaviour of nature could be explained by science and concepts of nature were dominated by ‘pre-civilisation’ explanations that encouraged the idea that humans were, of all human and non-human species, exceptional (Macnaghten and Urry 1995; 1998). Thus in a world of seemingly unlimited resources manipulated solely for the purposes of human prosperity, civilised humans positioned themselves as distinct from, and impervious to, the “uncivilising” effects of the natural environment.

Empowered by the new sciences and encouraged by and exonerated from environmental destruction by western Christianity, humans sanctified the “use” of the environment as an instrument for human progress. Consider this quote from Genesis following the creation of man in His own image:

‘And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every
living thing that moveth upon the earth’ (Genesis 1:28, King James Version).

In the relentless quest for modernity, humanity was more interested in the domination of humans over nature than the relationship between humans and nature (Macnaghtan and Urry 1995). The separation of humans from the environment became a necessary tenet for this indiscriminate use of the natural environment (Macnaghtan and Urry 1995) and sciences led the charge in new ideas and schemes to use the natural environment to further the human condition. The social sciences, it is argued, largely ignored the natural environment with the exception of cultural or human geography which, according to Sauer (1925: 303), ‘is based on the reality of the union of physical and cultural elements of the landscape.’

In these Enlightened times, traditional sociologists followed the fundamental concepts inherited by the anthropocentric Dominant Western Worldview (DWW) (Catton and Dunlap 1980), which dictated that social facts can only be explained by other social facts. Fundamental beliefs driving the Dominant Western Worldview are that; people are unique on this planet over which they have complete dominion; as masters of their destiny people will pursue their goals whatever the costs; the planet’s resources are inexhaustible, and progress is limitless and is the only logical way forward (Catton and Dunlap 1980) (see table 2.1 for a summary of the dominant environmental paradigms in sociology).

The narrow and pragmatic DWW formula was influenced by the prominent sociologist Durkheim and his popular ‘anti reductionism taboo’ that rallied against the tendency in sociology to look toward psychological phenomena to explain social phenomena which ignored the ‘social’ factors of phenomena in favour of individual variables. The unintended outcome of Durkheim’s taboo was to preclude considering the effects of all other phenomena, including the biological and physical (Catton and Dunlap 1980). In the effort to be a ‘serious’ science, sociology modelled itself on the principles of the discipline of biology by

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9 Catton counter-argues that human ecology was a sociological concept as early as 1913-14 before it became widely believed to have been founded in bioscience in 1921 (Catton 1994).
taking a proprietary and myopic focus on the social facts in social analyses to the
detriment of natural variables (Macnaghtan and Urry 1995). A critical reading of
this implicit anthropocentrism in sociology lead to the label of the ‘Human
Exceptionalism Paradigm’ (HEP) (Dunlap and Catton 1979), whereby humans
were deemed exclusively unaffected by other animals and the natural
environment. Dunlap and Catton (1979: 250) take this epithet a step further
suggesting that a Human Exceptionalism Paradigm more appropriately
illustrates the denial that ‘the exceptional characteristics of our species (culture,
technology, language, elaborate social organisation), somehow exempt humans
from ecological principles and from environmental influences and constraints’.

While other, non-sociological, disciplines were referring to the ‘environment’ as
the natural environment or biosphere, in sociology ‘environment’ referred to the
social and cultural (including the physical and biological) influences on society. If
the natural environment was a variable in sociological analysis, then the
tendency was to consider or refer to the surrounding environment in the terms in
which it was socially defined. This had the effect of ignoring or abrogating the
environment as an agent in any sociological analysis, unless it was somehow
defined in a social way (Catton and Dunlap 1980). Sociologists began to argue for
a new sociology that took account of the natural aspects in social analyses and
which acknowledged that it was not only society that acted on the environment,
but also the environment that acted on society. These sociologists wanted a
discipline that could deal with the interaction between society and the
environment where different social and environmental variables were given equal
consideration. Research that followed this new paradigm resulted in the ‘New
Environmental Paradigm’ or ‘New Ecological Paradigm’ (Dunlap and Catton 1979).

According to Buttel (1987), this new sociology was not intended to be a subset of
current sociological pedagogy, but was meant to completely replace sociological
practices no longer deemed adequate to tackle the big-picture issues involving
social process and the environment. However, Dunlap (2008) argues that rather
than try to replace traditional sociological theories, the new Environmental
Sociology was advanced rather ‘as a foundation for the development of
theoretical perspectives that recognised the ecological bases of social life’ (Dunlap 2002 in Dunlap 2008: 484) which suggested more of a paradigm shift, as opposed to the replacement of a traditional paradigm with a new paradigm. Along with this redirection of traditional sociological enquiry, was the drive toward making the causes of environmental degradation and environmental problems the focus of sociological questions (Buttel 2003).

In the new comprehensive environmental paradigm, the cognitive, behavioural and physiological elements are crucial to capture the full interaction of the social and environmental. In practice, for example, a group’s actions toward the environment are likely to be determined by how or what they think about the environment. The group may change the way they feel about the environment if it is confronted with a physiological effect (such as asthma exacerbated by air pollution) caused by the environment. Consequently, this may change the way the group behaves toward that environment (by reducing air-born pollutants) (Dunlap and Catton 1979). In theory, by studying the cognitive, behavioural and physiological elements of environmental problems, we discover the way we think about ourselves in relation to the environment (White 1967). The environmental movement was particularly illustrative of how physical phenomena can influence social phenomena (Dunlap and Catton 1979). Indeed, research on the environmental movement during the 1970s was mostly conducted by environmental sociologists (Buttel 2004). Environmental sociology went on to become a part of the environmental movement challenging the fundamental tenets of sociology, but it is argued that by the late 1980s it had settled into just another specialisation of the traditional sociological discipline (Buttel 1987: 466).

**The new paradigm - environmental sociology:**

As the popularity of visiting nature reserves as a recreational activity grew after WWII, so did the popularity of studying the sociological aspects of nature recreation, resources management and environmentalism (Dunlap and Catton 1979). In the USA especially, the natural surroundings or the ‘environment’ was gradually added to sociological analyses by various sociology groups in forestry and other environmental problems and impacts between 1964 and 1973 (Dunlap
Freudenburg et al. (1995: 366) proposed a ‘conjoint constitution’ of society and nature which would allow that social facts are, in part, determined by biophysical advantages or constraints and that physical facts are likely to have been constructed by social processes. Or, in other words, the social and the physical are agents in the way they and each other are structured – they are co-constituted. In this way it is necessary to interrogate the concepts of nature and society as concepts that are often composed of ‘hidden assumptions’ that define them by evoking the ‘subtle but powerful ways in which specific historical and cultural blinders can shape, not just the perceptions of consequences, but also the consequences of perceptions’ (Freudenburg et al. 1995: 388). For example, the emphasis on reducing the impact on the environment through commitments to limit economic activities overlooks the fundamental premises about the relationship between nature and society that allows these economic behaviours to flourish (Macnaghtan and Urry 1995).

Table 2.1 Environmental paradigms in Sociology (Source: modified from Catton and Dunlap, 1980)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumptions about the nature of human beings</th>
<th>Assumptions about social causation</th>
<th>Dominant Western Worldview (DWW)</th>
<th>Human Exceptionalism Paradigm (HEP)</th>
<th>New Ecological Paradigm (NEP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People are fundamentally different from all other creatures on Earth, over which they have domination.</td>
<td>People are masters of their destiny; they can choose their goals and learn to do whatever is necessary</td>
<td>Humans have cultural heritage in addition to (and distinct from) their genetic inheritance, and thus are quite unlike all other animal species.</td>
<td>Social and cultural factors (including technology) are the major determinants of human affairs.</td>
<td>While humans have exceptional characteristics (culture, technology, etc.), they remain one among many species that are interdependently involved in the global ecosystem. Human affairs are influenced not only by social and cultural factors, but also by intricate linkages of cause, effect, and feedback in the web of nature; thus purposive human actions have many unintended consequences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assumptions about the context of human society

The world is vast, and thus provides unlimited opportunities for humans.

Social and cultural environments are the crucial context for human affairs, and the biophysical environment is largely irrelevant.

Humans live in and are dependent upon a finite biophysical environment which imposes potent physical and biological restraints on human affairs.

Assumptions about constraints on human society

The history of humanity is one of progress; for every problem there is a solution, and thus progress need never cease.

Culture is cumulative; thus technological and social progress can continue indefinitely, making all social problems ultimately soluble.

Although the inventiveness of humans and the powers derived therefrom may seem for a while to extend carrying capacity limits, ecological laws cannot be repealed.

In a synthesis of more recent literature on environmental sociology, Goldman and Schurman (2000) found insights complementary to this New Ecological Paradigm (NEP) by looking into the crucial research directions from a broad range of social theories to find that the rationale for an NEP is overwhelming if considered in the light that:

- Not only must society be studied as constitutive of nature and vice versa, but nature must be understood as an actor with a conjoined materiality with society
- Sociology must become a reflexive science that understands knowledge (including ecological knowledge) as situated, partial, and internal to exercises of power, and people (as subjects and scientists of inquiry) in their organically embodied and ecologically embedded contexts
- Studies of nature-society relations need to consider ecological processes, political-economic structures, and meanings, values, and agency as necessary and complementary components of analysis; and
- The boundaries assumed by traditional units of analysis (e.g. nation, economy, biology, culture, or species) are inherently unstable and permeable.

The capacity of traditional sociology to encompass the principles of the NEP is clearly challenging. Environmental sociology showed promise as a way forward however, by the turn of the century the sub-discipline was beginning to fracture.
Persistent problems in Environmental Sociology

Environmental sociology was being plagued by another of the epistemological ‘great divides’: that of the relativist/pragmatist dichotomy. Dunlap (2010: 23) reduced the state of environmental sociology into two groups - ‘environmental agnostics’ and ‘environmental pragmatists’. He claimed that the agnostics are mostly relativists who largely ignore the material basis of environmental problems, preferring to see them as symbolic or cultural phenomena to be interpreted hermeneutically. The pragmatists on the other hand, are realists who recognise that the environment is a material variable with empirical validity in any analysis of social-environmental relations, as well as the social and symbolic. So, whereas the environmental pragmatists were subscribing more closely to the tenets of environmental sociology, there was the argument that environmental sociologists have been too preoccupied with the social aspects of environmental degradation to notice how social processes have changed in response or adaptation to the environmental problems (Buttel 2004). A further issue was that environmental sociologists neglected to see the environment as a heterogeneous variable in social research which poses different research outcomes, depending on the particular vulnerability or resilience of different kinds of environment with variable ecological traits (Buttel 2004). Environmental sociologists (particularly in the U.S) remained preoccupied with finding answers to why a contemporary, prospering society was unsustainable and spent little time on investigating how things could be different or how they might be changed (Buttel 2003; see Dunlap 2002 for similar thoughts).

Clearly, breaching the social/nature divide was proving difficult for environmental sociology. Freudenberg et al (1995) warn that giving both social and environmental phenomenon equal consideration in an analysis is only exacerbating the social/nature divide by highlighting their distinctness and difference (1995). In other words, “equal” consideration is not the same as “symmetrical” consideration (Callon 1986). This asymmetry has consequences for sociological research, in that the investigator must choose to take a particular stance, or to infuse the units of analysis with either material or social value – and once again sociologists slip into a method of analytic primacy. The goal in
environmental sociology should be, rather, to see nature as neither a purely social or purely material variable but as both: a hybrid of the social and the material (Latour 2005). The hybridisation of physical or material and social agents has the added advantage of assuring that researchers consider the symbolic meanings that we attach to physical things (Woodgate and Redclift 1998), rather than simply adding nature in to ‘already entrenched constellations’ of social science (Whatmore 1999: 23).

While the principles of the NEP have become the core of a broader environmental sociology discipline, much sociological research on environmental problems, especially as regards sustainability, tends to fall back on arguments that the environment and associated problems are ‘socially constructed’. The ‘social’ is a convenient construct for sociologists because an analysis does not have to address the biology or ecology of the problem. However, viewing all problems as socially created acts to maintain the gap between the social and biological sciences (Woodgate and Redclift 1998). The obvious potential problem with this social construction of environmental problems is its potential misuse. If environmental problems are framed in social discourses then they can be framed in particular ways using particular angles that serve particular political ends (Buttel 1994 cited in Woodgate and Redclift 1998).

Much research of the original advocators of environmental sociology has maintained a wide gap between theory and research and lacks empirically grounded results (Buttel 2004). Current applied research in environmental sociology had split into two factions roughly corresponding with the North American/European scholarly groups. While the North Americans were busy using empirical data to analyse processes and outcomes of environmental-social problems, the European scholars were stuck on problematising, rather than analysing, the social/environmental interactions (Dunlap in Redclift and Woodgate 2010). Buttel argues that the effects of Environmental Sociology in addressing dichotomies like society/nature (but especially structure/agency) has been patchy and claims that much research in the field favours theoretical or methodological over substantive importance (Buttel 1987). An environmental
sociology that can stay true to the principles of the NEP is what Buttel claims to be the new human ecology (Buttel 1987).20

**Human ecology**

Dunlap (2008) argues that the need for an ecological perspective in environmental sociology is self-evident by stating that:

> [W]ithin environmental sociology, the combination of obvious ecological problems ranging from toxic contamination to global warming and a new generation of scholars who take the significance of these problems for granted, makes the ecosystem dependence of modern societies seem self-evident. In an era when the human “footprint” on the global ecosystem has become so undeniably large that analysts argue the Earth has transitioned from the Holocene to the Anthropocene epochs ... there is little need to note that one’s work is premised on an ecological rather than exemptionalist view of the world (Dunlap 2008: 285)

Put simply, sociology needs ecological concepts (Catton 1994) if it is to be of any use in the present and future environmental problems. Focussing research on ecosystems, then, would seem to provide environmental sociology with the required concept. Human ecology as a sociological approach concentrates on ecosystems of humans, culture and the natural environment. However, a persistent problem in social research is the selection of units of study. Human ecology has had several iterations over the decades, but the most recognised is the POET model which separates out discrete, but interrelated, units of study. The POET model, population, organisation, environment and technology, has been criticised as too anthropocentric (Catton 1994). Despite the criticisms, human ecology has been credited with bridging the divide between social and biological sciences (Becker and Ostrom 1995). It is the specific inclusion of human culture from a biological perspective that makes human ecology unique and it has several compelling reasons for doing so:

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20 ‘New’ as different from ‘classical’ human ecology in that society is no longer seen to inherently live in harmony with the environment, but are more exploitative of it (Buttel 1987).
• The aptitude for culture is the product of biological evolution through natural selection. It is the most distinctive biological attribute of the human species.
• This aptitude must have been of selective advantage in the natural environment of humankind, although it may not be so in other settings.
• Human culture is totally dependent on the processes of life for its existence, and it is very much affected by biological and biophysical happenings.
• Human culture is an immensely powerful biological force, in that it has highly significant impacts, through its influence on human behaviour, on biological systems.
• These impacts became increasingly important after the introduction of farming, and even more so since the industrial transition.
• Some biological and biophysical principles are of great relevance to our understanding of human situations (Boyden 2007: 4).

Crucial to the efficacy of analysing environmental problems through human ecology, is the focus on the fluid nature of all elements between and among systems. However, this focus on systems as units of analysis relies on the assumption that systems are stable and predictable entities with defined boundaries (Vayda 1983) that could lead, once again, to the separation of human and natural systems. Here, human ecology runs the obvious risk of reverting back to the dichotomy that it set out to avoid. Thus, it is important to examine the pervasive and tenacious constructs through which ‘nature’ is defined and how these constructs could give nature, and humans their agency.

**Cultural geography and the production of nature and agency**

The ‘production of nature is something that is learnt; and the learning process varies greatly between different societies, different periods and different social groups within a society’ (Macnaghtan and Urry 1995: 210; 1998). Thus, the concept of nature is constructed in different ways (therefore there is no one single nature, but rather a range of natures) through other social actors, rather
than through our direct experience with nature. As Woodgate and Redclift explain:

‘In modern society we are confronted by, and respond to, natures constructed (both physically and cognitively) by other social actors, more often than to natures which we experience reflexively, and at first hand’ (Woodgate and Redcliff 1998: 12).

Thus, agency is implicit in concepts of nature in current global discourse where nature is assumed to set the limits of human progress (Macnaghtan and Urry 1995). If, to follow the argument of Macnaghtan and Urry, there are different natures then the different ways of interacting with, and responding to, nature are not necessarily tied to personal experiences with nature, but are reflexive through those experiences and through social and political conceptions of nature. Consequently, there are different ways of knowing nature that rely on dual agency – a give and take of knowledge and action between human and non-human actors. Social action and the processes of nature are in a dialectical relationship (Murphy 1995). Yet, this relationship has historically placed nature as ‘primordial’ and ‘external’ to the intellectual lives and work of humans, which are primarily urban (Fitzsimmons 1989: 107). According to Fitzsimmons (1989: 111), early geographers squeezed physical and human geography ‘uncomfortably’ together through the concept of space, rather than landscape. When it came to the question of whether nature has agency, Fitzsimmons (1989: 114) admits that it was safer for geographers to simply ignore it in the effort to avoid confrontation with the natural (physical) sciences and thereby ‘lose access to the scientistic authority and the complicity of scientific power’. This confrontation was not entirely avoided however, with the interest regarding nature in the social sciences considered to be a ‘mass trespass over the manicured lawns of natural science’ (Whatmore 1999: 23).

Of course, to say simply that humans have agency is to simplify the actions that humans take. Humans do not make choices as unrestricted or haphazard as the idea of having total agency might suggest. They are restricted by their environment in several ways. Murphy (1995: 136) suggests these constraints are
manifested in three different conscious ways or paradoxes – dialectically, pragmatically and locally. We are restricted dialectically because it is through striving to build a social unity through laws and regulations that we limit the possibility of social change. Problems that arise are subsumed and trivialised by the social consciousness as unavoidable outcomes because ‘to embrace problems of any scale is to threaten the precarious order maintained by our collective inattention’. We are restricted pragmatically through the necessity of the everyday tasks of jobs and family and survival. We tend not to theorise our existence or the why of things because we are too busy doing things. Scientific claims about environmental problems sit uncomfortably outside our everyday consciousness. And lastly, we are restricted by our locality because human consciousness is essentially a local affair. We may be globalising, but humans are primarily concerned more with what’s going on in their backyard despite the global consequences of our actions (Murphy 1995).

Cultural geography, like sociology, has been accused of affording humans greater agency than objects or the environment. Sauer (1925: 309) maintained a clear distinction between natural and cultural elements as a basis for assessing the impact the cultural has on nature or how the natural forms are transformed by ‘man’ to construct the cultural. Sauer made his position clear on the separation of culture and nature when he explained that ‘culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result’ (Sauer 1925: 343). Although the two elements are brought together to form a landscape, outside of the landscape they remain separate elements. Braun (2004) eludes to a pervasive separation in cultural geography by describing the problem of relations between culture and nature as having a ‘career’ spanning several changing ‘moments’ which problematise the relationship. By looking at the relationship between culture and nature, these moments in cultural geography bring into being the very problem they seek to resolve, except for the final moment - the Actor-network moment – which Braun (2004: 152) argues ‘sets out to displace this question and its founding categories all together’. Braun (2004: 152, 168) refers to the analytic symmetry of ANT (discussed below) as a ‘non-modern ontology’ and pitches it against other approaches in cultural geography that ‘pre-suppose a world divided
into distinct ontological domains’. So in the end, according to Braun (2004: 170), the problem of agency lies in the tendency of ‘placing all the action on the side of the cultural, and leaving “things” entirely mute and passive’. The persistent problem for cultural geography, when thinking about the interaction between culture and nature, seems to be posed by the ‘elusive materiality’ of nature (Castree 2003: 168).

There are notable examples in more recent works of cultural geographers that confidently place “things” amongst all the action. Whatmore (2002) in particular expertly employs a non-modern ontology to displace dichotomies in notions of wilderness, science and consumption. Through a redistribution of social agency Whatmore uses elephants, genetically modified foods and patents to reassemble the ‘geographies of social life’ (Whatmore 2002: 4). These reassembled ‘hybrid geographies’ describe complex and unexpected associations that blur the distinctions between human and non-human. Similarly, Saltzman, Head, and Stenseke’s (2011) comparative case study of cattle farming in Sweden and Australia is a ‘prime example of practices dismantling the nature/culture divide’ (2011: 54). By investigating boundaries between species and spaces and between humans and the non-human world, Saltzman et al. found some striking differences between the two case studies. Firstly, in Sweden cows are an historical and embedded aspect of Sweden’s natural landscape, unlike Australia where cows are a relatively recent (1788) introduced species. These ‘integrationist’ and ‘separatist’ attitudes to ‘nature’ influence environmental conservation imperatives where human activity, such as agriculture, is either a part of nor separate to ‘nature’. (Saltzman 2011: 61). Similarly, Eden and Bear’s (2011) case study of recreational anglers in the UK demonstrates the ways ‘nature’ has agency in cultural practices and specifically, how our cultural perceptions of nature influence environmental management. By interrogating the concept of the “balance of nature” the authors determined the attitudes of recreational anglers toward river management. They found that through anglers’ rejection of the notion of human control over nature there emerged ‘socio-natural’ associations that manifested in different categories of environmental interventions.
Introducing a second dichotomy and Actor-network theory

Aside from the society/nature dualism, the (Western) intellectual world is fraught with fundamental binary oppositions (Brubaker 1993) or what is referred to as modernity’s ‘great divides’ (Goldman and Schurman 2000; Braun 2004) such as agency/structure, material/symbolic, mind/body, micro/macro which, as demonstrated above, often means that researchers study phenomena within an either/or framework of logic and almost necessarily refrain from crossing disciplines. The obvious effect of these binaries on the practice of studying society and the environment is to obstruct heuristic practice and conceal the existence (or non-existence) of both “oppositional” elements in the phenomena under study. Viewed from a traditional sociological perspective, this thesis is a study of relationships between people and their World Heritage listed natural environment. Sociology, as well as its environmental sociology and human ecology cousins is perhaps not up to the task of providing nature with that ever-elusive materiality. And so it is at this point in the chapter that the theories of traditional sociology must be left behind in the search for those more able to adequately bridge the social/nature divide. Additionally, this point in the chapter introduces a second pervasive dichotomy in sociology: the agency/structure dualism. The sociologist who wishes to study society and nature is now faced with the prospect of navigating two separate, but interconnected, dichotomies. While society/nature focuses on relations between humans and objects, agency/structure focuses on relationships between human action and social context, or as Layder (1994: 4) puts it, 'in general terms the action-structure distinction concentrates on the questions of how creativity and constraint are related through social activity (1994: 4). Agency then is ascribed through the process of social relations to humans making the issue of ascribing agency to ‘nature’ immediately problematic. The society/nature dichotomy cannot be addressed without first ascribing agency or action to nature. The question is how?

Before presenting Actor-network theory as a possible solution to the problem of how to ascribe agency to nature, I turn here to other key sociological thinkers on the agency/structure subject. The theories of Bourdieu and Giddens offer useful frameworks for reconceptualising how agency could be ascribed in a ‘natural'
World Heritage setting. Both sociologists break down the agency (or action) and structure dichotomy by suggesting a process of relational influences. However, as neither offers any suggestions regarding how these theories might apply to nature, their usefulness extends only so far.

Bourdieu emphasises the dialectic relationship between agency or human actors and social structures and attempts to understand them through the combined effect of objective conditions, internal interpretations and social action (Raedeke, Green, Hodge and Valdivia 2003). Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' bridges the gap between the structure and agency dichotomy, as it represents both human practices as influencing, and influenced by, broader political processes. Habitus embodies the shared meanings among social groups at the intuitive, subconscious level and the social interactions that are taken for granted (Raedeke et al. 2003). It is the habitus that allows individuals to act in any number of 'transformative' or 'constraining' ways yet, inevitably, it also 'predisposes individuals toward certain ways of behaving' (Reay 2004: 443). The various spheres of life that make up modern society (education, science, art, politics etc.) are what Bourdieu terms 'fields'. These fields are composed of social relations, which are inherently competitive as actors vie for resources (social, economic and cultural capital) (Raedeke et al. 2003). Fields are unstable and their status is relative to the shifting statuses of other fields, just as actor's positions within the field are relative to other actors (Wacquant 2008). Therefore, alongside the unconscious actions of the habitus are the more strategic actions of the field, which form a 'constructed relationship' between habitus and field.

Giddens interweaves the processes of action and structure into what he calls 'structuration' theory (Giddens 1984), whereby 'human actions simultaneously structure and are structured by society' (Kasperson 2000: 32). In social analytic terms, structuration theory produces 'theoretical accounts of actual behaviour and social experience, and the way humans rearrange their social circumstances' (Layder 1994: 130). Structuration is particularly useful in the analysis of institutions and strategic conduct which focuses on 'how the agent draws on structural properties (rules and resources) in the constitution of social relations
(Kaspersen 2000: 48). In the analysis of strategic conduct, Giddens insists on three tenets; the need to avoid impoverished description of agents’ knowledgeability; a sophisticated account of motivation; and an interpretation of the dialectic of control (Giddens 1984). Structuration theory is incredibly abstract and complex and its practical application to the social research context has been criticised (see for example Ross 1991). However, others (Layder 1994; Kaspersen 2000; Cohen 2000) and Giddens himself encourage researchers to draw on particular elements of the theory, rather than attempt to apply the entire theory to a research project.

For Giddens, social practices reflect the ability of humans to modify their circumstances in which they find themselves, while simultaneously recreating the social conditions (Layder 1994). This ‘dialectic of control’ suggests that power is part of all actions (Kaspersen 2000) and that power balances are constantly shifting through the attempts by people to use resources at their disposal (Layder 1994). ‘Control’ according to Giddens (1984: 283) is the ‘capability that some actors, groups or type of actors have of influencing the circumstances or action of others’. Subordinates can maintain power through their access to resources that the superordinates depend upon in some way, thereby maintaining leverage against the superordinates (Cohen 2000). The use of these resources varies substantially however, between different social contexts (Giddens 1984). Giddens ‘practical and discursive awareness’ refers to how our skills and knowledge effect the way we engage in activities and how we describe and discuss the reasons for our behaviour (Layder 1994: 182). It also encompasses how, upon reflecting on our behaviour, we adapt it according to available resources. Giddens charges his actors with a great deal of knowledge which informs their actions. However, actions also have ‘unintended consequences’ that illustrate the reproductive nature of actions. How these actions reproduce can change or reinforce institutions and future actions in unanticipated (Kaspersen 2000) and sometimes contradictory (Giddens 1984) ways.

It is clear that in studying society and nature, it is necessary to be mindful of how concepts of ‘society’, ‘nature’, ‘agency’ and ‘structure’ are constituted or co-
constituted. While the theories of Bourdieu and Giddens are well suited to this end, and while elements of their theories are woven into this thesis’ analytical fabric, they do not resist making causal statements about social phenomena based on these a priori structures of society and nature (Becker 2007). Consequently, they do not offer a solution to the problem of allowing nature to be endowed with agency or action. Without agency, ‘nature’ cannot escape its oppositional alignment to ‘society’ in heuristic practices. Without being able to act, nature will continue to be acted upon by oppositional social forces. Actor-network theory (ANT) provides a way through this impasse by proposing that there is no ‘society’ or ‘nature’ at all.

ANT, by design, exerts a force on the researcher to look beyond binaries. Forged in Science and Technology Studies, ANT is an increasingly popular tool for studying social/environmental problems with the main purpose of destabilising the society/nature and/or agency/structure divides (for example; Abram and Lien 2011, Asdal and Ween 2014, Bell 2003, Callon 1986, Castree 2001; 2002, Castree and MacMillan 2001, Davies 2002, Lien and Law 2011, Hitchings 2003, Keely and Scoones 2000, Law and Mol 2011a, Lockie 2012, Murdoch 1997; 2001, Chou 2012). In an attempt to move beyond any either/or propositions, ANT encourages the use of metaphors better suited to circumscribing the society/nature dualisms. In researching society and the environment, this use of metaphors is arguably ANT’s most powerful tool. However, in the absence of any ANT ‘framework’ or step-by-step guidelines, ANT can be difficult to deploy faithfully. Latour (1999: 16; 2005) laments that many ANT studies are not, in fact, ANT. Latour believes this problem is inherent, in part, to the hyphen in actor-network giving it too close a resemblance to the agency/structure dichotomy. This misunderstanding has resulted in ANT studies, as well as ANT criticism being ‘much too similar to the traditional divides of social theory’. Without totally circumventing the society/nature binary, research may jump out of the either/or frypan only to fall into the both/and fire demonstrated by Demeritt’s comment that ANT ‘make[s] it possible to imagine nature as both a real material actor and a socially constructed object’ (Demeritt 1994: 164). The crucial message is that ANT must be deployed
faithfully if it is to truly circumvent the society/nature and agency/structure dichotomies.

Arguably, if sociologists are to fully ‘reimagine’ nature then propositions of both/and and either/or will no longer do (Castree and McMillan 2001: 210). Castree and McMillan (2001) argue that an ANT approach to researching environmental problems offers a remedy for inherent weaknesses in constructionist or realist conceptions of nature and society which appears to close the gap between the poles of society and nature only to ‘reinstall it at another level’. They explain that bringing the natural into the social domain is simply shifting the ontological framework from one ‘side’ to the other while keeping the original dichotomy intact. In other words, researchers are merely shifting from an either/or to a both/and proposition. Herein lies a particular difficulty for any sociologist attempting to use ANT to explain research on society and environment. Doing ANT analyses requires the sociologist to jettison almost everything that makes them a sociologist. For this reason, some would argue that, to some degree, the society/nature distinction is necessary in studies of society and environment (Murdoch 2001).\footnote{While Murdoch provides an account of ANT and its critics, the article is not an expression of his views.} Nevertheless, ANT concepts such as the hybrid object (or quasi-object), that is, something that is other than both social and natural, offer a solution to this disciplinary impasse.

ANT has been used extensively in Science and Technology Studies (STS) to investigate hybridity, specifically, how the performance of many social functions is now undertaken by technology (Cooper 2008). Technological innovation is such an integrated part of everyday life that ANT attempts to explain how these technologies influence human behavior to form socio-technical systems (Latour 1992). Latour uses innovations from everyday, often taken-for-granted, examples to argue that technology is interwoven in a process of negotiation that transmits functions and, in some cases, human morality (Latour 2002). For instance, he argues that the problem of hotel guests taking their keys home is solved by hotel
management attaching a metal weight to the keys. This innovation transfers, or delegates, the moral obligation of the guest, to return the keys to the manager before they leave the hotel, to the key itself which is less likely to be left accidently in a coat pocket (Latour 1991, 1992). Similarly Latour suggest that innovations forego the necessity to discipline humans in mundane function like closing a door (Latour 1988). This moral function (if leaving the door open lets in a cold draft) is transferred to the installation of an automatic door closer (Latour 1992). The human and non-human hybridity of the key chain and door closer nudges the objects firmly into the realm of action. In these cases they both ‘translate actions between the human and non-human poles’ and in the translating they are no longer purely social or purely natural or a combination of the two, but something distinctively unique (Bell 2003: 14).

In stretching the hybrid metaphor further, STS has explored how these ‘hybrids’ take on different characteristics in different scenarios to create multiple versions or composites of hybrids. Law and Mol (2011a) demonstrate how the foot and mouth epidemic in the UK in 2001 revealed different veterinary realities of the disease. Different experiences with the disease by different veterinary traditions create different versions of foot and mouth. Law concludes that ‘clinic, lab, and epidemiology are each involved with their own specific ontological variant of ‘the’ disease. Foot and mouth is not singular. It is a composite’ (Law and Mol 2011a: 2, original emphasis). Law and Mol (2011b; see also Mol 2002) similarly use the practice of using an ultrasound machine (or Doppler) to demonstrate the existence of multiple Dopplers. The machine is used to check a pulse by a surgeon, midwife, and technician. While all three are using the machine for the same reason, the outcomes are vastly different. The surgeon is checking for indications of damaged arteries, the midwife is checking for a foetal heartbeat and the technician is checking his own pulse to determine whether the machine is working. While there are traces of similarity in the three uses, Law and Mol argue that it is not way the Doppler is used in each scenario that is different. It is the Doppler itself that changes.
Critical to applying the concept of hybridity in an ANT study, is symmetrical analyses - or what Callon calls a ‘generalised symmetry’ (Callon 1986:4). That is, all actors are afforded a uniform category or class of actor without prescribing a set of ‘natural’ or ‘social’ values or characteristics. The characteristics of particular actors are allowed to emerge throughout the research, based on their actions and roles within the networks. This method of research is, no doubt, easier “said than done” as the researcher must unlearn everything they know about nature and society in order to give neither one priority over the other. While ANT clearly offers useful concepts for addressing dichotomies in sociology, how to go about ‘doing’ ANT is less clear. Indeed, ANT appears at times to be intentionally vague.22 It does not claim to be a theory per se, except perhaps a ‘theory of the space of fluids circulating in a non-modern situation’ (Latour 1999: 22). Neither does ANT prescribe a single formula or system for approaching an ANT analysis. Indeed, the language and terms used in ANT studies varies widely. ANT is also known as material semiotics (Law 2007) and a sociology of translation (Callon 1986). Yet it does have a set of tenets, common among ANT research, to guide the researcher along the heuristic path to an Actor-network analysis. These tenets are discussed below.

**Following the Actors**

While ANT does not come with a ‘how to’ guide, according to Latour, ANT simply insists that the researcher follows the actors.23 To follow the actors the researcher must ‘attempt to reveal what is extraordinary about the ordinary features of everyday life’ (Silverman 2013: 49). Following the actors involves looking at how actors enrol other actors and how they interact with each other. By exploring these interactions, the researcher can determine and define the

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23 Latour’s 2005 Reassembling the Social: an Introduction to Actor-Network Theory is the closest thing to a ‘text-book’ on how to conduct an ANT analysis. Although the book is intended to be a how-to guide it, in Latour’s own words, acts more like a ‘travel guide’ rather than a ‘discourse on method’. Its aim is to ‘offer suggestions’ and help practitioners to ‘find their bearings once they are bogged down in the territory’ (2005: 17)
roles of the actors. Some of these actors may actually be intermediaries, a term traditionally used in economics and defined by Callon as ‘anything passing between actors which defines the relationship between them (1991: 134). Intermediaries differ from actors in that they are what actors set into motion as an effect of their association with other actors. Similar to intermediaries, are Latour’s (2005) mediators which, according to Latour, differ from the former in their ability to transform. Actors cannot act without the circulation of intermediaries and intermediaries cannot act alone. For example, a textbook may sit unread on a bedside table. Until it is picked up and read, the book’s author and the reader remain disassociated. The relationship that this book has put into circulation so far are between the publisher and book shop and the book shop and the consumer but, so far, the author and reader are yet to enter into a relationship. In this example, the author and reader have put the textbook into circulation and it has described the relationship between the two. The book is the intermediary (but only when picked up and read) and the author and reader become the actors. To extend this metaphor further, if the book inspires the reader to act in a transformational way (change jobs or study Latin) then the book can also become an actor. According to Callon, intermediaries can change into actors and vice versa (1991).

For Latour (2005), making a decision to follow the actors is a decision that eschews any predetermined theoretical framework or what Latour describes as a ‘privileged locus’ (2005: 61). Rather than using a single locus or framework to help explain the behaviour of actors, ANT follows the visible, empirically traceable trails that actors leave behind. According to Latour, if frameworks or structures are completely and indisputably defined, they leave no room for new information regarding their composition. ANT searches for new information on how these structures are composed to allow the possibility that anyone, or anything, can be followed. This type of research is intended to keep the researcher grounded in the concept of, what Law terms, ‘heterogeneous networks’ (Law 1992: 380) which is a metaphor to help remind the researcher that structures are made up of heterogeneous actors (human and non-human) that sometimes consolidate to
form a single structure. ANT does not pre-suppose who or what these structures are composed of: thus the researcher must follow the actors to find out.

**Analytical symmetry**

The origins of ANT are fuzzy due to the dispersed nature of its definition and application (Law 2007), but Law attributes the theory to Callon writing in the early 1980s who contextualised ANT in the business of describing the weaknesses and strengths of systems of social and material heterogeneity (2007). Symmetry, according to Latour, does not mean that if you study ‘society’ then you must also study ‘nature’. It means, rather, that you would study neither as singularly predetermined concepts or stable structures or, as Callon (1986) suggests, you must speak of social and natural materials as if they are the same thing by keeping the vocabulary consistent when studying the different materials of the research problem. Callon’s 1986 study of domesticating scallops in St Brieuc Bay, France is arguably the exemplification of using analytical symmetry in ANT research.

Callon, exploring the translation of a scientific innovation, discovered that there were four ‘moments’ in the process. In this case the object to be translated was an innovation proposed by scientists to increase scallop production for small-scale scallop fishermen. Callon’s four moments - ‘problematisation’, ‘interessement’, ‘enrolment’, ‘mobilisation’ and the possible fifth moment of ‘dissidence’ are uniformly used to describe the actions of scientists, fishermen and scallops throughout his analysis (1986: 17) to explain the actions of fishermen and scientific colleagues (humans) and scallops (non-humans). A simplified version of Callon’s study describes problematisation as the point where the actors are identified related to the achievement of a particular goal or solution to a problem. In this case scientists propose, to scallop fisherman, a way to increase scallop larvae production. In this way, the scientists become the ‘obligatory passage point’ through which other actors’ interests are potentially met. Interessement occurs when the actors are attracted to the particular goal. They may be attracted for different reasons - the scientists desire professional recognition, the fishermen want increased scallop stocks and the scallops are attracted to the extra supports
installed by the scientists. Enrolment is the successful outcome of interessment. Actors have now accepted their role in the network as part of a research project. Mobilisation occurs when the process of translation is complete. The actors have been mobilised into a network of relationships with a common goal.

What makes Callon’s study particularly interesting for the principle of analytical symmetry, is what the scallops (the non-human actors) did next. After the successful mobilisation of a network, the majority of scallops failed to anchor themselves on their new supports. This act of ‘dissonance’ had the result of rejecting their, previously interested, role in the network (Callon 1986). The network become unstable until the small number of scallops that had managed to attach to the new supports were harvested by errant fisherman before the scientists could determine why the scallops failed to anchor causing the network to collapse entirely. Affording analytical symmetry to ‘natural’ and ‘social’ allowed Callon a richer, more complex understanding on how humans and non-humans were active in the formation and destruction of networks.

**Redefining power**

According to Law (1992), ANT is primarily concerned with the mechanics of power and the central premise in any ANT analysis is that power is associative, that is, power is invested in relations rather than entities. Thus, for ANT, power is not assumed by actors or groups, but rather it is found, discovered, uncovered by following the traces of power into and out of groups, organisations, departments or places. Following the traces brings power into focus, not through studying individual actors, but by investigating how it is produced and reproduced through relationships to other actors in the network. It is through making the associations between actors transparent that ANT derives most of its clout as an analytical tool. Through the process of ‘interessment’ discussed above, certain actors entice or enrol other actors to assemble and to enact. In these networks power resides in the different forms taken by the actors relational aspects, rather than in the actors themselves. Agency and power are relational effects and therefore do not reside in either humans or non-humans but from ‘relations between entities’ (Lockie 2004: 50). Because actors themselves are also networks,
through their enrolment by other actors, there are networks within networks creating multiple layers of networks (Law 2007).

From an ANT perspective, there are no assumptions about how power is generated and maintained. It does not presume that social constructions hold all the power. Indeed, as mentioned above, it does not presume that such social construction exists at all. ANT is more concerned with the ordering of heterogeneous materials that, when brought together, generate power (Law 1992). In this light, constructs, such as society and the environment, are effects or the end results of processes that involve a network of materials that are organised and sorted into patterns that construct and stabilise these constructs (Law 1992, Latour 2005). These constructs may indeed be powerful, but the aim of ANT is to study and trace the heterogeneous materials (or actors) that shift and move together to form these constructs through a ‘process of heterogeneous engineering’ (Law 1992: 381). This engineering by actors (and in some cases by intermediaries) is where the power is engineered and by focusing on the mechanics of power we pull apart and analyse associations between the heterogeneous actors in search of how power is an effect, and not the cause, of a network.

**Criticisms**

Actor-network theory, like any other methodology, is not perfect and Latour is the first to make several points regarding its flaws. Some of these flaws are worth repeating here to provide an overview of ANT’s limitations, to help define what ANT is and, most usefully, what it is not. For Latour (1999) ‘network’ refers to transformations or how objects or ideas are transported through a series of translations. Network, in this sense, is different to the contemporary definition, such as the World Wide Web, which transports information in an unmodified state. Actor and network are not meant to define a binary of agency and structure - a notion which ANT specifically views as problematic. Latour (1999: 17) explains actor-network as a ‘summing up of interactions through various kinds of devices, inscriptions, forms and formulae, into a very local, very practical, very tiny locus’. Castree and MacMillan (2001) take further issue with the idea of ANT networks as
distinctively different from any other network. While they are generally advocates of ANT, they challenge ANT’s rejection of, what they consider to be, the very useful sociological rubrics, such as economical or social processes. They argue that a staunch commitment to the absolute uniqueness of every network makes it necessary to begin ANT investigation with a blank slate every time.

Another important distinction in ANT, is that actors in the network are not defined by what they do, but what gives them the power to do it. This power is not assumed to be a characteristic, \( a \text{ priori } \) of conventionally powerful actors, but as a potential condition or characteristic of all actors in the network. When doing an actor-network analysis, as Law (1991: 12) states, ‘it is a mistake to think of the large and powerful in a different way’. The final point is that ANT is not a theory. It is an ontology. It does not try to explain the behaviour of social actors, but rather firmly instils knowledge with the actors and does not seek to provide an explanation to those actors about how their actions are subject to external forces only decipherable through sociological methods. Rather, it seeks to learn from the actors by framing and summing up the ‘procedures which render actors able to negotiate their way through one another’s world-building activities’ (Latour 1999: 21). Description, or providing a ‘\textit{uniquely adequate account of a given situation}’ is, in the words of Latour, ‘incredibly demanding’ (2005: 144). However, some see this reliance on description as a lack of critical interpretation that renders ANT unacceptably apolitical in its interpretation of power and influence (Castree and Macmillan 2001).

**Conclusion**

This chapter has introduced key issues in researching society and the environment. The society/nature dichotomy is tenacious in Sociological research, which struggled to incorporate ‘nature’ or the environment into social analyses and produce research with substantive importance. This tendency is a legacy from the traditional sociological paradigm of resource exploitation for human progress. The new ecological paradigm is not without its persistent difficulties and largely continues to separate society and nature into two distinct domains. ANT offers a possible way forward by attempting to bring actors into the picture.
without predetermining what the structure of these actors might look like. ANT offers particularly powerful tools, such as the metaphor of hybridity and method of analytical symmetry, to help circumscribe the society/nature dichotomy and tackle the issue of subscribing ‘nature’ with agency or action.

A natural World Heritage area with an adjacent population as a case study, presents a dizzying array of both human and non-human actors making it an ideal subject for an ANT investigation. ANT assists this research, with the aim of investigating the effects of World Heritage implementation, to trace the associations between actors while examining the perceived barriers between natural and social elements. With the help of ANT it sets out to determine whether there is such a thing as a World Heritage network, what it might look like and what it would tell us about the effects of World Heritage. In other, more ANT-like terms, the research sets out to see how human and non-human actors translate World Heritage as an effect of a network. The following chapter addresses the appropriate methods and research instruments to explore how World Heritage actors translate, transform and influence as a result, or an effect, of that network.
Chapter 3: Research design

I have departed with PhD thesis convention by positioning this chapter after my two ‘literature review’ chapters. Generally, the methodology chapter comes straight after the introduction to give the reader a sense of how the research was conducted before going on to talk about the actual research. I have followed the advice of Evans and Guba (2002), both in deciding to title this chapter ‘research design’ rather than ‘methods’ or ‘methodology’ and to place the chapter after my literature reviews. This chapter follows the literature reviews because it explains the most appropriate design for this study in response to the previous two chapters.

The following research questions and methods employed in this thesis arose from the literature (reviewed in the previous chapters) and my preliminary research. This is not to say that I did not already have some ideas about how I would approach this research project even before reading the literature. According to Booth, Colomb and Williams (2008) it is the mark of experience to start a research project with a plan and as I am a qualitative social researcher trained in the social sciences, I planned to explore a phenomenon by talking with people and observing behaviour. This chapter explains the disciplines that influenced the theoretical stance for my thesis and describes the instruments I used in conducting my research, including methods of data collection and analysis. It also includes critical reflexive aspects of qualitative research, including where I am situated in the research process and limitations and ethics of undertaking such research. To begin, I would like to explain a little more about why the research design chapter is located after my literature review chapters.

In part, this thesis was written from the middle outwards. Qualitative research is an iterative process and themes and patterns have emerged concurrently with my data collection and analysis (Creswell 1994) leading to more emerging patterns and more collection and analysis and so on. This cycle of iteration meant that, often, themes and patterns were crystallised during the writing of my results chapters
revealing the theory and previous research necessary to help explain what I found. For example, I did not fully comprehend the importance of the society/nature binary discussed in Chapter 2 until after I had written my first results chapter! So I feel that this research design chapter belongs here – contrary to the majority of theses – because I can explain how the questions and methods evolved, lapsed or resolved with the background chapters providing the signposts for what questions to ask, who to ask and how to go about the asking. This background information serves the purpose of 'sensitising concepts' which 'suggest directions along which to look' in a given research context (Blumer 1954: 7; see also Charmaz 2006).

**Qualitative research**

Early in my candidature, I was asked by a senior researcher at my school about my topic of research. I replied that I was going to study how World Heritage inscription had affected residents living adjacent to the site. The senior researcher replied ‘that'll be difficult to quantify’. It was the first, but not the last, time a fellow academic assumed that my research method would be quantitative. Even in a school where the ‘environment and society’ is the focus of research, I encountered a strong bias toward purely quantitative methods among my colleagues.24 The case study for this thesis, discussed in the next chapter, is a large (over 1 million hectares) World Heritage area of mostly conjoined national parks. Placing World Heritage to one side for a moment, as part of the preparation for this thesis I looked for examples of qualitative studies on national parks; World Heritage or otherwise. I found, consistent with others, that qualitative, ethnographic research on national parks is rare. Haynes suggests that the reason for this lack of interest may be owing to the ‘quotidian of ‘park life’ which for the most part ... is made up of superficially dull routines like cleaning toilets and washrooms, repairing walking tracks, lighting small fires to create mosaics of burnt and un-burnt country, re-painting signs and attending to the usually small needs of park visitors’ (2009: 115). He notes that it is perhaps

24 I am a student at the Fenner School of Environment and Society, The Australian National University.
because working in national parks is so ‘routinised, and hard to enliven textually, that accounts of what rangers and park managers do are rare’ (Haynes 2009: 115). West and Brockington suggest, more distressingly, that qualitative, ethnographic research in national parks can be seen, by some, as tangential to the business of saving nature (2006: 609). Both suggestions point to a rather bleak view of how qualitative social research in ‘natural’ areas is conceived and only reinforce the necessity to extend and strengthen the existing scholarly body.

Ultimately, the decision to use qualitative inquiry methods on which to base the research, is based on the characteristics of the research question and the case study site. Unlike quantitative research which seeks the objective truth, qualitative research is designed for studying 'concrete cases in their temporal and local particularity' to form 'situation related statements' (Flick 2006: 13-14). Miles and Huberman cheekily declare qualitative data to be ‘sexy’ (1994: 1) and this is, in part, because qualitative research is reflective of situations based on relatable human experience, which provides data with a quality of ‘undeniability’ that is more meaningful and thus, more convincing to readers than quantitative studies (Miles and Huberman 1994: 1). Regardless of the suggested sexiness of qualitative data (or possibly because of it) good qualitative research, like quantitative research, requires the selection of appropriate methods, theories and approach to the research topic, the recognition and analysis of different perspectives, and self-reflexivity (Flick 2006). Flexibility is a fundamental characteristic of qualitative research that requires an evolving design, the presentation of multiple realities, the researcher as an instrument of data collection and focus on participant views. Aspects of the research design may alter during the course of the research (Marshall and Rossman 2006) and because qualitative research is essentially an inductive process, categories and themes in the data are generally formed during the data-gathering phase until a theory or pattern emerges (Creswell 1994). Consistent with qualitative design, the methods of enquiry for my research included in-depth, semi-structured interviews, direct and participant observation and documentary analysis (Miles and Huberman 1994).
Methodologies

Sociology

My undergraduate years were agreeably spent in the company of Giddens, Habermas, Durkheim, Marx and others whose enquiries into social phenomena and theories on power, equity, structure, control and class forged a life-long fascination with the discipline of sociology. The development and redevelopment of theories and opposing theories that help explain social phenomena - or telling stories about the social world - are what most draws me to the discipline. Throughout this research I have borrowed ideas from contemporary sociologists like Bourdieu and Giddens and drawn heavily from the work of Latour, but I am fundamentally influenced by classic sociological theories like C. Wright Mills’ sociological imagination in the way I approach research. The sociological imagination is one of the first concepts sociology undergraduates are exposed to (Scanlan and Grauerholz 2009) that encourages budding sociologists to view familiar routines from a completely different (alien) perspective. In this thesis, as in my day-to-day happenings, I look at society through the lenses of different histories and structures while being reflexively vigilant to the effects of my part in society and my own bias or preconceived ideas. One of the strengths of sociological theory in research is that it is constantly evolving. However, the criticisms directed at sociology and in particular environmental sociology discussed in the previous chapter have prompted me to search out and select elements from other disciplines such as human geography and methods like Actor-network theory which are suited to studying issues that involve concepts like environment and society.

Human Geography

human geography ... offers a new conception of the interrelationships between earth and man, - a conception resulting from a more synthetic knowledge of the physical laws governing our earth and of the relations between the living beings which inhabit it (Paul Vidal de la Blache 1921 in Livingstone, Agnew and Rogers 1996: 182).
Although geography has come under similar fire as sociology (see previous chapter) for failing to fully dissolve the nature/culture binary in environment and society research, it offers a number of attractive concepts for this research. In the incomparable words of human geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, the aim of human geography is ‘to try to understand what “being-in-the-world” is truly like’ (Tuan, 1977: 200–201). Tuan argued that to achieve this understanding the geographic sciences required a complementary ‘humanistic perspective’ that allows for the optimisation of ‘human awareness and knowledge’ (Tuan 1976: 267). At the heart of the way we know and experience the world is the concept of place. Place is fundamental to the discipline of human geography. Place constitutes materiality, meaning and practice (Cresswell 2009). Cresswell (2009: 2) explains how these three elements are interlinked:

*The material topography of place is made by people doing things according to the meanings they might wish a place to evoke. Meanings gain a measure of persistence when they are inscribed into the material landscape but are open to contestation by practices that do not conform to the expectations that come with place. Practices often do conform to some sense of what is appropriate in a particular place and are limited by the affordances particular material structures offer.*

The emphasis on materials, people, meanings, expectations and practices make human geography ideal for exploring and explaining and foregrounding the scene at World Heritage sites. Actor-network theory assists in identifying the key actors in this scene and helps to make sense of relationships between them.

**Actor-network theory (ANT)**

ANT rejects the notions of using social structure as a frame for research because, as Latour argues, ‘society is no more ‘roughly’ made of ‘individuals’, of ‘cultures’, of ‘nation states’ than Africa is ‘roughly’ a circle, France a hexagon or Cornwall a triangle (Latour 2005: 24). While ANT was primarily used in data analysis for this research, like grounded theory discussed below, the separation between data collection and analysis is never clear as I undertook both concurrently and both
stages of the research process informed the other at various stages. I have included ANT in this section because I have used the premise of ANT to build on my sociological foundations which, according to Latour (2005) is arguably ANT's intended purpose. Latour introduces ANT as a means to reframe sociology as a science of tracing associations which emphasises the relations or connections between actors.

ANT is discussed in greater detail in the previous chapter but essentially I employ ANT in this research because of its analytical capacity to empower both things (environment) and people (society) to act and enrol other actors into a network and move closer toward an ‘ecological sociology’ (Murdoch 2001) by avoiding the reification of both nature and society (Murdoch 1997). As Jepson et al. (2011) have already discovered conservation actors (i.e. actors that influence conservation processes and outcomes), as well as being people and organisations, are non-human including animals, and devices of categorisation and certification challenging the traditional idea that conservation is purely a human endeavour. I have attempted to do similar here through using ANT to consider humans and non-humans without affording analytical privilege to ‘anything or anyone’ (Law 1993: 10) in what Law describes as a modest sociology which attempts to step outside a priori structures, explanations or reductions and that eschews dualisms (Law 1993).

ANT was a late but profound addition to the analysis of my data. In my research proposal I had intended to only interview the residents living adjacent to the World Heritage area. However, I decided to revisit my initial plan after months struggling to make sense of the interview data. There seemed to be no clear pattern of perceptions of World Heritage either as a concept or physical entity other than something they did not give much thought to despite, generally, assuming it was a ‘good thing’. The awkward silences as my interviewees struggled for something enlightening to say and the frequent shoulder shrugging was disheartening and my growing malaise frustrated attempts to make any analytical sense of the data. In early drafts of this thesis, I reluctantly chose ‘cynicism’ as a theme or theory in which to group much of the interview data. I
made the mistake of not looking closer at conventional sociological questions of ‘why’ or ‘who’ and so, without further investigation, I settled on cynicism as a theory to describe residents’ perceptions of their World Heritage surrounds. Much later, in the final draft of this thesis, I decided to revisit this theme after reading Becker’s 2007 Writing for Social Scientists. In it he describes the problem of cynicism (borrowing heavily from Bennett Berger 1981) and how it can jeopardise and weaken data analysis and theory building. I knew the theme of cynicism had become a problem in writing my thesis because I was yet to write the chapter based on my resident interviews. Instead, I had gone on to broaden my interview pool – looking at local and state government and environmental groups for less cynical opinions on World Heritage (a strategy that only further complicated the issue as I will explain below).

The problem was not cynicism as a theme – indeed, I am sure that the exploration of cynicism as an outcome of World Heritage inscription would make for fascinating research. The problem was that, as Berger (1981: ix) discovered, I had developed a ‘cynical posture’ toward my research (see also Becker 2007 for similar thoughts). Like Berger I saw an ideological conflict - the aspirational idea of World Heritage and people’s lack of interest were at odds with one another. And, perplexingly at odds with what I expected to find. I could no longer write about residents’ perception of World Heritage without sounding cynical. Cynicism had crept into my writing to the point where it rendered my thesis as profoundly negative. In my novice attempts to reveal an elegant theory from my data, I had merely succeeded in dumbing it down. In representing resident’s perceptions in my field-notes, I had made broad, insinuating remarks alluding to resident attitudes that were ignorant, lazy, and self-interested without the slightest awareness that I had done so. I had not consciously set out to represent these people with any moral judgment – I knew this was the epitome of poor social research – yet I had done exactly that. I had failed as a researcher and PhD student to interrogate the reasons, systems, networks, and social and cultural environment, in which these perspectives were ‘constructed’ (Silverman 2013) relying instead on comparisons with my own views of the world. My confidence
nosedived and I had writer’s block. How could I explain the data from resident’s interviews without sounding cynical?

The growing negativity I felt toward my research reached a climax when my temporary Blue Mountains home was burgled. I lost all of my personal effects, equipment and roughly two years of PhD research. Fortunately, I had yet to erase my interviews from my digital recorder, which looks like an ordinary ballpoint pen and was overlooked by the thieves. I returned home immediately after the burglary and thought about whether to continue my study. Six months later, I began to tentatively rummage through my interviews, all of which I had to re-transcribe, but it all became too much and rather than deal with the data I had already collected (which was over 30 interviews) I decided to go back to the GBMWHCA and expand my interviews beyond residents and into the professional realm. The logic being that other groups would know more about World Heritage and even if their responses were still negative, at least there would be less silence and shoulder shrugging. I searched for narratives that were more knowledgeable, considered, and positive – narratives that would, I hoped, balance out the cynicism. I interviewed staff from the NSW Government department, local council and volunteered with state and locally run Bushcare groups, but I did not find what I was looking for. As Latour (1987) would have foreseen, when I moved from speaking with the World Heritage non-experts to the experts, I found more cynicism, not less.

Overcoming this cynicism and trying to ‘unfreeze’ my thinking (Eisenhardt 1989: 546) became the major challenge of this research and the writing of this thesis. I was introduced to ANT through a weekly meeting of students engaged in similar research and gradually fresh hints, clues, actions, perspectives and relationships in the data started to emerge. What seemed initially to be a simplistic case of cynicism, hinted at a larger and more complex issue of World Heritage influencing how actors related to each other and how they understood each other. Rather than looking for indications of cynicism in the data, I looked at how associations could help explain how these narratives and roles were created. Through a process of analytical trial and error, ANT provided an appropriate and
adaptable means to trace the associations between actors to show how they become defined, connected or disassociated in a World Heritage network.

**Research methods**

*Grounded theory*

For the initial analytical phase of this research, I borrowed elements from grounded theory which, through the method of constantly comparing data with data, keeps the researcher close to the participant’s accounts and what they view as problematic (Charmaz 2006). I conducted two stages of coding, with the initial stage asking broad questions about suggestions, foci and theoretical categories in the data. This first level coding stays close to the data where I highlighted actions in each segment of data (or chunk of data) with themes that reflected these actions. Influenced by my sociological stance this initial phase of coding searched for indications of relationships (human and non-human) and was guided by broad concepts such as power, equity, structure and control. To address the aim of this research, I specifically searched for indications of World Heritage effects by interrogating the relationships between humans or non-humans and World Heritage, what these relationships were and how and why they came to be.

Using grounded theory as a method generates a vast number of codes (121) and so a second phase of focused coding is necessary to reduce the data. This phase requires sifting through the initial codes to find the most significant to the research questions or the most frequent. For example figure 3.1 below describes the relationship between a resident of the Blue Mountains and an aspect of World Heritage as ‘disengaged’. The resident was not consulted about World Heritage nomination and their source of information regarding World Heritage inscription was, after the fact, from the local newspaper. In isolation this example could be explained as disempowerment: the resident was excluded from the World Heritage process. However, through the iterative process of grounded theory it became clear that this example was part of a larger pattern in the data. Other initial codes such as ‘apathy’ and ‘lack of awareness’ suggested that residents were generally *disinterested* in World Heritage specifics and this
disinterest likely explained their lack of involvement in World Heritage issues. Codes that reflected this pattern were condensed into the single theme of ‘disengagement’. Because of its prevalence in the data the code of ‘disengagement’ eventually became one of three themes (or narratives) that form the basis of the first results chapter in part two of this thesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BULLABURRA CASE</td>
<td>Disengagement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1692.2006</td>
<td>TRANSCRIPT BULLABURRA #015.txt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3.1. Example of first level coding using HyperResearch.**

Lost opportunities, the second major theme, and the basis of my second results chapter emerged from a more subtle analytical reading of the initial codes. The codes of ‘expectation of greater protection’, ‘economic motivation’ and ‘no evidence of change’ suggested a pattern of contradictions, which later evolved into a theme of ‘lost opportunities’. The idea that some individuals or groups had beneficial expectations regarding World Heritage implementation (primarily financial, educational and conservational), were juxtaposed by the code of ‘no evidence of change’ as a result of World Heritage inscription. The third and final theme, and basis of my third results chapter, emerged initially from an in vivo code that prompted a data search for similar indications that described a particular approach to managing World Heritage. The catalyst for this theme is discussed in Chapter 7: a narrative of business as usual.

**Case study**

*Sometines we simply have to keep our eyes open and look carefully at individual cases—not in the hope of proving anything, but rather in the hope of learning something!* (Eysenck 1976: 9 in Flyvbjerg 2006: 224).

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25 In vivo coding pays attention to the language used by participants and captures such things as jargon, unique words or phrases and terms that crystallise or condense meanings.
Yin (1994: 6) suggests that different types of research questions correspond to different strategies. In this case, where I have attempted to determine in what ways World Heritage implementation is implicit in the relationships formed through managing the site and perceptions of an adjacent population the research, as defined by Yin, is explanatory. Thus, a case study approach consisting of the full variety of available evidence, including documents, artefacts, interviews, and observations, has a distinct advantage over other strategies (Yin 1994). The literature on case study as a method generally begins with a caveat outlining the past and current criticism aimed at several flaws the method is perceived to have. The most vehement critics of the case study, mostly non-qualitative researchers, claim that it is not 'scientific' enough (Tellis 1997) or weak in the areas of validity, theory and reliability (Flyvbjerg 2006). In the mid 1930s sociological methods in general were under attack and, as a result, the case study was little used for almost 30 years (Tellis 1997). Support for the case study as a legitimate method in quantitative and qualitative research and detailed explanations of the strategy can be found in Yin, (1984, 1994) and Miles and Huberman (1994). In particular Yin, according to Miles and Huberman (1994), has mitigated much of the criticism surrounding case studies by striving to use the method along with fully codified research questions, standardised data collection procedures and systematic analysis (Miles and Huberman 1994: 8). Miles and Huberman (1994) advocate the use of multiple case studies as providing a deeper understanding of processes and outcomes of cases however, I have chosen to limit my research to one case for the sake of depth, but I am aware that it may come at the expense of breadth.

I have chosen a case study method for this research, as it is particularly useful for theory development (George and Bennet 2005), as well as investigating contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and contexts are not clear (Yin 1994). Yin (1984) suggests that when building a narrative picture of a case, the explanation method of data analysis based on theoretical propositions is preferable where data are examined, initial propositions are reviewed and data are examined again to refine or consider other ideas much in the same way as grounded theory. The
combination encourages beginning the data analysis as soon as the data emerges, the early development of provisional theoretical propositions and the capacity to generate new ideas that inform further enquiry (Corbin and Strauss 1990). As the new ideas, categories and themes emerge from the data they will form the core of the developing theory, which becomes a guide for the further collection and analysis of data (Glaser and Strauss 1967). This process ceases when the data are saturated or no longer yields new information (Bowen 2006).

**The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area**

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWHA) provides an excellent case study for exploration. The main justification for choosing it as a case study is that it is a good example of World Heritage implementation at a particular point in time in a particularly interesting context. I wanted to base my research on a World Heritage site with an adjacent population. I also wanted a site that had been World Heritage inscribed for at least ten years. When I first became academically interested in World Heritage sites, I believed the site management problems were endemic to developing countries – after all, effective planning, site management, community consultation, are issues generally related to resources or a lack of them. However, the literature in Chapter 1 suggests that World Heritage sites are problematic regardless of which country they are situated (for European World Heritage sites see for example Van der Aa 2005). The two Reactive Monitoring Missions in Tasmania and the Great Barrier Reef discussed in Chapter 1 suggest similar issues: weak or poorly integrated management and planning structures, persistent conflict between conservation and local development, inadequate public participation, insupportable levels of tourism and ineffectual conservation strategies. Even if these issues were not critically evident in the sites they are always a concern to management.

Stake (1995) suggests that site selection should provide the opportunity to maximise what can be learned within a limited time frame. With this in mind, I considered issues of language and access to information and sites, and the theories, conclusions and further questions to emerge from prior research. After initial investigations in Southeast Asia, in particular Indonesia and Viet Nam, I
decided to concentrate my research in Australia. At the time of writing there are 19 World Heritage sites in Australia – 11 natural, four mixed (natural and cultural) and four cultural. The four cultural sites and one natural site were inscribed after 2000 and the majority of these sites are close to populated areas so choosing one out of 14 sites, although somewhat arbitrary, came down to the level and nature of research undertaken previously at each site. There have been no academic publications based on the World Heritage listing of the GBMWHA, though there has been some social research undertaken in other Australian World Heritage sites such as the Tasmanian Wilderness (see Russell and Jambrecina 2002) and the QLD Wet Tropics (see Bentrupperbäumer and Reser 2006), so I felt I had some preliminary information to use as a starting point for my own research, though nothing specific to the GBMWHA. The rationale behind choosing only one case study is that the GBMWHA is a 'critical case' which reflects my theoretical perspectives and which could be used to reaffirm or challenge these theories (Yin 1984: 42). A detailed description of the case study follows in Chapter 4.

*Interviews and observation:*

I spent time at my case study site on three separate occasions spanning May 2011 to August 2012 with a total of four months in the field. The fieldwork was an iterative process, consisting of unstructured interviews, observation and reflection. My aim was to keep interviews as informal and conversational as possible. Participants were initially asked to describe or reflect upon their experience of living/working in a World Heritage area. If this open-ended question did not suffice for the whole interview, I used a list of additional prompting questions (see appendix 1). I did, as much as possible, allow the participant to manage the order and pace of the information by asking a series of introductory questions with the intention of stimulating further discussion on the topic based on the participants’ experience and understanding of the issues and therefore minimising researcher-lead answers (Marshall and Rossman 2006).

I recorded the audio content of the interviews and took notes, which were coded separately to the transcribed interviews (see data analysis section below). Coding
my notes as ‘data’ allowed me to code my thoughts and ideas that occurred during the interviews, as well as capture the visual aspects of the interviews, such as facial expressions and gesticulations. I used a ‘Smartpen’ for this purpose so I was able to select any written comment and crosscheck with the precise time index of the interview. I also created interview summary sheets, as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), for each individual interview that recorded the ten key points from the interview and any further questions that arose (see appendix 2). The summary sheets also provided a checkpoint to assess how successfully I was collecting data and highlighted any need to revise the research method (Flick 2006). These summary sheets were also coded along with the transcribed interviews and field notes.

I received approval from the ANU ethics board prior to conducting the research. As part of my ethics agreement, participants were informed of the nature, purpose and use of the research (see appendix 3). They were asked for signed consent before proceeding with the interview (see appendix 3). I have deidentified all interview transcripts to preserve anonymity and have not used any participant’s names throughout the thesis. Participants were given the opportunity to decline to be involved in the research and withdraw at any stage of the research. My visits to the case study site occurred in three rounds discussed as follows.

**Round 1**
During May – July 2011 I conducted a first round of in-depth semi structured interviews with residents from Katoomba, Leura, Bullaburra, and the Megalong Valley (detailed in Chapter 4), as well as management staff, local conservation groups, tourism and local business operators (see appendix 4 for the full interview schedule). I had pre-organised to meet with people from the resident committees of the towns above. I was subsequently invited to post my research on their website and attend their committee meetings, where I was introduced and was able to take the names and contacts of those attending who wished to partake in my research. Thus, most of my interview schedule was organised in the field through the opportunistic and snowball strategies as described by Miles
and Huberman (1994), whereby opportunistic is following new leads: taking advantage of the unexpected, and snowball (or chain) identifies cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are informative (Miles and Huberman 1994). I also found willing participants through posting flyers in bookshops and neighbourhood centres and door knocking (see appendix 5). My interview sample was not an attempt to be representative of the Blue Mountains community but, rather, I aimed to include as broad a cross-section of the Mountains community in my first round of interviews in order to identify the main issues for subsequent rounds. As I was away from home, living in Katoomba for three months during the first round of interviews, I spent time with local groups such as the Blue Mountains table tennis club, the Bullaburra and Megalong Valley resident’s committees, the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute and the World Heritage Unit. I had many occasions for informal and spontaneous conversations with a range of people from Mountains towns, businesses, universities, and other local groups, such as rock climbers, horse riders, bush walkers, artists, photographers, mountains bikers, horticulturalists, researchers, writers, rural bushfire brigades, farmers, historians, as well as domestic and international tourists.

**Round 2**

When I returned from the first round of fieldwork I maintained contact with several informants though email and began analysing data from the first round interviews. Through the ongoing contact with interviewees, notes from my observation, collected documents (discussed below) and data analysis, key research themes and ‘actors’ began to emerge or as Cloke, et al. (2004: 219) accurately describe, themes were ‘extracted from the chaos, the mix of materials comprising what is sometimes called the raw data’. This process of extraction is a phase of the research often overlooked and taken for granted in researcher’s accounts (Cloke et al. 2004), yet it was a process that was critical in identifying where I needed to direct my energies for the second round of interviews. It also provided the crucial role in the research process by revealing the gaps in my collection of information and thereby indicating which actors I had missed in the first round of interviews. Thus, my second round was conducted during two
weeks in January 2012. On this occasion, although I reconnected with key participants from the first round, I was concentrating on staff from the local government and was able to organise the majority of interviews prior to my arrival in the Mountains.

**Round 3**

The third round of interviews took place during two weeks in August 2012. During this time I went back to see my informants from the previous two rounds, as well as some residents with whom I had developed a rapport. During the analysis of my second round interview data, a late actor emerged that warranted further investigation in this third round, so I included conservation volunteers, staff from the local council and conducted a focus group involving environmental educators, planners and environmental scientists from local government. I wanted to include volunteers in the interview sample so I also volunteered with two Bushcare groups in separate areas of the GBMWAH.

**Observation**

Observation and interviews were undertaken concurrently and informed subsequent data collection needs and focus. Additionally, I travelled to various tourist sites in the area and spent a substantial amount of time walking in the national parks where my goal was primarily to observe activities. I employed Marshall and Rossman’s (2006: 98) description of observation as a broad activity that ‘entails the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours and artefacts’ throughout the three rounds of field-work. The field-notes were a ‘running commentary’ to myself (Eisenhardt 1989: 538) that informed an important part of the study: including the daily activities of the participants and other local people, descriptions of dwellings, buildings, settings, practices, communication and social and cultural rituals. As well as being included verbatim in part two of this thesis as ‘vignettes’, field-notes were coded along with the interview data. Documentary data, including maps, photographs and newspaper clippings further contributed to the shaping and refinement of the research questions.
Data analysis

Launching into the analysis phase of research can leave the apprentice researcher feeling ‘overwhelmed and undertrained’ (Miles and Huberman 1994: 3), which only strengthens the argument for beginning the analysis phase at the very beginning of the research process. Additionally, by beginning my analysis in the field I was able to avoid relying on what Cloke et al. (2004: 232 borrowing from Dixon and Jones 1998) call the ‘epistemology of the grid’. Grounded Theory’s emphasis on exploration and discovery in the early phases of data analysis requires constantly crosschecking emerging categories against the field context. This process helps to keep ‘preset grids of expectation’ (Cloke et al. 2004) from encroaching into the analysis. Even with an early start in data analysis the sheer scale of raw data including hundreds of pages of transcribed field notes and interviews, piles of documents and photographs, maps and newspaper clippings is still an intimidating task specific to qualitative research where researchers have what Miles and Huberman (1994: 262) call a ‘vertical monopoly’ over the research process. That is to say, especially in the case of PhD students, that the researcher defines the problems, asks the questions, designs the research project, collects, reduces and analyses the data and writes the conclusions. While this absolute authority over the research process cannot be avoided in PhD research, I employed the help of computer software in an attempt at efficiency.

Qualitative data analysis software (or CAQDAS) is popular in social sciences however, the name is somewhat misleading. The software does not actually analyse the data. Rather, it performs as a powerful tool for organising, coding and retrieving a large amount data in various mediums. It is, in essence, a sophisticated replacement for the ‘old’ paper and scissors method of qualitative data analysis. I used HyperResearch for my data analysis, which organises the data into source material, cases (or units of analysis) and a list of codes termed a codebook.\(^{26}\) My source material consisted mainly of typed transcripts and other

\(^{26}\) HyperResearch is smaller and less sophisticated than other more popular choices such as NVivo and ATLAS.ti. I chose to use HyperResearch because it is designed specifically for Macs and because I like its simplicity. The more sophisticated packages often require training or workshops.
documents. My cases initially naturally broke down into the towns where I had conducted interviews. However, after the first round of analysis there were no obvious comparisons to draw between the different towns, with the exception of one rural area, which became a mini case study addressed in Chapter 5, and the other towns were collapsed into a single case. The strength of HyperResearch, as with other CAQDAS, is in the codebook. Once the initial round of coding is complete, codes can be easily nested to create categories or patterns.

Throughout the analysis, I maintained two integrated sets of coded data corresponding to my primary methods. The first set, in accordance with grounded theory, identified concepts and categories in the data (transcripts, field notes etc.), as ‘open’ codes, that is, without using any a priori theoretical framework. This initial list of codes was then used in a second analysis of the data to test its validity. This ‘concept testing’ was done iteratively over the course of analysing the data until the set was collapsed into three major themes, or results, that form the basis of part two of this thesis. The second set of codes identified the major ‘actors’ according to ANT. I used these two sets of codes to continually ‘ground’ the research regarding the emerging themes and how these themes and actors were associated. Crosschecking the two code sets allowed me to extrapolate a more sophisticated interpretation of the major themes in the data and how these themes are the product of network effects between actors.

I began using HyperResearch from the moment I began collecting data as a method strongly recommended by Marshall and Rossman (2006). This strategy allowed the data analysis to develop alongside the data collection striking a balance 'between efficiency and design flexibility (Marshall and Rossman 2006: 154). Early data analysis using the software involved uploading all the transcribed interviews, interview notes, interview summary sheets and any other relevant documents in electronic format. Then each document is scanned line by line and words or phrases relevant to the research questions are attached to “chunks” of

In comparison, the HyperResearch interface is intuitive and the software tutorials are easy to follow.
data. These words and phrases become the codes or analytic units, which are then sorted, categorised, refined or erased as the research progresses using the software. Additionally the software allows for memoing, which has been described as like ‘taking field notes on observations about texts’ (Bernard and Ryan 2000: 608). Memoing is similar to attaching notes of interest to particular comments, phrases and activities aimed at commenting on the interesting, unusual or relational aspects of data as a way of making sense of the data during the coding process. Quotes were also extracted from the data and used illustratively throughout the thesis in an attempt to convey accuracy and subtlety (Marshall and Rossman 2006).

**Researcher role**

My role in the research as the instrument cannot be divorced from the data and therefore must be considered in the method of data collection and analysis. Patton (2002) and Marshall and Rossman (2006) suggest that there is a continuum of researcher involvement in qualitative research with the 'full participant' at one end and the 'complete observer' at the other. I have attempted to position myself somewhere in the middle of that continuum. As mentioned above, the prior reading for this thesis created sensitising concepts or notions that gave me an idea of the kinds of phenomena I might come across in the field. It is also important to consider my own ideas about the way the world works and my interests and research history. I am strongly motivated by a concern for human justice and a desire to contribute to knowledge that assists in creating greater social equality. A critical understanding of social, cultural and political processes is fundamental in the search for finding better methods of balancing development and conservation while empowering local people. The World Heritage phenomenon specifically, and the management of protected sites in general, is a provocative issue for someone with an interest in social equality and institutional change. The sheer number of guides, manuals and resources on the subject of how to manage World Heritage with community involvement attests to the importance of contextual and holistic management practices. Yet tensions between conservation and development persist, not only in World Heritage, but almost anywhere involving conservation and people. It is these sensitising
concepts that motivate me to undertake this research and which ultimately situates me, as researcher, as a part of this thesis.

I wish to include here something about the process of writing the thesis because it is a phase of the research that, in the social sciences, inevitably requires the researcher to write themselves into the research (Cloke et al. 2004). Ideas are formed through the process of writing the thesis. Kamler and Thomson (2006: 4) suggest that as researchers we:

> write our way to understanding through analysis. We put words on the page, try them out, see how they look and sound, and in the writing we see things we had no idea were there before we started writing. If the goal of research is to make sense of the data we have produced, and to theorize it in order to develop understanding, then writing the research is central to the process of inquiry itself.

With this in mind, it is difficult for me to say with any certainty how much of the analysis of my data – or the deductions or assumptions I have drawn from my various data sources - I owe to the actual process of writing the chapters for this thesis. I started the writing process from the very beginning of my degree and my ideas, questions, directions and structure have undergone several iterations throughout and I have, with Charmaz’s encouragement (2006) enjoyed making discoveries along the way. The discovery making has also been pushed along by what Saldaña (2009: 190) calls ‘shop talking’ throughout the research. I have, sometimes unconsciously, intertwined and assimilated the ideas of others with my own through talking to informants, colleagues, and friends about the research. This shop talking has resulted in many new areas of enquiry and has encouraged me to verbally articulate my aims and results thereby helping to crystallise the key concepts and open my results to external inquiry.

**Challenges and limitations**

The limitations in qualitative data collection begin early in the process. I can only collect data that is ‘collectable’, which is to say only what can be clearly observed, clearly read and heard and this is further reduced by the actions or events that I
witnessed and the elements that I noticed and recorded. Recording data in the field is a selective process no matter how hard we try to capture everything. Not only is recording everything an impossible task, there is usually so much going on we also need to make conscious decisions about what to record and what to leave out. These decisions are usually, unconsciously, made in advance depending on the context, discipline, method and predispositions of the researcher (Cloke et al. 2004). These decisions continue throughout the data reduction phase of the research with more interpretation, shifting and sorting into themes and categories and finally in writing the findings of the research. Aware of the data collection pitfalls and the iterative nature of qualitative, ethnographic research, I allowed for my data collection phase to be spread across three separate periods spanning from May 2011 to August 2012. Particularly with the state and local government participants, I sent abstracts of the interviews for verification and/or clarification.

My chosen case study is large – over one million hectares consisting of several national parks intersected by two major roadways. I was based in a house in Katoomba, which is the largest of the towns situated along the southern-most of the two roadways - the Great Western Highway. Katoomba was a convenient base as it is easily accessible by train from Sydney and I was without a car. The train service, however, runs parallel with the highway and so, for travellers without their own vehicle, getting around the area is limited to towns along the highway. This drastically limited the places I could visit while staying in Katoomba and is the reason why I chose to limit my interviews to towns accessible by train and/or foot. The one exception was Megalong: a small rural town 30 kilometres southwest of Katoomba. I borrowed a car to interview Megalong residents during the course of one day toward the end of my fieldwork. There were other opportunities to travel around the area in private cars but I did not conduct any formal interviews on these trips. Aside from being limited by public transport, the distances between towns on the highway and off the highway were prohibitive, as was the need for an all-wheel drive vehicle to access some areas. Thus, the resident interview sample was limited to a small
geographical area relative to the size of the case study which is largely unpopulated, being national park, and inaccessible.

In an ideal world I would have spent longer in the field, talked to more people and observed more events. I would have spent more time analysing the data and I would have tried for longer to articulate useful outcomes from the research. However, limits must be placed on all stages of the PhD project if one hopes to ever complete it. Knowing when to stop returning to the field was a difficult decision but one that was made easier by a lack of funding and ever decreasing amount of time. Despite guidance from grounded theory and Actor-network theory it was difficult to be certain that my theoretical categories were saturated or that I had followed the actors as far as I could go. Nevertheless, I was plagued by the fear that I had misunderstood a key point, failed to talk to the right people or had missed or overlooked some crucial piece of information. I resisted the urge to talk to ‘just one more person’ and resolved to make the best of the data I had collected while I still had time to try and fulfil the requirements of a PhD degree. I have tried to accomplish this on two counts. First, I have tried to contribute to the World Heritage community through using the empirical data to ground the thesis in the context of a World Heritage case study that offers a more complete narrative on the day-to-day relationships between and among actors. Second, I have attempted to elevate the data beyond narrative to build concepts that offer disciplinary contributions to sociology, cultural geography and Actor-network theory.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an overview of the design of this research. My background in sociology provides the overarching disciplinary philosophy for this thesis with influences from cultural geography and guided by the methods of Actor-network theory. It has introduced grounded theory and case study as methods to contextualise the research and develop theories through categorising and theming the data. Actor-network theory also plays a key role in the data analysis and in structuring the chapters in part two of this thesis. The following chapter provides a detailed description of the case study. The GBMWHA consists
of several national parks and one reserve as well as being inscribed on the World Heritage list. It is also home to 80,000 people who mostly live along the major transport corridor. The following chapter provides an account of the area’s World Heritage listing, outstanding universal and other values. It introduces the towns and agencies where interviews were conducted and it explains the management regime of the area and the actors involved.
Chapter 4: Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area case study

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS by Henry Lawson (1888)

ABOVE the ashes straight and tall,
Through ferns with moisture dripping,
I climb beneath the sandstone wall,
My feet on mosses slipping.
Like ramparts round the valley's edge
The tinted cliffs are standing,
With many a broken wall and ledge,
And many a rocky landing.
And round about their rugged feet
Deep ferny dells are hidden
In shadowed depths, whence dust and heat
Are banished and forbidden.
The stream that, crooning to itself,
Comes down a tireless rover,
Flows calmly to the rocky shelf,
And there leaps bravely over.
Now pouring down, now lost in spray
When mountain breezes sally,
The water strikes the rock midway,
And leaps into the valley.
Now in the west the colours change,
The blue with crimson blending;
Behind the far Dividing Range,
The sun is fast descending.
And mellowed day comes o'er the place,
And softens ragged edges;

106
Inscribed on the World Heritage list in 2000, the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWHA) is one of the largest and most intact areas of protected bushland in Australia. It was inscribed on the World Heritage list for its rich biodiversity: especially eucalypts. However, the area has many other values which, arguably, speak more to the manner in which people have interacted with the landscape for over 100 years or, in the case of Aboriginal people, for thousands of years. The area has a rich Aboriginal and European history that is impressed upon the contours of the land in the form of rock paintings or carved out of the bedrock in the form of roads. The vast World Heritage area sustains a small residential population and the area’s scenery has attracted visitors since the late 19th century. Today, millions of people visit the area every year. Some visitors are content to gaze at the views and others spend time walking along the numerous tracks creating a challenge for the managing authority to finely balance recreational use with conservation. The GBMWHA ‘represents an extraordinary story of natural antiquity, diversity, beauty and human attachment’ (NPWS/Environment Australia 1998: 11).

The aim of this chapter is to provide situational information which foregrounds the upcoming results chapters in this thesis. The purpose of a case study, as discussed in the previous chapter, is to aid in the investigation of phenomena within a real-life context (Yin 1994). Chapter 1 provided information on the phenomena under question – World Heritage. This chapter provides the real-life context for that phenomena by introducing the GBMWHA and the different elements and actors involved in managing the area. It sets the scene, so to speak, by describing the GBMWHA network. It begins with the GBMWHA’s rather troublesome World Heritage inscription and outstanding universal value. It follows with a discussion of ‘other’ values that, while not formally inscribed on the World Heritage list, are valued nonetheless. It then looks at the system of management and different types of land tenure, plans and key players involved in managing the World Heritage Area. After introducing the Blue Mountains
National Park, the chapter then introduces the people who live adjacent to the Park and their local governing body, as well as the planning and infrastructure required to sustain a large population and three million annual visitors to the area.

**The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area**

![Figure 4.1 Location of the GBMWHA within Australia](image)

The GBMWHA is Australia's 14th World Heritage site. Inscribed in 2000, it consists of 1.03 million hectares of mostly forested landscape on a sandstone plateau extending 60 to 180 kilometres inland from central Sydney, New South Wales (see figure 4.1). The area forms the central part of the Great Dividing Range and is comprised of eight protected areas in two blocks separated by a transportation and urban development corridor – the Great Western Highway. The GBMWHA is comprised of the Blue Mountains, Wollemi, Yengo, Nattai, Kanangra-Boyd, Gardens of Stone and Thirlmere Lakes National Parks, and the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve (see figure 4.2). All seven national parks and the karst reserve are crown land permanently reserved under an Act administered by the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). Each of these parks contains a Wilderness Area (making up just over half of the whole area of the GBMWHA), which is subject to the NPWS Wilderness Conservation Policy 1989 where motor vehicles and horse riding are prohibited.
Figure 4.2 Map of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (Source: GBMWH A Strategic Plan, NPWS DECC 2009).
Inscription

Senator Allison: I would like to ask you a hypothetical question ... If the nomination fails, are we going to see yet another buck-passing exercise, ‘It wasn’t my fault they didn’t get their act together?’: What is going to happen in terms of who takes responsibility for having got it right?

Mr Muir: The answer to that question is that usually, unless it is abysmal, you get a sort of conditional failure and you get to do it again. ... We do not have to embarrass ourselves by putting forward a poorly constructed proposal; we can do it right (Commonwealth of Australia. Senate Committees. 1997).

The above snippet of conversation between Senator Allison and Mr Muir, executive director of the Colong Foundation, is taken from a lengthy parliamentary discussion regarding the Colong Foundation’s concerns regarding a potential Blue Mountains World Heritage nomination. Mr Muir was called as a witness on the matter of Australia’s Commonwealth environmental powers. Mr Muir used the example of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage nomination to illustrate the need for a formal process regarding state and federal government negotiations on World Heritage nominations. Mr Muir vented his frustration with the current arrangement stating that:

The situation with regard to the Blue Mountains is one where the community has fallen into a state of cynicism after numerous announcements of the intended listing. There have been three deadlines set for the preparation of the nomination ... but these have never been seriously considered. We are now in a situation where the consultant ... has two months, two months only, to prepare the nomination report. There is $80,000 ... to undertake this assessment [which] is about half of what you would expect for a feasibility study, let alone a nomination report being put to an international forum by the Commonwealth government to signify its belief that a property
Mr Muir’s fears, that given the situation the nomination would fail, were justified. Australia’s nomination of the Greater Blue Mountains was granted a ‘conditional failure’ and given the chance to do it again.

Indeed, technically, the World Heritage nomination for the Greater Blue Mountains failed twice. It was given a negative evaluation by the advisory body to the World Heritage Committee once in 1999 and again in 2000 (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 1999, 2000). The property was inscribed in 2000, despite the negative evaluation but the Australian and NSW governments and the World Heritage Committee advisory bodies made some substantial compromises. Initially, the Greater Blue Mountains Area (GBMA) was nominated for World Heritage listing by the Howard Government in 1999 as a mixed property with outstanding natural and cultural value. The two cultural values nominated but not recognised by the World Heritage Committee were:

- The aesthetic beauty of the landscape as perceived by humans;
- Changing human attachments to the landscape in its natural condition over at least 12,000 years – from the earliest Aboriginal occupation to contemporary communities.

The World Heritage Committee’s cultural heritage advisory body, the international Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), rejected the nomination's claim to cultural heritage, despite admitting that 'strong linkages between the cultural and natural values of the area clearly do exist' (IUCN 1999: 176) leading to the bitter disappointment of the local community (Domicelj 2009). The World Heritage Committee’s natural heritage advisory body, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), queried the extent to which the GBMWHA natural heritage values could be considered ‘universally significant’. An additional concern of the IUCN was the number of 'inholdings' within the site which it claimed were 'substantial in number and size and,
although not presenting any great current threat, have the potential of becoming problems in the future' (IUCN 1999: 176).

The World Heritage Committee, on advice from the IUCN, urged Australia to defer the 1999 nomination until they could address the issues raised by the IUCN. It recommended that Australia consider a 'serial site' nomination, linking the Greater Blue Mountains to other ecologically important sclerophyll forests in Australia (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2000). It also suggested that Australia submit more substantive material addressing the concerns raised by the IUCN. The IUCN was not persuaded that Australia had adequately addressed how it would mitigate the potential environmental threats but, nevertheless, put forward a suitable criterion for inscription at the World Heritage Committee meeting in 2000, admitting to the Committee that 'this was a finely balanced case' (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2000: 35). The Committee, at its 24th session in Cairns Australia in 2000, Chaired by the newly elected Australian Committee member, decided to inscribe the property, against IUCN recommendation, on the basis that there was a need to recognise eucalyptus ecosystems on a global scale (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2000).

**Outstanding universal value**

Thus, the GBMA was inscribed on the 29th November 2000 as a natural heritage property according to natural criteria (ix) - 'ongoing evolutionary process' and (x) – 'biological diversity' (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2000). The World Heritage Convention recognised that the Greater Blue Mountains Area had outstanding universal value to humanity because it represented:

- An outstanding example of Australia’s characteristic sclerophyll ecosystems dominated by eucalypts
- A significant representation of Australia’s biodiversity
- The habitat of a number of globally important threatened species.

The GBMWHA sits in the Eastern Sclerophyll Open Forests Region of Australia. Not surprisingly then, the area is rich in scleromorphic species – most notably the eucalypts. In fact 97 per cent of the area is dominated by over 100 species of
eucalypts, making it one of only three places in the world where such a diverse range of scleromorphic species are found and the largest sclerophyll forest in the world (NPWS/Environment Australia 2000). The site contains a wide and balanced representation of eucalypt habitats from wet and dry sclerophyll, mallee heathlands, as well as localised swamps, wetlands, and grassland. Ninety eucalypt taxa (13% of the global total) and representation of all four groups of eucalypts occur. There is also a high level of endemism with 114 endemic taxa found in the area as well as 120 nationally rare and threatened plant taxa. The site hosts several evolutionary relic species (Wollemia, Microstrobos, Acrophyllum), which have persisted in highly restricted microsites (NPWS/Environment Australia 2000). The area is abundant in native bird and plant species, moths and butterflies and vertebrate taxa, including native mammals, reptiles and frogs (NPWS/Environment Australia 1998; UNEP 1998, updated 2005).

**Other values**

Through World Heritage inscription, the GBMWHHA is formally recognised, primarily, for its eucalypt diversity. However, the full range of values, detailed in the original nomination dossier, is worth exploring. I include them here, not only because they formed a substantial part of the original nomination, but also because the importance of these values is being sustained through further research and documenting in the case of a possible re-nomination. Values like geodiversity, European history, Indigenous connection, recreation and tourism and artistic inspiration not only feature in the nomination dossier they are prominent in websites, tourism and other promotional material on the GBMWHHA. These ‘other values’ moreover make up a significant part of the GBMWHHA Strategic Plan as values that are in need of protection as much as those declared by World Heritage inscription (DECC 2009: 11).

**Geodiversity**

It is the distinct geology and geomorphology of the Greater Blue Mountains that make the area’s ecosystems and plant and animal communities what they are (NPWS and Environment Australia 1998). The vegetation, including the recently discovered Wollomi Pine, and animals that populate the area are determined by
the type and configuration of rocks and soils. The GBMWHA has the most extensive sandstone canyon system in eastern Australian (DECC 2009). It has hundreds of kilometres of sandstone cliff lines and sandstone landforms, as well as several pagoda rock formations that emit an air of lost city or ruin-like appeal (Washington & Wray 2011). Surprisingly, the GBMWHA even has sand dunes, being the only known high-altitude sand dunes in Australia as well as other geological phenomena such as slot canyons and bottleneck valleys (Washington & Wray 2011). The area also contains fossil sites, ancient volcanic activity and natural freshwater lakes. It is home to the Jenolan Caves, which is believed to be the world’s oldest open cave system (DECC 2009).

More recently, in Australia it seems, geodiversity has assumed a more cultural inflection through the term geoheritage. According to Washington & Wray (2011), geodiversity may be endowed with geoheritage if it is considered historically significant. They argue, subsequent to the original nomination, that the GBMWHA is an outstanding example of geoheritage and that, along with scenic and cultural values the geodiversity of the area, should be nominated for inclusion on the World Heritage list.

**History**

The Blue Mountains feature heavily in Australia’s convict and pastoral history. Europeans first attempted to cross the area in 1788. But it was not until 1814 that the first route across the Blue Mountains was surveyed; the road we now know as the Great Western Highway, ‘Australia’s most historic road’ (NSW RTA 2002). After early settlement in the 1820s, of mostly farmers and miners, wealthy Sydney residents began to build retreats in the cooler climate. It was the beginning of a movement as dozens of families flocked to the Mountains to join the ‘Blue Mountains Craze’ (Low 1991) largely assisted by the opening of the railway in 1867-68. Some of these wealthy new estate owners, who were often the trustees of reserves, hired agencies to construct what is now part of the Blue Mountains walking track network. The idea was to provide easier access to views of the valleys from escarpments and descend to the bases of waterfalls in the area.
The population increased again following cultural shifts after World War II. Suburbanisation in Sydney and the increasing use of private vehicles resulted in corresponding changes in the structure of Australian cities. The Blue Mountains were now considered to be within commuting distance of work in Sydney, and to represent a lifestyle choice – a means of escaping the monotony of the suburban plains of Sydney. As a result of the increase in population, there were subsequent development pressures, particularly in the Lower Mountains.\(^{27}\) This led to the expansion of the villages and the encroachment of residential development onto spurs and ridges, further into bushland. The style of residential development tended to be modest by today’s standards, and managed in most cases to blend with the bushland setting (BMCC 2002).

The Blue Mountains has a long history of local conservation. Indeed, it is widely agreed that without such conservation the GBMWHA would not enjoy its current state of national and international conservation recognition. Along with the Sydney based Colong Foundation, the Blue Mountains Conservation Society (BMCS) largely drove the World Heritage nomination and has, over the years, grown into the largest conservation group in NSW with around 850 members (BMCS 2012). The original name of the BMCS was The Katoomba and District Wildlife Conservation Society which was formed in 1961. Bushwalkers and the new conservation movement in the twentieth century led to the first protected areas and eventually the Blue Mountains National Park in 1959 (NPWS/Environment Australia 1998). Other parks were established in the surrounding areas largely as a response by conservation advocates to threats from mining, plantations and construction of roads and dams (NPWS/Environment Australia 1998). Today, the group remains passionate and vocal about environmental issues in the Mountains. Consisting entirely of volunteers, they rely on the strong environmental consciousness believed to exist in the Blue Mountains. According to one conservation group spokesperson, the 'Blue

\(^{27}\) The ‘lower mountains’ refers to towns along the Great Western Highway that are closest in distance to the city of Sydney. An explanation of the local divide between upper, middle and lower mountains is included below.
Mountains community is ultimately the strongest protection for the GBMWHA' (SMH 2004).

**Indigenous connection**

The GBMWHA spans the country of six known Indigenous language groups (DECC 2009). The original nomination argued for a ‘direct and tangible cultural association’ between the Blue Mountains and the people who traditionally occupied the area (NPWS/Environment Australia 1998). The nomination dossier used the archaeological example of Indigenous rock art as the basis for this claim. The nomination of cultural values of the GBMWHA was unsuccessful, as discussed above. At the time, there was no comprehensive survey of the area’s Aboriginal history and that is still the case today in 2016. However, research continues on Aboriginal people’s connection to the area and new information is emerging. Rock art has since been discovered, considered to be of ‘outstanding aesthetic and scientific value’ (Mackay 2015: 82). Additionally, since the original nomination, a number of places in the GBMWHA have received statutory recognition as ‘Aboriginal Places’ under the *NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* as formal recognition of their associative cultural heritage values (Mackay 2015).

**Recreation and tourism**

The area receives about three million visitors annually, making it one of the most popular national parks in Australia (NSW NPWS 2001b). Domestic and international tourists largely visit the park by day only, mostly on the scenic escarpment areas of the Jamison and Grose valleys, from Wentworth Falls to Katoomba, and at Blackheath, although other accessible areas are popular for adventure ecotourism. The Glenbrook precinct is also popular with commercial ecotourism operators and overseas visitors because it is accessible and has highly visible wildlife populations. The area contains a number of very popular visitor facilities, mostly walking tracks, lookouts, picnic grounds and camping grounds in the Katoomba, Blackheath, Wentworth Falls and Glenbrook areas. The area

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28 The nomination additionally made this claim of connection with early European settlers using the network of walking tracks and lookouts as the example.
managers provide some information on the natural and cultural features and visitor facilities via their visitor centre at Govetts Leap in Blackheath. As well as maintaining visitor facilities such as access roads, tracks and toilets, they also regulate visitor numbers and administer commercial activities and recreation licensing. The local council owns and operates the two tourist centres at Katoomba and Glenbrook and also maintains roads, lookouts and walking tracks on council land.

With the two major visitor drawcards in the area being its accessible scenic lookouts and complex of walking tracks such as those around Echo Point, Govetts Leap and Wentworth Falls, the Grose Valley, and the Euroka camping area at Glenbrook, and overnight and ‘wild’ bushwalking experience tourists are often dispersed over a wide area. However, there are high priority management issues and maintenance costs for the managers, as part of the broader management program (NSW NPWS 2004b).

Artistic inspiration

Termed ‘scenic grandeur’, the aesthetic qualities of the GBMWHA, detailed in the original nomination, is an enduring argument for World Heritage worthiness (Washington 2015: 158). The GBMWHA Strategic Plan describes the scenery as ‘some of the most dramatic ... in Australia’ (DECC 2009: 17). The drama is largely a result of the vastness of the area which can be appreciated from down within the valleys, as well as from the many lookouts along the cliff lines. These lookouts offer views of the forested valleys and cliffs that seem to stretch on without end. Designated as the ‘backdrop to Sydney’ (NPWS/Environment Australia 2009: 134), the GBMWHA can be viewed from Sydney and it is from this vantage point that the area derives its name. The Blue Mountains indeed look blue from a distance. The illusion is created by the presence of eucalyptus oil particles in the air. The particles have light-scattering properties, which intensify blue light rays to create a ‘blue haze’. In addition to Aboriginal rock art, the scenic beauty of the area has acted as muse for artists since the late 18th century (NPWS/Environment Australia), and the area continues to inspire artists of literature, fine arts and photography.
Management

Day-to-day management of the GBMWH A is the responsibility of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) which is a part of the New South Wales (NSW) Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) (formally the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW)). The seven national parks included in the GBMWH A are administered by the OEH Central Coast-Hunter Range Region (based at Gosford), the Blue Mountains Region (based at Katoomba) and the Sydney South Region (based at Audley). The GBMWH A covers 12 different local government, or council, areas. The Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) manages the local government area that bisects the GBMWH A (see figure 4.1). Other state government agencies involved in management, include the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS), the NSW Department of Industry and Investment (DII), and the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority (HNCMA). Livestock Health and Pests Authorities (LHPA) assist with pest animal management in the GBMWH A and on adjoining, mostly rural, private lands. Overall management of the World Heritage Area rests with the Director-General of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. This authority is derived from the NS W National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974.

A Management Committee has been appointed for the GBMWH A, including state and federal government senior officials and the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust. A separate GBMWH A Advisory Committee is made up of scientific, technical, Aboriginal and community members appointed by the state and Commonwealth Environment Ministers. The Strategic Plan for the area is used by the GBMWH A Advisory Committee to guide its operations and in providing advice to Ministers regarding issues relevant to the Area. The GBMWH A, like all Australian World

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29 The GBMWH A Advisory Committee, established in 2005, meets quarterly to discuss matters relating to the protection, conservation, presentation and management of the GBMWH A, including strategic policies in relation to Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention. The Committee was established to 'play a crucial role in achieving conservation outcomes by facilitating the development of cooperative, constructive and innovative relationships between NPWS, the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust, the Department of the Environment and Heritage and the community' (DEH/NPWS 2005).
Heritage properties, falls under federal jurisdiction through the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC). Under the *EPBC Act* any development that may threaten World Heritage values must be referred to the Federal Environment Minister. Essentially, the Act ensures that a state government cannot proceed with any action that may impact on the GBMWHA without federal government approval.

**GBMWHA Strategic Plan**

It is the GBMWHA Strategic Plan (DECC 2009) that explicitly aligns the EPBC Act with the principles of UNESCO’s World Heritage Convention Operational Guidelines (DECC 2009). The Strategic Plan provides overarching strategic management principles. The Plan makes no pretences at being a statutory document. Its aim is to secure a commitment between, primarily, state and federal governments to support and implement the suggestions within the document. Therefore, the plan is more like a comprehensive scoping study of values, as well as management issues and areas for concern than a precise strategy for management. While the plan reinforces the necessity for stakeholders to work together in a strategic, coordinated and consistent manner, it does not provide suggestions on how this can be achieved. However, it is clear from the list of threats to World Heritage values included in the Plan that such an approach to management is critical. There are six categories of threats:

1. Uncontrolled or inappropriate use of fire;
2. Inappropriate recreation and tourism activities, including the development of tourism infrastructure, under the increasing visitor pressure from Australian, overseas and commercial ventures;
3. Invasion by pest species including weeds and feral animals;
4. Loss of biodiversity and geodiversity at all levels;
5. Impacts of human enhanced climate change; and
6. Lack of understanding of heritage values

These threats concern federal, state and local governments as well as residents, domestic and international tourists, businesses and the World Heritage area itself.


**Blue Mountains National Park**

The focus of this thesis is to explore World Heritage effects and thus an aim of the research was to look for evidence of those effects. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I looked for evidence through interviews, observation and documentary analysis. For this reason, I have singled out one of the eight reserves that make up the GBMWHA to provide a physical context for my research method. Most of my interviews and observation were undertaken in the towns that comprise the Blue Mountains City and this City lies within the Blue Mountains National Park (BMNP). Or, more accurately, this City lies between the two sections of the BMNP, which along with the World Heritage Area, is cleaved in two (see figure 4.2) by the Great Western Highway.

The Park is 247,000 hectares, making it the second largest park (Wollomi is almost 500,000 hectares) out of the eight reserves in the GBMWHA. Much of the park to the south of the Great Western Highway is made up of the Warrangamba catchment and Lake Burragorang, which supplies Sydney’s water and, as such, is jointly managed by NPWS and the Sydney Catchment Authority. To the west, it joins the Kanangra-Boyd National Park, and Yerranderie State Recreation Area to the southeast with primarily rural areas and state forests in the south and southwest. To the north, is the Grose River catchment and the upper catchment of the Wollangambe River up to the Wollemi National Park. To the west, are the rural areas of the Newnes Plateau and the city of Lithgow. According to the NPWS the park’s proximity to Sydney, and the City of the Blue Mountains, as well as tourism and the rural, forestry and mining activities along the southern and western boundaries ‘create complex management requirements for the park’ (NSW NPWS 2001b: 6).

Geologically, the BMNP is part of the Sydney Basin Geological province and the Blue Mountains Plateau. The major geological features in the park are caused by the erosion over tens of millions of years of Permo-triassic sandstones that form the iconic deep valleys, cliffs, canyons (Colley 2004). While the Blue Mountains are not technically “mountains”, high cliffs are a prominent feature of the area – particularly in the south where there are deep dissections, waterfalls and many
interesting topographical features like the much visited Three Sisters and Orphan Rock. Erosion of the Grose subgroup sandstones has formed narrow slot canyons and a variety of pagoda rock formations in the Grose, Wollangambe and Bungleboori catchments. Remnants of overlying Wianamatta shale and Tertiary volcanics occur in scattered locations and contribute to the distinctive landforms of the park. There are around 140kms of walking trails in the area, as well as facilities for picnicking, camping, riding, cycling and four wheel driving. Other popular uses of the area include rock climbing, abseiling and canyoning on the sandstone cliffs of the Grose and Jamison valleys (NSW NPWS 2001b).

Management issues
A persistent issue for the management of the BMNP is that the existing park boundary is not a logical or rational, planned separation between NPWS land and land which falls under the ownership of other agencies and private Mountains residents and businesses. Rather, the BMNP boundary is a product of the ‘history of dedication and the management environment at the time of dedication’ (NSW NPWS 2001b: 6). This statement alludes to the way sections of the BMNP have been added to the park in a fragmented and irregular way reflecting its ad hoc and piecemeal transformation from private and crown land to consolidation into a national park and influences the way the park is managed today. As a result of the complex geography, broad altitudinal range and the variety of land uses within the BMNP, a wide range of introduced plants and animals are present, with each species exploiting a particular environmental niche (NSW NPWS 2001b). Introduced species vary considerably in their potential to invade natural or disturbed ecosystems. A major issue for management is the occurrence of introduced species across tenures and the major sources that lie beyond the park boundary. For this reason, the NPWS insist that control programs be carried out in a coordinated and co-operative manner with other agencies, park neighbours and the community to achieve maximum success (NSW NPWS 2001b).

In their management plans, the NPWS thematically divides the BMNP into four categories: the developed setting, natural setting, wilderness setting and restricted setting (NPWS 2001b). All management and maintenance is discussed
and planned based on these four categories. The settings where this research takes place are in the developed and natural settings. Natural refers to all areas of the park which are not defined as developed areas, wilderness areas or restricted areas. Recreation tends to be more dispersed and any facilities provided are relatively low-key compared to the developed areas, catering for a lower level of use. There are a large number of recreation facilities in these areas including an extensive system of roadside lookout and signposted walking tracks, as well as a limited number of vehicle-based picnic and camping facilities. These facilities generally have a very high maintenance requirement because of the large number of visitors, the nature of the sandstone terrain and/or the age of many of the facilities, particularly the walking tracks.

There is much overlap between the two settings where lookouts, car parks and bush walking occur. This overlap is present in the major day-use areas in the tourist attractions in the developed settings in the Glenbrook precinct and along the Jamison Valley and Grose Valley escarpments where facilities are spread across the park and non-park boundary between Wentworth Falls, Katoomba and Blackheath. Many of the tourist facilities along the Jamison Valley escarpment, such as lookouts, car parks and walking tracks, are located partly inside the park and partly outside the park. Where appropriate, the NPWS works co-operatively with the local council in providing and maintaining facilities to cater for the high level of tourist visitation to this area. Under an existing agreement with Blue Mountains City Council, the NPWS has primary responsibility for walking tracks, while Council has primary responsibility for vehicle-based picnic facilities, where facilities extend across both national park and council land. According to the NPWS, the extensive system of lookouts and walking tracks in the park from Wentworth Falls to Katoomba will be maintained in accordance with funding priorities to a standard consistent with the Developed setting. Emphasis will be on the provision of a range of picnicking, viewing and walking opportunities along and below the escarpment to cater for high levels of use, while protecting historic values. The NPWS aims to work closely with Blue Mountains City Council in maintaining high quality visitor facilities and improving the park/city boundary (NSW NPWS 2001b).
Ongoing park management programs have been directed at the control of specific occurrences of introduced plants. Boundary zones in the south of the park which have been adversely affected by past land use practices and feral animal activity have widespread occurrences of exotic grasses, shrubs and trees. Control programs, including bush regeneration, herbicide application and mechanical treatment, are used to control these weeds. Considerable success has been achieved with the control of gorse and lantana through the use of bush regeneration programs. Volunteer groups have been active in controlling remote occurrences, in areas such as the Grose Valley and Katoomba Creek, and have achieved major gains in regenerating urban bushland, mainly outside the park boundary. Thirteen introduced animals of concern are known to occur in the park, including rabbits, feral pigs, goats, cattle, horses, cats, wild dogs (particularly in the south west boundary areas of the park), foxes, European bees and European carp. Major programs have been undertaken targeting introduced grazing animals, as these animals affect the growth and regeneration of native vegetation, accelerate soil erosion, and create environments favourable for colonisation by introduced plants and assist their spread. Small-scale programs have been undertaken in recent years to target rabbits, goats, cats, foxes and introduced fish, mainly aimed at outbreaks rather than systematic control.

The Blue Mountains is a region of high fire risk. There have been periodic severe fires resulting in loss of property and life. Having built-up suburban areas immediately adjacent to and often downwind of large tracts of flammable bushland requires well-planned fire control in these zones. In order to manage the sometimes conflicting priorities between property protection and ecological sustainability, the NPWS has adopted a Fire Management Zoning (FMZ) system for its reserves. The Blue Mountains National Park has been divided into three Fire Management Zones – Asset Protection Zones (APZ) are small areas which are regularly slashed or burned to protect community assets, specific natural heritage or culturally important sites that have a risk of damage by bush fires or associated management activities. The main incentive for creating APZs are to protect human life while the second category, Strategic Zones, are larger areas complementary to the APZs which require similar maintenance and are primarily
maintained to decrease fire intensity. The third category, Heritage Protection Zones, employ strategies to protect species within the reserves and the fourth, Land Management Zones cover land tenures not managed by NPWS. They include privately owned land, State forests, Council reserves and other Crown lands. (NSW NPWS 2004a). The BMCC Local Government Area is covered by the Blue Mountains Bush Fire Risk Management Plan prepared by the Blue Mountains Bush Fire Management Committee which has similar bush fire zones to the NPWS and includes Parks, council and private land tenures (NSW BFCC 2008).

BMNP incorporates and protects a number of relatively undisturbed catchments. These catchments make significant contributions to maintaining water quality in the Hawkesbury-Nepean River and Lake Burrarorang, which is Sydney’s main water supply. Most of the park’s waterways are classified as Specially Protected (Class S) or Protected (Class P), which limits the type and level of pollutants that can legally be discharged into these waterways. No wastes are permitted to be discharged into Class S waters. However, several of the park’s major watercourses, including the Kowmung, Coxs and Wollangambe Rivers, have their headwaters outside the park. The location of urban areas on the major east-west ridgeline bisecting the park has resulted in widespread disturbance to the water quality and hydrology of many of the park’s catchments. Only 45 per cent of the park area is assessed as comprising pristine catchments with potable water. Two of the largest pristine catchments in the park are Yarramun Creek in the northern Blue Mountains and Green Wattle Creek in the southern Blue Mountains. There are numerous other smaller pristine sub-catchments (NSW NPWS 2001b).

Catchment disturbance and pollution arising outside the park can have serious impacts downstream on the rivers’ hydrology, their habitats and recreational amenity. Impacts on the park’s catchments arise from urban development, mining, quarrying, forestry and rural activities, as well as disturbances associated with recreation and park management facilities. Threats to park catchments will intensify and extend to new areas as urban and rural activities expand, park
visitation increases and features of major hydrological significance such as swamps are altered (NSW NPWS 2001b).

**The Residents**

Largely absent from any detailed account of the GBMWHA, is the contemporary residential population. Indeed, according to Australia’s nomination dossier, the Greater Blue Mountains Area is a million hectares of contiguous protected reserves. However, a close look at the map of the GBMWHA (see Figure 4.2) reveals that the million hectares is not contiguous, but split into two portions. The Great Western Highway is the biggest contributor to this split in the World Heritage area, as it provides access to the towns and acts as a transport corridor from Sydney to the Western Plains. As mentioned above, technically, land within this split is not included in the World Heritage Area. This area has been neatly excised from the World Heritage nominated area so, in effect, the populated areas in the GBMWHA are not ‘within’ the World Heritage area, but rather adjacent to it.

Although there is no formal resident population within the GBMWHA boundaries, there are several urban centres close to the boundaries, particularly along the line of the Great Western Highway in the BMNP. This east-west chain of small towns is collectively called the Blue Mountains City. The Blue Mountains City is the administrative centre for 26 towns and villages linked across some 50 kilometres, some adjoining, others separated by several kilometres of undeveloped bushland with around 80,000 residents (BMCC 2010a) (see figure 4.3). Tourism is the major industry, with approximately three million visitors per year, while the Council and health sectors remain the biggest employers. Colloquially, the towns of the Blue Mountains are divided into three groups:

- The upper mountains towns, along the Great Western Highway which are characterised by well-established town centres, rectilinear street patterns and early twentieth century buildings;

- The lower mountains towns, along the Great Western Highway which typically have small town centres, curvilinear streets and mid-twentieth century buildings; and
• Towns along the Bell’s Road and in the Carmarthen Hills which have informal, rural road patterns, with few community facilities, large, well established gardens and secluded houses.

Figure 4.3 Blue Mountains towns
(Source: Bluemountainsaustralia.com, 2016)

The area attracts urban growth because of its relative proximity to the employment centres in Sydney, good road and rail links and bushland setting (NPWS/Environment Australia 1998), although there are concerns regarding the high percentage of elderly population, low income families and a predicted zero growth rate over the next 10 years (BMCC 2010a). During 1947-1981 the population of the Mountains more than doubled, due to an increase in motor vehicles and an outer suburb population shift with people looking for cheaper land. However the population growth rate has been slow ever since. Typically, the Upper Mountains area attracts more tourists while the Lower Mountains area is becoming more suburban in character. The Upper Mountains is also more disadvantaged in the areas of household income, health and education compared to either the Mid- or Lower Mountains (BMCC 2009a). While most natural bushland in the area is conserved in the BMNP, some areas close to existing urban areas remain in private ownership (NPWS/Environment Australia 1998).

The major issue affecting traffic in the BMNP is the presence of the Great Western Highway (GWH) and its impact on the environment and villages. This impact is exacerbated by the fact that it combines with the railway to physically
divide communities throughout the Mountains. The Great Western Highway is
classified as a Road of National Importance by the Federal Department of
Transport, and is one of the two classified roads in the LGA managed by the
Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA). The GWH is one of the two major east–west
links between Sydney and the Central Western Region of NSW, yet the highway
also serves as a ‘local’ road that provides the only connection between Mountains
villages, as there are no back roads in most cases. It also forms part of National
Route 32, which continues west to Adelaide via Broken Hill. Traffic volumes
range between 25,000 and 38,000 vehicles per day between Emu Plains and
Springwood, and 7,000–10,000 vehicles per day between Mount Victoria and
Lithgow (BMCC 2002). Fourteen to 16 per cent of these vehicles are heavy
vehicles, such as rigid trucks, semi-trailers and 19-metre B-Double trucks (BMCC
2010a). The GWH has been under construction for around 40 years and has just
recently upgraded major sections of the highway to a divided four lanes with only
the section between Mt Victoria and Lithgow west of Katoomba waiting to be
upgraded. In some areas, the widening of the highway has meant significant
realignment, resulting in property acquisitions and adjustments, the demolition
of buildings, changes to traffic flow and persistent road closers and delayed travel
times. The protracted highway works has led to a spate of community criticism,
some of which finds its way into the local newspaper (see figure 6.2, Chapter 6 for
an example).

**Towns Surveyed**

**Katoomba**

Previously named William’s Chimney and Collett’s Swamp, Katoomba, in the
upper Mountains is the major commercial centre and most populous of the
Mountains towns. Katoomba is 110 kilometres from Sydney along the GWH and
City Rail and has a population of around 8,000 people. Katoomba is where most
tourists to the mountains eventually end up due to its proximity to popular
attractions. The town is possibly most well known as the place to see the iconic,
weather-eroded sandstone pillars called the Three Sisters. The Three Sisters is
best viewed from the Echo Point viewing platform which was built in the 1930s
and looks out over the Kedumba and Jamison Valleys where, when the weather
permits, viewers can also see Mt Solitary and the Ruined Castle. Further south in Katoomba, and visible from the Echo Point lookout, is the popular Scenic World complex which offers tourists a suite of transportation that travels over and down into the Jamison Valley. There is a funicular railway originally built for hauling coal out of the valley, a cable car and board walk on the Valley floor. From here and Echo Point, visitors can embark on several short, medium, full-day or overnight walks along established tracks that follow the ridges or descend steeply to the tracks along the Valley floor.

Katoomba grew out of a tiny mining settlement into a developed tourism town toward the end of the 19th century. Grand old buildings from Katoomba’s prime, such as the Belgravia and Carrington hotels, remain, as do many other art deco and Edwardian buildings, though one must look up over the shop fronts to notice most of them. The train station sits at the top of Katoomba Street and the GWH was rerouted around the town in 1985. There are no obvious indications of being in a town within a World Heritage Area. With its second-hand clothing and antique shops like Mr Pickwicks Rare Old Books and Antiques and the Katoomba Vintage Emporium and the 19th century grandeur of the Carrington Hotel and The Paragon café the place has a second-hand rose, faded 20s glamour that is appealing. The residential streets are attractive with wide footpaths decorated with deciduous trees and alternating purple and white agapanthus.

**Bullaburra**

About 10 minutes’ drive from Katoomba toward Sydney, is the small Mid-Mountains town of Bullaburra. The town is split into North Bullaburra and South Bullaburra by the Great Western Highway and the railway. The only way across from North to South is to cross the pedestrian bridge over the railway line or if travelling by car then residents must drive to the next town along the Highway until they come to a legal place to turn. The majority of the 1,200 residents live on the South side of the Highway with development in the North mostly within a few blocks of the railway line with a few exceptions of newer blocks in bush conservation zones. The South is a mix of old and new housing development with some of the newer estates also beginning to encroach into bush conservation
zones. The town’s one defining feature after the unmanned railway station is the small Bullaburra Progress Association Town Hall which is locally heritage listed and is still used for association meetings and other community group activities such as yoga and the monthly markets. Behind the Hall is a newly constructed park and children’s playground.

Bullaburra had one combined post office/commercial store selling basic grocery items for roughly 60 years until the early 1980s. It also had a petrol station until a few years ago but currently Bullaburra residents must travel to another town, most likely Lawson, to get petrol or milk and the newspaper. The residents of Bullaburra are represented by a vocal and active Township Association, which has lobbied against inappropriate development proposals in the town. Most recently, the RTA has been the focus of its ire, with the recent widening of the highway, which runs through the centre of the town and is the only access between the east and west, having a significant impact. Although residents would like a new shop where they could stock up on ‘basics’, most like their lack of a commercial centre as it keeps the tourists in the larger centres. The house blocks are large and many back onto both council and NPWS owned land.

**Megalong Valley**

The village of Megalong Valley has no village centre *per se*. The 164 residents are dispersed over 630 square hectares of Valley floor at the base of the sandstone cliffs which form part of the boundary of the GBMWHA. Valley residents rely on the bigger Mountains towns for basic services and supplies, as the Valley has nothing except for a church and a small consolidated primary school. Food, petrol, Council services and supplies all require a trip up Shipley Road into Blackheath or further along the highway into Katoomba. There are three Council areas in the Valley – the Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC), Lithgow and Oberon. The Valley is subject to the same planning controls as the rest of the Mountains towns, which is intended for urban areas. During my fieldwork, the Council was consulting the community about the drafting of a new, more comprehensive, Local Environmental Planning instrument.
Residents of the Valley feel comfortably removed from the more definitive parts of the World Heritage area, such as the Three Sisters and the larger towns clustered along the ridgeline. According to Tourism NSW (2016), the Megalong Valley is a popular destination for those looking for an authentic Australian bush experience. The sandstone cliff that rises steeply from the Valley floor to the join the Narrowneck ridge running to the west of Katoomba separates the Megalong Valley from the unpopulated Jamison Valley, which is part of the Blue Mountains National Park. The cliff is locally known as the Iron Curtain - suggesting a clear geographical and symbolic divide between the local politics of towns above the ridgeline and those down in the Valley. Megalong Valley residents are unquestionably living the good life. Though the Valley lacks the cafes and boutiques that line the streets of some other Blue Mountains towns and the iconic views enjoyed by many Mountains residents, they like the peace and quiet. They enjoy their own unique view of the cliffs resembling the magnificent walls of an ancient sandstone city, which is, according to one Valley resident, infinitely more spectacular than the view from above.

Local Government

Administering the adjacent population is the Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC). Their Local Government Area is 143,200 ha. Land-use within the City is a mixture of national park, bushland reserves, parks and sports fields, residential, commercial, industrial and rural areas and roads/railways. Much of the Blue Mountains City is undeveloped. It is mostly comprised of bush land - around 86 per cent - which is mainly national park (70 per cent) and it shares a border with the BMNP that stretches for 342 kilometres (BMCC 2010a). The remaining land is protected native vegetation under the Council’s Local Environmental Plan (LEP). Rural land use is only 6 per cent of the City’s area and falls predominately within the Megalong Valley. In July 2003, after extensive community consultation, the BMCC adopted an ambitious 25 year City Vision and Map for Action for a more sustainable future as the external policy framework which guides ‘decisions and actions’ of the community, Council and external agencies (Berry and Dillan 2005). As part of the Map for Action they have committed to engage in local research groups such as the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute (BMWHI) to
improve relationships with the boundary areas through addressing ‘edge relationships’ between the World Heritage Area and the urban, rural and industrial areas (BMCC 2000). The concern is that economic activities may arise that are incompatible with the World Heritage values and that this can be ameliorated through ‘focusing on better integration between ‘on-park’ and ‘off-park’ management’ (BMCC 2009a: 138). The desired outcome of this 25-year vision is for the Mountains to become an environmentally responsible, equitable, liveable, vibrant and creative and efficient city (BMCC 2009a).

Given the large size of the LGA and small ratepayer base, the BMCC introduced an environmental levy in 2005 (BMCC 2009b). The BMCC are aware of the problems produced by the residential and commercial activities in the LGA that directly and indirectly impact the BMNP and the wider World Heritage area including weed invasion; poor water quality; localised flooding; stormwater runoff into bushland; degraded and unsafe walking tracks, worsening degraded lands (including significant erosion); failing on-site sewerage systems and an increasing number of threatened species (BMCC 2009b). The Levy was introduced to give the Council an extra $1.174 million per year to spend specifically on environmental protection and natural resource management projects within the Blue Mountains LGA. Mountains residents are surcharged 3.65 per cent on top of regular council rates. The council has identified several major environmental impacts as a direct result of BMCC LGA population including:

- **Existing development:** Most existing development pre-dates the current planning approaches, which identify and respond to environmental constraints; and development has occurred in the past that would not be permitted under current planning frameworks. This has also resulted in environmentally constrained land having been zoned for residential development, although not all of it has been developed.

- **Catchment water quality:** A significant proportion of urban development in the Blue Mountains is situated at the top of Sydney’s drinking water catchment. Protecting water quality from the impacts of point and diffuse pollution sources is critical for conserving natural and drinking water
values. Greater flow rates and volumes due to increased areas with hard surfaces within the catchment are causing erosion and scouring.

- **Sewage disposal:** Leaking septic tanks, exfiltration and overflowing sewers and pump stations have significant impacts on water quality, as do partial treatment bypasses at Mount Victoria, Blackheath and Winmalee sewage treatment plants.

- **Developable land:** Land suitable for development is in very short supply. Most undeveloped land still remaining is constrained by slopes steeper than 20%, bushland that includes significant vegetation communities or proximity to watercourses.

- **Biodiversity:** Vegetation clearing, weed invasion, pollution and fauna predation by feral animals are exerting major impacts on biodiversity in the Mountains.

- **Recreation and tourism:** There is a lack of understanding of the impacts of recreational pressure on sensitive areas, and insufficient information available about it. Nature based tourism often occurs in the more sensitive areas, which can suffer through inappropriate use or overuse.

- **Bushfire hazard:** Bushfire hazard is high to extreme for most of the urban areas in the Blue Mountains.

- **Landfill:** Landfill sites are approaching capacity and old sites require remediation to limit environmental impacts.

- **Management:** There is a general lack of coordination between agencies responsible for management of environmentally sensitive lands (BMCC 2002).

Planning in the BMCC LGA is regulated by two planning instruments – the Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 1991 and the LEP 2005 which was consolidated into one single instrument in 2012-13. The principle objectives of the LEPs are; a) the preservation of the unique Mountains character, b) urban containment, c) environmentally sensitive design and bush fire protection, d) pollution and erosion control, e) town character, f) economic development and employment, g) energy and resources and, h) social environment (BMCC 1991).
Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the GBMWHA through the most common ways it is publically perceived and understood: values and associated threats. Though the area was officially inscribed for natural values ‘other’ values are included here, as they remain a fundamental element of the GBMWHA that is further investigated in the following chapters. This chapter has introduced the ‘physical’ place, where much of the empirical evidence for this thesis was collected. The BMNP is the most populated and visited out of the eight reserves that make up the World Heritage area and consequently is the most threatened. This chapter has introduced a range of actors in the GBMWHA, including the towns surveyed and state and local government and concludes Part One of this thesis; now the context has been set for what follows. Part One has provided background on the World Heritage process and literature, including examples of Australian World Heritage sites. It argued the prevalence and tenacity of the society/nature dichotomy in social research and suggested a possible forward step in Actor-network theory. It provided an account of the research design, including methodology and methods and introduced the case study – The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

Part Two, World Heritage Narratives, consists of three results chapters and a chapter on the discussion/conclusion. The second part of the thesis draws on the background information introduced in Part One to move towards an understanding of the effects of World Heritage implementation. The first of the results chapters expands on some of the actors introduced in this chapter, as they are related to each other in the World Heritage area. With the help of Actor-network theory, it introduces some new, unconventional, actors that shape conceptions and influence behaviour in ways that begin to describe a World Heritage network. It takes a close look at these actors to reveal the first of three narratives in the World Heritage network – a narrative of disengagement.
Part Two: World Heritage Narratives
This chapter has two main functions. First, it draws on interviews with Mountains residents and staff from the Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) and observation in and around the World Heritage area to determine who the major actors are and how they relate to the World Heritage area. Second, it will begin to situate these actors within the World Heritage network. By applying an ANT analysis, this chapter reveals some unexpected actors that emerged throughout this study and, through tracing the associations between these actors, determines a common narrative of World Heritage, which largely derives from how they interact within the network. The actors in this chapter, which are both human and non-human, combine to express a disengaged narrative of World Heritage. This perspective has a network effect that serves to downplay the role that World Heritage has in the network.

This chapter introduces three main contributors to the narrative of disengagement. Two of these contributors are general to the mountains residents surveyed and the third is particular to the group interviewed in the Megalong Valley. Disengagement is demonstrated in this chapter through an ANT analysis of Echo Point, which serves as the first, and often only, interaction with the World Heritage area; tensions between outstanding universal value, the very rationale for World Heritage inscription, and local value; and land-use and the conflict between conservation and cattle farming. I begin with a vignette of one of the GBMWHA’s most popular tourist attractions - Echo Point - before moving on to introduce the outstanding universal value of the GBMWHA - the eucalyptus trees - and the outstanding local value - the views. This section considers lookouts, trees and views as actors in a World Heritage network and, as such, it jumps straight into the deep end of ANT analysis where objects and concepts (non-humans) are given the same analytical attention as humans. The chapter then explores a mini case study on the Megalong Valley; a farming area that runs right along the physical boundary of the World Heritage area. The response to World Heritage by actors in the Valley is lukewarm, based on a long
working history prior to inscription and the deployment of World Heritage texts. Superficially, World Heritage appears to have had very little visible effect on actors in the network, yet through an ANT analysis, we can begin to determine who some of the hidden actors in the network are and just what effect their relationships have on the way World Heritage has been translated.

Vignette: An afternoon at Echo Point

It is 2pm on a Tuesday and I am sitting on a sandstone bench at the Echo Point lookout in Katoomba. It is January and the weather has been cold and raining this past week but today it is playing nice. The day is cloudy with patches of sun but since there isn’t a modicum of shade anywhere on the Echo Point viewing area when the sun comes out from behind a cloud it burns. There are approximately 200 people milling about at the lookout. The topography of the platform allows for only glimpses of the Jamison Valley as one walks to the platform’s rim where the main attraction, the Three Sisters, is dramatically revealed. On the walk down to the platform edge visitors pass an Aboriginal man with dreadlocks wearing a kangaroo skin cape and board shorts. He is playing the didgeridoo with some skill (though I’m certainly no expert) and has just yelled out to a receding figure that he’d like a pie for lunch. Visitors to the platform are mostly tourists and since there are no shady spots or picnic tables I assume most of the people I see are not from the Blue Mountains. One tourist, a man wearing a Russian fur hat and an illegal looking 12 inch hunting knife strapped in a scabbard at his hip, sets up a tripod and video camera two metres in front of the didgeridoo player. The player looks up but says nothing and pauses his playing to take a sip of water. He invites some passing Chinese tourists to come and sit on the low concrete retaining wall beside him and have their photo taken. The Chinese politely decline but the guy in the Russian hat plonks down next to him while a woman takes their photo. The didgeridoo player has a joke with Russian hat man and then the woman sits down for her photo opportunity. The didgeridoo player is selling boomerangs but no one seems to be buying.

Two Council workers pull into the Echo Point car park and sit in the cab while they eat their lunch. I marvel at how well-dressed many of the tourists are. They
spill out of the large coaches shuttled direct from Sydney, look at the view, take
some photos and climb back on the coach. A group of Koreans are making use of
one of the sandstone benches for a picnic which means they are all facing away
from the view. As the top of my head burns from the sun I note with envy that
the clever Koreans have unfurled umbrellas for shade. The two Council workers
get out of the cab and connect a hose to a water tap. They start mixing up liquid
out of plastic four litre containers and what look like squeezy bottles in the back
of the truck. They are wearing plastic gloves stained blue. They disconnect the
hose, get back into the cab and drive off. A young couple are lying supine on one
of four, square timber benches in the middle of the platform. They are both
scrolling through photos on their digital cameras.

A man sharing lunch with his daughter asks the didgeridoo player if he would
mind posing for a photo with her. *Do ya want me to marry her too* replies the
didgeridoo player good-naturedly. They all laugh. The didgeridoo player places
his arm around the young woman’s waist and smiles for the photo. By mid-
afternoon the crowd has noticeably thinned and the didgeridoo player has gone
on a break. When he returns he is accompanied by a young boy comically
struggling to tie a red, paint-splattered cloth around his waist. The didgeridoo
player gives him a hand tying it up before the boy runs off. Later, I notice other
similarly clad Indigenous men standing at the front entrance to the
disingenuously named World Heritage Plaza and one is helping tourists alight
from a bus. They are part of the Koomurri Aboriginal Centre which has a
window facing onto the sidewalk with posters depicting a fierce looking
Indigenous man wearing the now familiar red loin-cloth. Back at the Echo Point
lookout the didgeridoo player appears to be involved in an informal business
meeting with a colleague or partner. The colleague/partner querulously hoots
“*you’ll sell more boomerangs here than anywhere else*” to the didgeridoo player
who doesn’t look particularly convinced. He says they can talk about it later. He
knocks off at 4pm.

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30 The World Heritage Plaza has no formal ties to the GBMWH and is not recognised as being
affiliated with the World Heritage status of the area by the BMCC or the Katoomba NPWS.
Before leaving Echo Point for the day, I briefly visit the Blue Mountains Visitor Information Centre, which takes residence on the back of the viewing platform away from the edge. Inside is a number of generic Australian souvenirs including postcards, soaps and oils, rain jackets that fold down into their own pocket, fleeces, hats and scarves and some printed t-shirts. There is an information counter to the rear of the centre which showcases maps for bushwalkers and information on tourist activities, accommodation and eating options in the Blue Mountains. I ask the man behind the counter if he has any information on the World Heritage listing of the Blue Mountains. He looks rather puzzled and replies that there is no such thing that he’s aware of. He double checks with another person working in the centre and she also replies that if there is such a thing she doesn’t know about it. They point out the various booklets detailing the bushwalking tracks in the area and books about Australian wildlife but there is nothing in the Blue Mountains Visitor Information Centre that mentions World Heritage.

**ANT analysis of Echo Point**

The above vignette describes an afternoon spent on the Echo Point viewing platform. The platform appears to serve a straightforward function. It was designed to allow easy access to uninterrupted views of the Three Sisters and Jamison Valley. However, if we use ANT to look analytically at this description, a more complex picture emerges. *We see how World Heritage is perceived and how it is translated through the viewing platform by other actors such as tourists, council workers and residents.* These different perspectives contribute to a narrative of general disengagement about World Heritage in the Blue Mountains community. An ANT analysis of Echo Point looks past the mere functionality of the viewing platform to explore the different ways World Heritage is interpreted at a specific place in time.

An actor-network consists of actors and, according to Callon (1991), intermediaries, which can be anything that passes between actors which defines the relationship between them. There are four types of intermediaries - technical artefacts, humans, money and texts. Echo Point acts as an intermediary here in
its capacity to define who and how other actors are associated with each other. In the words of Callon (1991: 135), ‘actors define one another in interaction - in the intermediaries that they put into circulation’. To help us describe the interactions that I witnessed on this afternoon at Echo Point and how these interactions define the actors, Latour suggests mapping how Echo Point has translated World Heritage to actors in the network (1991). According to Callon (1991) the process of translation is triangular - it requires the translator, the thing to be translated and a medium that generates the translation. By looking at what was observed one afternoon at Echo Point we can see how the various visitors to the platform (the translators) perceive World Heritage (the thing to be translated) by standing on the viewing platform (the medium that generates translation). I use four questions adapted from Latour (1991) to explore how these translations operate.

1. How does the intermediary attribute a fixed border to actors?
The platform attributes a fixed border that clearly establishes the boundary between what is World Heritage and what is not. It keeps the World Heritage separate from the surrounding area similar to Foucault’s concept of heterotopia (Foucault [1967] 1984) which is a place seamlessly integrated with its surrounds, yet disturbingly disconnected from them. While it acts to attract some actors it detracts others such as residents who find its ‘otherness’ to be off-putting, rather than attractive. The Echo Point lookout has been a part of the Katoomba landscape for 80 years yet, for residents of the Mountains, it is really only somewhere the tourists go. The popularity and commercialisation of the lookout has changed the Mountains residents’ relationship with the site. Some residents see the lookout as money the Council spent on all that lovely concrete when it could have been spent more wisely on roads and other essential infrastructure. As popular as the Echo Point viewing area is with tourists, it has not ingratiated itself into the hearts of residents, partly because of the desire to avoid tourists. One resident vented her frustration about the lack of maintenance and the inappropriateness of the platform ...

   tourists see wide open spaces and amazing rock formations, but I see lots of weeds, lots of garbage and lots of plastic rubbish sold at the
touristy shop. I mean, I suppose that's tourism the world over in a way. But if you really want a plastic cup with a picture of the Three Sisters on it then people will buy it. Like a coffee mug with Will and Kate (laughs). You know, I mean that's just tourism all over. So to me it's just a very unnatural area. Yeah, it's just sort of cheap, plastic and I just see the degradation of the area rather than its beauty, but visitors still have to see the beautiful rock formations which you get an amazing view of from that area, which is why it's become an amazing place.

The views are no less spectacular because of the concrete, but the lookout itself has become a spectacle in the eyes of the residents and somewhere they would prefer to avoid, unless accompanying visitors. They are at once irritated with the Council for the recent concrete-heavy upgrades, yet also sympathetic to the Council's efforts to accommodate more tourists. Comments also reflect the past nature of the Echo Point lookout suggesting it was once more at the centre of the residential community, as part of the local character, rather than a place marginalised as a tourist spot, as demonstrated by this resident You know, the whole redevelopment of Echo Point has its good points, but in some respects I think a lot of that character was just lost. Further alienating Echo Point from residents are the newly imposed parking fees as expressed by one resident [it's] very frustrating for locals to have to pay a damn parking fee, you know, if you want to go, and I think we are entitled to one free pass a year, but you actually have to apply for that. This statement also implies a sense of entitlement to visit the site, and park for free, by virtue of living in the Blue Mountains. Echo Point is actively deterring residents from seeing the platform as a welcoming and functioning part of their landscape.

2. How does the intermediary assign interests or goals to actors?

The platform assigns the interests and goals of visitors by controlling the flow and direction of visitors. It draws their attention out over the World Heritage area and the Three Sisters, which possibly as a consequence, is often misunderstood as being the reason for World Heritage listing. Between the Echo
Point Information Centre and the toilet block, is a stone archway which marks the access to the Prince Henry Cliff Walk which connects the privately run Scenic World Complex and Leura Cascades; a scenic area in the BMNP. It is a pleasant, moderate walk which is also popular with tourists with time to spare. However, if the floor of the Jamison Valley is your destination, then you must descend 170 metres down the steep and aptly named Giant Stairway which takes 30 minutes to climb down and even longer to climb up. The day-visitors on package tours seldom have the time, which means that their relationship with World Heritage, dictated by timetables and other practicalities, rarely strays from the confines of the platform. Echo Point is somewhat disingenuous in its assignment of interests to other actors. Despite the one million square hectares of the GBMWHA, the Echo Point lookout has become, through its role as the viewing platform for the Three Sisters, the representation of the areas outstanding universal value. This misunderstanding especially irks the Executive Officer of the World Heritage Unit in Katoomba, as well as the local conservation society. The spotlight on the Three Sisters threatens to undermine and even trivialise the more ecologically significant reasons for World Heritage inscription. Echo Point has successfully assigned its interests and goals by directing visitors to the view of the Three Sisters and the Jamison Valley. Its purpose has been entirely fulfilled without the need to explicitly inform visitors on the area’s World Heritage status.

3. What are the definitions of those borders and goals shared by intermediaries and actors?

Echo Point defines those borders and goals which are shared by the platform and visitors through its unmistakable ‘otherness’ - its ability to stand out from its surrounds as a place that does something. The throngs of buses and people, the cameras, backpacks and even the clothing mark it out as a tourist destination - a tourism cliché. Through its heavy use of concrete, landscaping, a tarmac pull-in for buses, signposting and ample parking it screams tourist attraction, viewing platform, council property. The Echo Point lookout defines the border through its use of height and size to accommodate many visitors who are content enough with the view of the Three Sisters and Jamison Valley, without needing to explore further on foot. Should they wish to go into the park, then the Platform acts as
gateway between Council land and the World Heritage area leading the visitor from one land use to another and across different land tenures and management styles. On a conceptual level, Echo Point is shared by residents as a place outside of their landscape. The platform and associated paid-parking belong to tourists and tourism and residents define the area as such.

4. What is the distribution of responsibility between actors? Echo Point distributes responsibility between actors so clearly that no one is left in doubt as to what their role is once they reach the platform. Tourists play the role of World Heritage tourist by walking down to the railing to take photographs and visit the tourist shop. It does not encourage lingering, due to the large amount of concrete and lack of shade so despite being in a residential area residents do not use it recreationally. The didgeridoo player performs the Indigenous role, the men in the council truck perform their role as council workers by using the platform’s facilities as a place of work to mix up their chemicals. The distribution of responsibility is a cause of tension between actors on a number of fronts. Echo Point is in a residential area and maintained by local government. Yet visitors stand on the platform and look out over the World Heritage area which is maintained by the state government. Furthermore, local government gains revenue from the Echo Point Lookout mostly in the form of parking fees, which vex residents, while the state government receives no remuneration. So while the views are the responsibility of the state and focus of tourists the maintenance of, and any revenue earned from, Echo Point falls to local government. These responsibilities are clearly divided - the state has no role in maintaining Echo Point and the local government has no mandate to maintain anything in the World Heritage area. The boundary between the platform and views is a political one and, thus, so are the responsibilities.

To summarise, we have a viewing platform which attributes a fixed border that clearly establishes the boundary between what is World Heritage and what is not. The platform assigns the interests and goals of visitors by controlling the flow and direction of visitors and their gaze, primarily, to the Three Sisters. It defines those borders and goals which are shared by the platform and visitors through its
unmistakable ‘otherness’ - its ability to stand out from its surrounds as a place with a unique purpose. It distributes responsibility between actors by assigning roles and responsibilities. The actors have defined one another through their association with Echo Point. The effect of this network is far more complicated than a superficial survey of a viewing platform would suggest.

The platform has become a scene of action and interaction that reveals an order of things and people (a network) that provide clues as to how World Heritage is translated. In the words of Callon (1991: 142), the platform converts to form a ‘scenario, carrying the signature of its author, looking for actors ready to play its roles’. In this network, Echo Point is not the author. It is not an actor. It is a technical artefact or an intermediary being used by other actors in the network. The author or actor in this scenario is the local council who built this platform. Echo Point was built to view the Three Sisters long before the area was given World Heritage status and apart from upgrades to the infrastructure, there is nothing to indicate that the view of the Three Sisters has undergone a transformation from spectacular rocks to rocks in a World Heritage area. World Heritage is translated through the Echo Point lookout primarily as a place to see or to stop and look. The view from the platform encompasses the Jamison valley and the Three Sisters, which is only a fraction of the larger World Heritage area, yet it plays a much larger role in the experience of day-trippers. Echo Point understandably has the potential to mis-translate the reason for OUV to tourists because it emphasises the view and lacks any other access to information on the World Heritage area. Echo Point translates a kind of touristic version of the World Heritage area that facilitates a brief visit that can be easily accessed. It also plays a small role in perpetuating the popular idea of a World Heritage area, which is to unambiguously have heritage on display for masses of people. For residents, Echo Point fails to assign much interest other than as a place to avoid.

The area does not attract regular use by local people and is translated to residents as a place where only tourists go to view this special touristic version of the World Heritage area. As will be discussed below, residents have their own special version of the World Heritage area. Echo Point becomes just another part of the
residential landscape where council workers mix up herbicides and locals avoid parking fees. As an intermediary in the World Heritage network, it is successful in defining the relationship between actors and in encouraging a particularly narrow perception of World Heritage that may contribute to the general disengagement regarding World Heritage.

**Outstanding universal value**

While the views are justly popular with tourists and residents alike, they are not the reason the area was given World Heritage status. The real reason for World Heritage status, diversity of eucalyptus trees, is far less obvious than the stunning scenery. The inconspicuous nature of the inscribed outstanding universal value causes tensions in the World Heritage network, as the following quote by a member of the local conservation society demonstrates:

> Even the Shadow Minister for the Environment before didn’t have an understanding really that it was World Heritage because of the diversity of the eucalypt species. I don’t even think people know that in the Blue Mountains. I don’t think that people really understand why it’s World Heritage, I think they just think it’s World Heritage because it’s a nice place. But I don’t think that the reasons, the ecological reasons to do with the diversity of eucalypts is very well known and I think that’s a lost opportunity.

The lost opportunity that she is referring to is the potential for universally acknowledged biodiversity to foster a more scientific appreciation for ecosystems in the Mountains community. This fostering, it is assumed, naturally leads to more environmentally friendly behaviour. It is an interesting point that residents may act more environmentally aware if they understand and value the area’s ecological uniqueness than if they only value the aesthetics. Whatever the case, despite the general assumption that World Heritage listing is due to the cliffs and scenery, it remains the trees that hold the universal value needed in order to nominate the Blue Mountains for World Heritage. Even after IUCN rejection discussed in Chapter 4 it is the eucalypt trees which remain the silent victors in the area’s long struggle for World Heritage listing, despite being the least publicly
appreciated. The OUV of eucalypts in the GBMWHA is a little known fact among residents participating in this research and contributes to the narrative of disengagement in the translation of World Heritage.

According to World Heritage criteria natural heritage is considered to consist of:

- Natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view;
- Geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation;
- Natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2005).

These criteria seem, in theory, straightforward, yet the concept of what constitutes as natural heritage remains something of mystery, which as Bentrupperbäumer et al. discovered, often goes unacknowledged in natural heritage management (Bentrupperbäumer, Day & Reser 2006; see also Reser and Bentrupperbäumer 2005). They noted that a frequently asked question on the website for the Australian Government’s department on environment and heritage was ‘what is natural heritage?’ The department’s response was clear on the issue of natural heritage consisting of ‘components of the natural environment that have aesthetic, scientific and social significance or any other special value’ and that ‘places … may have diverse values’. Aside from the obvious subjectivity involved in assessing what natural object has more scientific value than other natural objects and determining what is aesthetically or socially valuable Bentrupperbäumer et al. (2006: 727) note that it is the absence of a singular value that is problematic cautioning that ‘As soon as it is said that places have values rather than value, clear meaning and reference slip precariously’. As will be discussed below, the idea that a place has values is less important to Mountains residents than the place’s overall value.
The World Heritage Committee inscribed the GBMWHA under natural criteria (ix) - 'ongoing evolutionary process' and (x) – 'biological diversity' (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2000). The World Heritage Convention recognises that the Greater Blue Mountains Area has outstanding universal value to humanity because it represents:

- An outstanding example of Australia’s characteristic sclerophyll ecosystems dominated by eucalypts
- A significant representation of Australia’s biodiversity
- The habitat of a number of globally important threatened species.

The stated natural values in this case are ecosystems, biodiversity and species and, most specifically, eucalypts. Eucalypts, as the following discussion reveals, are an unlikely candidate for outstanding World Heritage values. As Hølleland (2013) has previously noted, in the Australian context eucalypts are rather more ordinary than extraordinary. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, a motivation for doing this research was to add to the small body of heritage studies literature on natural World Heritage. There is rarely a debate about the values, meanings and interpretation of natural heritage because the values of ecosystems, biodiversity and threatened species are, according to World Heritage criteria, grounded in science. Yet, the long and difficult road to World Heritage listing for the GBMWHA saw the nomination cycle through several attempts at finding the criteria that would provide the best chance for success. In this sense, the bureaucratic processes of natural World Heritage inscription encourages nominations based on scientific justification of OUV but also an element of calculated risk. The concept of natural heritage is far from fixed, at least in the context of deciding which bits of nature to propose as being worthy of OUV as was the case in the GBMWHA.

After a decades long saga to get the area inscribed on the World Heritage list under various other natural and cultural criteria, it was the eucalypts which finally made an impression on the World Heritage Committee at their 24th session meeting in 2000 in Cairns, Australia. Before the final nomination dossier presented to the World Heritage Committee there were several previous
scientific assessments of the GBMA. The first assessment, by Dr Geoff Mosley commissioned and funded by the Colong Wilderness Foundation, concentrated on the geomorphology and related scenery of the area as adequate criteria for World Heritage nomination. A following assessment focussed on similar themes, though both Mosley’s, and the subsequent assessments, were ultimately rejected by the state government who commissioned the Royal Botanic Gardens to conduct another, broader, biological assessment. In an act considered irresponsible by the Colong Foundation (Colley 2004), the state government eventually settled on the diversity of eucalypts as an appropriate theme for nomination criteria. The IUCN subsequently rejected the nomination, based on the suggestion that the number and type of eucalypts fell short of universal significance. Since the World Heritage Committee overruled the IUCN’s recommendation to defer the nomination, the GBMWHA was inscribed on the list and the eucalypts remain the foundation for listing and, in retrospect, were the crucial element in the nomination and enlisting process. Eucalypts, as World Heritage criteria, now goes largely unnoticed in the World Heritage network and since the World Heritage Unit houses no biologists or ecologists, the importance of eucalypts as World Heritage is not actively promoted. The one exception is the World Heritage Exhibition Centre at the Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens, which has information on the World Heritage trees, although there are mixed opinions as to whether the information is useful.31

Mountains residents that appreciate their surrounding World Heritage bushland do so not for its ascribed World Heritage values. In fact, most residents do not know or care why the area is inscribed. They love it for its beauty or aesthetic value, but there is still something in the language that residents use that firmly places beauty of the bush “out there”. The separation of the bush from the Mountains villages is compounded by the landscaping, which deliberately

31 The main criticism from the World Heritage Unit was the exhibitions location. The exhibition was planned for Katoomba, but was later moved to the Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens which is approx. a 45 minute drive from Katoomba and is not accessible by public transport. Subsequent to my fieldwork, the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre opened in Katoomba in 2012 which features a permanent exhibition on the GBMWHA.
portrays the villages as small European settlements in the middle of iconic Australian bushland. There is an obvious and enduring preference for exotic species and formulaic landscaping in private gardens even in residential areas zoned as bush conservation where, according to the BMCC, clearing is under strict control. According to one Bullaburra resident who lives in a bush conservation zone, the clearing of blocks for residential development is not strictly controlled. She blamed the developers for assuming that people do not want any trees on a freshly pegged house block and so bulldoze down the lot. Some are felled by accident too, which happened on her own block, but she was forced to check on the block every day to make sure the developers were leaving the trees as per her request. It is a tenacious practice of bulldozing all the trees on residential development sites to create a clean, smooth landscape on which to build a house and grow a garden.

Trees, and plants in general, are ascribed social and cultural symbols all over the world which give the trees certain status, positive and negative, within certain contexts. These characteristics are what Raintree calls ‘phytosociological behaviors’ (Raintree 1991, ch 2, para 5) and they differ widely among and within continents, nations and groups. In the Mountains trees and people have a complicated love/hate relationship based on several variables. Some residents feel that a eucalyptus tree has a ‘proper’ place out in the bush, some have a greater appreciation for nativeness, and others consider the cost of nursing a sick tree or removing a dead one and then there is the fear of eucalypts dropping their branches and causing property damage. Last, but by no means least, residents valued the famous Mountains blue haze, which is colloquially attributed to eucalypts. Many residents voiced a combination of these concerns. The following quote by one Katoomba resident demonstrates this love/hate relationship:

Eucalypts are lovely plants. They look lovely. They are obviously an Australian native plant. They do well in other countries as well, but they are mainly from Australia. But they are also thugs. They are no good in domestic areas. They’re just not made for domestic areas.
Because they drop branches, they easily break off. And that happens to other trees as well, but eucalypts are particularly renowned for it.

So strongly are Mountains residents’ appreciations for the area tied to its beauty, that most were sceptical of the real reasons behind the World Heritage inscription discussed above. Universally recognised ecological or biological criteria is considered secondary to the much romanticised blue haze from which the Blue Mountains derive their name and is apparently a product of the oil released by the eucalyptus trees. It was all too much for one Katoomba resident who, after being told that the area was listed because of the diversity of eucalypt species felt the need to defend the blue haze;

*I think the fact that there are so many [trees] and that they give the mountains that blue haze, that's certainly a worthwhile thing. But just to say because we've got so many eucalypts, you know, it should be a world Heritage area, no. But because we've got so many eucalyptus and they produce this effect that is worthwhile.*

As discussed in Chapter 4, the proposed aesthetic criteria in the Blue Mountains World Heritage nomination never made it past the advisory committee, yet this rejection means little to Mountains residents. For residents, the importance of the optical effect of the eucalypt trees, or the blue haze, far outweighs the number or diversity of eucalypt species. Residents were surprised to hear the reason for World Heritage listing and when told, replies such as “is it really just the trees” were common.

It is generally understood that the gum trees in the GBMWHA are protected and it is subsequently illegal, according to local government, to chop them down. Unlikely though it is that a Mountains resident would illegally chop down a forest tree, particularly for economic reasons, gum trees are often unwelcome and dispensable plants on private properties. But in the Mountains gum trees in backyards have rights too. If a resident wants to remove a tree from their yard they need the written consent of the Council as per the BMCC Tree Preservation Order (BMCC 1991), which requires the resident to consult with an arborist over
the viability of the tree. Residents may also apply to have tree branches removed to improve the views or increase sunlight, provided the Council undertakes the works and the applicant pays for it. Over the long-term it costs more money to save the tree than it does to cut it down. According to a Mountains aborist, if he looks after a sick tree for ten years and charges $90 every visit then charges an extra $200 on top of that for remedial treatment the expense of keeping a tree alive could run into the thousands. Whereas he estimates that it costs around $1,000 to cut the tree down. According to the BMCC Tree order residents are fined if they are caught cutting down trees on their property without going through the required process. Offenders are rarely caught but those that are have been named and shamed in the local newspaper.

Some Mountains residents resent the BMCC Tree Order, with one resident refuting that forest trees have any role to play in backyards:

> So people have this misguided concept about preserving trees which is in legislation. As far as your own trees in your backyard, if you want to knock down a tree you have to get permission. And, you've got to pay them to give you permission. So, the whole scheme is ridiculous. Conservation of forest trees in your backyard is just absurd

According to the aborist, most people he talks to love gum trees but not in their backyard highlighting that the way trees, and especially eucalypts, are perceived depends on their location. Despite the obvious affection that eucalypts garner in the World Heritage network, they are perceived as messy and dangerous when in places they do not belong. The arborist lives in the middle of a World Heritage bush, but struggles to find local work saving World Heritage trees.

Tourism in the Mountains is driven by the majestic beauty of the cliffs and bushland, but also by the little villages that make up the Blue Mountains City. These villages each have specially selected European “signature trees” to draw attention to the village main street and to maintain each town’s unique appeal. This street-scaping is coordinated through the BMCCs Street Tree Masterplan
The bedrock of the Plan is that the Blue Mountains City be ‘themed’ by the strategic use of single species planting along major thoroughfares. Mixed planting in these areas is prohibited. This type of landscaping aims to visually ‘separate’ out the residential, urbanised, ‘lived’ space from the pristine, un-lived-in wilderness. The contrast between native Australian bush and European village is arguably part of the Mountains charm. The tourists doubly benefit from the ‘experience’ of hiking in the real Australian bush for half a day always within cooee of an excellent coffee at one of the many outlets making up the Mountain’s thriving ‘café culture’. It is the unique lay of the land or the topography that is calling the shots here. Most Mountains towns are situated in such a way that visitors stop for at least an hour in one or two of them to be able to access the best walking tracks.

Whether part of the bush or lining the main street, a tree can be translated though and by different networks of actors to meet particular goals. Like Callon’s scientists, fishermen and scallops discussed in Chapter 2, trees are translated and transformed into different roles in different contexts according to Law’s process of heterogeneous engineering (1992). Villages, roads, tourism, the bush, local council, and residents are just some of the heterogeneous actors that are ordered in ways that reproduce trees differently. Trees are not passive objects in the network - through their abilities to drop branches, generate bushland, change colours, camouflage concrete and provide habitats they influence other actors in the network.

Similar to the idea of multiple versions or hybrids (Mol 2002; Law and Mol 2011b), a single tree is regarded differently to a forest of trees, yet single trees can be regarded differently depending on their place, or the ‘proper’ place of where a tree belongs. Forests of trees can be considered as having more value, not through their sheer number, but through what is created by sheer numbers of eucalypt trees - the aesthetically pleasing blue haze from which the Blue Mountains takes its name. Eucalypts are unwanted backyard trees because of the danger of falling branches, the mess they make and they are not as aesthetically pleasing as other European trees that change colours and provided shade in
summer and let the sun through in winter. That is, unless the eucalypts number in the thousands out in the bush, then, they are aesthetically pleasing. Further, if a eucalypt is sick and in need of care why, as one resident pointed out, would someone pay to have a single tree treated when there are thousands of them out there? Unlike their more colourful European cousins, eucalypts lack sufficient charisma (Lorimer 2007) to earn merit simply as solitary trees in the World Heritage network. Their place is with other eucalypts and even then their role as universally outstanding has not been translated with much success.

**Outstanding Local Value**

'It was the worst cup of coffee in the mountains, but the views were spectacular'

For Mountains residents not even bad coffee can diminish their appreciation for the area’s spectacular outlook. Participants in this research were very much aware of the beauty of their World Heritage surrounds. They were aware of it being a national park managed and overseen by the state department NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. Those few fortunate enough to live along the escapement were appreciative of their spectacular views. Those occupying less precious real estate also appreciated the views, if not from their own windows then the views afforded to them just down the street or over in the next block. The views that are always accessible from the various higher aspects of Katoomba and Leura (weather permitting!) especially are a valued and deeply rooted aspect of Mountains life for residents. When prompted to give their thoughts about World Heritage, residents mostly chatted about the 'views' or the 'bush' both of which were referred to as being worthy of World Heritage listing. However, these were also things, the views and the bush, that had an element of permanence and resilience and these perceptions have very real consequences for how Mountains residents view their surrounds. When queried, the views were the main reason stated for World Heritage inscription and very few residents knew of the actual reasons, as discussed above. The views and the bush are considered as grand, extensive, things that look after themselves; require little maintenance and therefore do not appear fragile or vulnerable or susceptible to the impacts of residential consequences. This is not to say that residents did not feel a sense of
environmental responsibility (see Nicholas, Thapa and Ko 2009 for similar observations), as this resident responds when I ask him what he thinks it means to live in a World Heritage area:

*I guess there’s a sense of responsibility to maintain it – whatever we can do in our own small way to preserve that – to preserve that and not to take it for granted. A sense of pride in that we have this opportunity, that we’ve been given this opportunity to be able to live in an area like this which is just so beautiful.*

This universal (we) sense of responsibility was reflected in many statements made by Mountains residents. But, again, their values were attributable to the tangible surrounds like the bush, as opposed to the ecological inscription of World Heritage, as demonstrated by this resident’s comment regarding how she makes appropriate decisions about what to plant in her garden:

*I am careful, but it’s not so much that I’m aware of it being heritage it’s just something that I’m aware because it’s bush.*

Generally the residents described the World Heritage area as an entity – as one massive area of trees, valleys and cliffs, which combined together to provide stunning views. The misconception that it was the views that accorded the place World Heritage inscription, may, as the conservationist warns above, be accountable for a lost environmental message. That people are so preoccupied looking far out into the distance that they neglect to look down at their feet and notice its diversity and fragility. The views and the bush are more visible aspects of the surrounding landscape making them easier to attach a value than biodiversity.

‘It’s heritage, blah blah blah’

When questioned on whether residents can see or feel the heritage in the area, a range of responses pointed to a range of different interests and perceptions of heritage. Some retired residents had been making the trip up to the mountains by rail since they were children and had a family history in the area that they
considered important. The residents that were knowledgeable about the early European settlements in the area were often surprised to hear that the European history was not part of the World Heritage inscription, as one resident pointed out that in the Mountains ...

... there is a different sort of history, a different sort of heritage to what apparently the World Heritage people were interested in.

The vast majority of the world’s World Heritage properties are listed under cultural criteria which include buildings, monuments and whole towns and cities. This historical heritage is often well known (think Taj Mahal, the Great Wall of China and the Pyramids of Egypt) and is more readily identifiable with World Heritage values. This grand, monumental view of World Heritage may go some way to explaining why World Heritage values seem difficult to attach to natural values, as seems to be the case in the GBMWH. Residents had no trouble associating World Heritage with something spectacular, grand or awesome yet, as demonstrated by resident’s responses above regarding the eucalypts, the idea of biodiversity as being a World Heritage value is more difficult to swallow. The natural environment, in this case, seems to be worthy of World Heritage value only when looked at, rather than having an intrinsic value of its own and even less value when the natural environment is further scaled down to the individual units, the eucalypts, that make up the area’s outstanding biodiversity. Biodiversity as World Heritage is hidden, or camouflaged as it were, among the more easily admired values. This camouflage may signify a human tendency to connect our notions of ‘heritage’ with cultural values, even when gazing over the natural landscape. It is also symptomatic of the larger issue of the disconnect between perceived cultural values of nature (the views) and the scientific values of nature (species richness or ‘biodiversity’). This difficulty also points to a fundamental contradiction in the theory and practice of World Heritage. It is assumed that for something to have World Heritage value it must be grand, spectacular or breathtaking. The concept of biodiversity can hardly be said to inspire such superlatives in non-scientific circles.
Perhaps because of the beauty of the area and its, mistaken, association with World Heritage values, as well as being grand, some residents saw heritage as something that must be visually pleasing. This tendency is well demonstrated when residents question the value of heritage that they consider ugly. When speaking to one resident about his view on heritage in the area, he began to talk about the heritage-listed buildings in Lawson – a small town west of Katoomba on the Great Western Highway. He remarked that these buildings ...

... were Heritage listed. Some of them were anyway. A lot of people were saying, I know you know, its heritage, blah blah blah, it shouldn’t come down. But they weren’t the best. They weren’t the nicest looking. Okay, they were the only ones in Lawson, but I don’t think it’s a great loss to the future.

Other residents were just as critical about the buildings’ lack of visual appeal and consequently their lack of heritage value. Above, residents took a similar view of eucalypts citing them as unwanted backyard plants. If physical beauty is a popular criterion for heritage values this bodes badly for the humble gum tree.

‘What would you expect to see? The bush isn’t going to change’.

I noticed a pattern emerging after only three interviews with residents. Often interviewees became defensive when asked questions directly related to what they know about World Heritage. The defensiveness was not directed toward me, but rather as a reaction to talking about something they were unfamiliar with. My, assumed inoffensive, questions had the unintended effect of making my participants feel uncomfortable and possibly a little inadequate. Just because they lived within a World Heritage area what made me think they had anything relevant or insightful to say about it? Aside from demonstrating one of the biggest challenges in interview-based data collection, the interviews suggested some important considerations – my interviewees wanted to be helpful and felt inadequate in their role as ‘interviewee’ – they assumed I knew more than they did about World Heritage and were immediately put on the back foot. In other instances where I might be asking informants questions about their experience of
illness or specific information related to their profession, the interviewee would take courage from knowing more about ‘their’ experience or profession.

The fact that my interviewees often know very little about World Heritage had a couple of consequences – in order to diffuse their discomfort they deferred to excuses about not having enough time in their day to really consider the meaning of World Heritage or that there are too many other things to worry about day-to-day to think about things that did not really concern them. The fundamental message being that World Heritage was a benign entity – nothing that caused consideration or worry. A second strategy was evasiveness. If an interviewee did not wander completely off the World Heritage topic (which was frequently the case) they spoke in general terms of conservation and protection of the natural environment, without directly referring to World Heritage. In this way, they could relate World Heritage to something they knew more about (either through direct experience but more likely through the media) without revealing their lack of World Heritage knowledge and as a way to talk about something more interesting to them. These tactics often caused tension in the interviews, as residents were either confused as to why I would ask them questions they could not fully answer or they were left fumbling around for something useful to say at the same time I was trying to keep them to the topic – further revealing their lack of knowledge and shifting the balance of power to my side.

The lack of knowledge about World Heritage points to a related outcome of the interviews. There was little expectation from World Heritage inscription among residents. Most did not really know what to expect as a result of inscription and, given the general misunderstanding that World Heritage was attributable to the views, assumed things would carry on much the same, with the exception of tighter development controls through the BMCC. As the residents were mostly established homeowners, no-one was particularly concerned that World Heritage would make any difference to their lives or to the surrounding landscape because of the existing national park legislation. Residents liked the idea of World Heritage because it gave them a greater sense of stability in the area in which they live like this resident who, when asked about the benefits of the World
Heritage inscription replied *I'm one of those people who live here and I don't want anyone else coming in. I'm quite happy when things stay the way they are and if World Heritage is going to help that then great.* This attitude of ‘no-one else coming in’ was reflected by many interviewees, regarding the increase of residential development and tourists and with the general understanding that World Heritage inscription was about protecting the views then it was assumed to be useful to this end.

Typically, Mountains residents were not involved in the nomination, but those who knew about it were supportive, yet did not really know what to expect as demonstrated by this Bullaburra resident:

> Well, I suppose in a big picture sense I was aware of the international ramifications. What it meant was that it would be on the world stage. And I think most people felt it was simply just a question of time. Certainly the people I was moving around with at the time, there was no cynicism or no scepticism. Everyone just felt that it was a question of time. You know, we will get it.

With the general lack of expectations regarding how World Heritage would impact the area, it is not surprising that residents had not noticed any changes since inscription. Participants were not aware of any changes to the national parks inscription, though some attributed World Heritage status to increased efforts of the NPWS as the following demonstrates:

> The last decade has seen considerable improvements on nature trail tracks [in national parks]. The [NPWS] have done some great improvements on some of the bush tracks. The best development is probably the National Pass at Wentworth Falls. Where they have put money in there. The signage is now good for people who want to do bush walks.

A small number of residents had noted less access into the parks. Though, as the following quote suggests, there is a prevailing confusion regarding what World
Heritage is, what it does and how it is connected to operations within the national parks:

I don't know if it’s because of World Heritage or not but, well one time there was lots of open gates now there is a lot more locked gates so you just can't drive down into the park where there were fire trails. I don't know whether if that’s the World Heritage or the national parks.

This quote begins with a turn of phrase I heard frequently throughout my interviews - ‘I don’t know if it’s because of World Heritage but ...’. The notion that residents did not know if changes were due to World Heritage status suggests that there has been little communication about what World Heritage is and what changes residents could expect. Further confusion was demonstrated by my question asking about perceptions of what World Heritage should look like and the question was often answered with the question back to me Just exactly what changes would I expect to see? Assumptions were that a World Heritage site should look well maintained and that there should be some activity or some visible World Heritage-type action. No-one had witnessed any of this ‘action’ however which, along with the lack of perceived changes and confusion about how World Heritage would be manifested, made the impact of World Heritage difficult to locate and identify for residents. Overwhelmingly, in my interviews with Mountains residents the topic of World Heritage was a conversation killer. The question of whether they thought about World Heritage (as a result of their day-to-day lives on the edge of a World Heritage area) met with ums, ahs, requests for clarification of the question or blank looks. After a silence, my interviewees interjected that this probably has nothing to do with World Heritage but ... and there the conversation would turn to the multitude of other issues perceived to be, possibly related to, but generally more note-worthy than, World Heritage status. The following answers to my question demonstrate just how little World Heritage is considered by Mountains residents:
I probably don’t, I’ve never considered, I mean, I live in Katoomba and I know I live in the Blue Mountains. I don’t think the World Heritage thing has had much influence as to the way I think about my life. I don’t want it changed but I don’t think I think seriously about living in a World Heritage area.

I was, I was reminded of [World Heritage] yesterday when you mentioned it. Other than that it doesn’t mean much to me. You know? We wouldn’t know unless we were told.

Life is too full or other things or there’s too much else to worry about.

One particular Bullaburra resident and Bush Regenerator expressed her disappointment over the lack of improvements to the area since World Heritage inscription, arguing that the responsible authority have favoured tourism over maintenance:

Well, sometimes that [tourism] seems to be where their money goes I think. And I think a lot of track maintenance, which still has to happen, but I would have expected more stuff to be done since the World Heritage listing. Yeah.

This resident’s opinion points to an assumption that World Heritage status would demand some changes in the management of the area however, the general perception was that the pre-existing national parks legislation was adequate and little would need to change. This attitude is reflected in the comments from residents about their national park surrounds. When asked whether there were any benefits to living near a World Heritage area most residents were more appreciative of the national parks – regardless of whether or not it had World Heritage inscription. Most could not think, off hand, of any benefits to them or the environment since inscription. In these cases the benefits were measured by what could be observed:

It’s hard to say for me. Because the national parks were here before the World Heritage listing I’m not sure that there’s anything really
anything tangible that you can point to that says the World Heritage listing has given a tangible benefit.

Yes I appreciate that we are [World Heritage] but it’s sort of um, I guess a bit, it’s just a title because it doesn’t really seem an awful lot different than before it was a World Heritage area. I mean there may be differences that I just don’t know about.

The formally inscribed World Heritage values remain largely unknown by the residents and having been a national park long before inscription, the area is considered the responsibility of other actors. In this case, World Heritage is largely mistaken to be the responsibility of the local government - which residents have an intimate relationship with rather than the state government, which is considered a more distant association. These relations will be discussed in the following chapters, but this lack of working knowledge about World Heritage suggests that a narrative of disengagement is an effect of the network. Residents localise their relationship with World Heritage by referring to practical matters that may affect their day-to-day life such as backyard maintenance, roads, infrastructure and weeds - all local council issues. Residents were especially concerned with the views; a concern possibly explained by the notion of consumption (Ronström 2014). What can be easily consumed, such as the views, will upstage aspects that are more difficult to swallow, such as biodiversity. Although residents have an appreciative sense of World Heritage (even though it is for the views and not the diversity of eucalypts) they relate, in more practical ways, to World Heritage through their dealings with the council. What to plant in their gardens and where to avoid paid-parking were more pressing concerns than World Heritage values. Similarly, their bush surrounds, as distinct from World Heritage, is the responsibility of the state department further reinforcing the narrative of disengagement.

So far this chapter suggests that World Heritage is far from the minds of residents of the GBMWHA. This missing World Heritage discourse is a finding consistent with other research into Australian World Heritage areas (see
Bentrupperbäumer and Reser 2006; Harrington 2004) that points to problems that arise from the very beginning of the World Heritage nomination process. Like GBMWHA residents, Bentrupperbäumer and Reser (2006) found that the community of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA) in Queensland was aware and supportive of World Heritage status even if they were unclear regarding knowledge of the area’s boundaries, and why the area had been inscribed. Consistent with this research, they found that the community was unclear about which agency or agencies are responsible for managing the area and how and to what extent the World Heritage status of the WTWHA has altered on-the-ground management functions, responsibilities and policies. The majority of people surveyed (88%) commented that they had not been involved in any discussion or consultation regarding World Heritage. Harrington (2004: 196) found that in the Magnetic Island community, within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, World Heritage was not at the forefront of residents thinking. Indeed, reflecting on her interviews with residents she states that ‘Unprompted discussion about World Heritage listing remains consistently and conspicuously absent’.

This research found that most residents had read of the potential nomination and subsequent inscription in the local newspaper and few were concerned as to why the property had been listed. While there was at least one public information session on Blue Mountains World Heritage nomination, only one participant in this research attended. Being a cattle farmer from the Megalong Valley, he was concerned about changes that World Heritage would make to his property. He came away from that meeting feeling no cause for concern, but events since inscription in 2000 have created an uneasy relationship with the GBMWHA and further contribute to a sense of disengagement regarding World Heritage.

**Megalong Valley Case study**

The final section of this chapter draws on interviews with a group of residents living outside of the major towns and particularly with one farmer’s family. This mini case study continues to explore the narrative of disengagement in the World
Heritage network. In this case there are also issues of livelihood, as residents in the Megalong valley often operate small, boutique farms. Because these boutique farmers work the land that shares a boundary with the GBMWHA, they have a more intimate understanding of the World Heritage inscription and OUV. This situation provides a different empirical sub-set of this study, compared with the examples above where Mountains people were not mindful of World Heritage inscription and they rarely contemplated the implications of World Heritage status. There were Valley residents who considered World Heritage to be ‘not an issue’ while also admitting that an obvious reaction to:

anything of that nature, heritage or environmental or something, would make a lot of people, especially people who live on the land, arc up. I mean, whether that’s justified or not, but they say, ‘Oh God, what’s happening now’. I’ll guarantee that would have been the case and it would have been ‘God knows what the federal government’s doing’ or something.

Common sense suggests that managing these boundary areas may be a difficult enterprise between different actors with competing interests, such as food cultivation and conservation. Indeed, this kind of management is fraught with the difficulties of governance across borders, as demonstrated in research on environmental sustainability projects (Cash et al. 2003; Clark et al. 2010), protected areas management (Crabb 2003; Dilsaver and Wyckoff 2005), ecological systems (Landres, Knight, Pickett and Cadenasso 1998), wilderness areas (Landres, Marsh, Merigliano, Ritter and Nornam 1998) and natural resources management (Mollinga 2010). The UNESCO published World Heritage material is also aware of these difficulties. Indeed, it advises nominating nations, where possible, to minimise the potential for conflicting interests with neighbours by aligning the World Heritage boundaries with the natural borders of mountains, cliffs or water reducing the need for cooperative management (Hockings et al. 2008: 41). One Valley resident could recall ‘one family who lost a fantastic business through World Heritage listing’ as a result of changes to the area’s boundaries.
The residents of the Megalong Valley (henceforth referred to as the Valley) are scattered along, mainly gravel, roads along the foot of the sandstone cliff that separates the Valley from the more popular tourist spots along the Great Western Highway. The GBMWHA boundary has no formal buffer zone, but if it did, the Megalong Valley would be right in it.\textsuperscript{32} As such, the NPWS and BMCC are concerned about activities in the Megalong Valley. Firstly, because much of the land is close to or forms a boundary with two of the national parks which are a part of the World Heritage area. Much of this borderland is privately owned and some of it is used for small-scale agricultural activities such as raspberry, olive and cattle farming. And secondly, because the Valley is visible to the tourist gaze and, with its agricultural landscape, detracts from the stunning forested valley views the tourists have come to see and sits uncomfortably outside the ‘natural’ heritage landscape.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the original GBMWHA nomination included cultural and historical values, which were not successful in attaining OUV. The GBMWHA Strategic Plan (DECC 2009) supports the continuation of these values, despite not being formally recognised by the World Heritage Committee. As well as Indigenous heritage and European history, the Plan acknowledges ‘other values’ including geodiversity and biodiversity, water catchments, recreation and tourism, wilderness, social and economic benefits, research and education, scenery and aesthetics and bequest, inspiration, spirituality and existence values (DECC 2009: 11-18).\textsuperscript{33} Contemporary farming, however, is not included in the area’s acknowledged heritage values. In fact, where farming is referred to in the

\textsuperscript{32} A buffer zone is a designated area around the core zone of many natural and cultural World Heritage sites meant to add an extra layer of protection.

\textsuperscript{33} Bequest value ensures that the GBMWHA will be handed on to future generations. Inspiration refers to the attributes that inspire the fields of philosophy, painting, literature and music and photography. Spirituality refers to the area’s promotion of serenity and rejuvenation and existence values refer to the value placed on the area by people who appreciate its existence.
Strategic Plan it is in the section ‘Adjacent land uses’ which focuses on their potential threats to the World Heritage area through the ‘siltation of streams, pesticide drift from aerial straying, fire, straying cattle and companion animals and the spread of exotic plants and animals’ (DECC 2009: 20).

Residents of the Valley come under three Local Council Areas and consider themselves to be definitively removed from the rest of the Mountains population describing their location as ...

... on the fringe. We're not really in it. People talk about that as the sandstone curtain, and that's fine. It's almost like what happens that side is their business and what happens on this side ... It's a big drop down, it's almost psychological.

It seemed, and I am certain they would not mind me saying, that Valley residents were a little insular. They have a tightly knit, social community with a pride in their place that trumps their World Heritage neighbour - as this excerpt of transcript suggests:

Me: do you know why this area was inscribed for World Heritage?
Participant: Why?
Me: Because it has about 100 different species of eucalypt.
Participant: Well, you know where the name Megalong came from?
Me: Where?
Participant: Valley under the cliff.
Me: (thinks - take that outstanding universal value!)

Families have been making a living in the Valley since the 1830s (Duncan 2006). Local timber felling, gold, coal and shoal mining, skin and fur trading, sheep-meat, poultry, pigs and sheep farming and dairies have all come and gone in the Valley. There are a few fruit farms and boutique wineries in the Valley now but cattle farming is by far the most enduring industry and there are still a number of commercial cattle farms in the area. The Hamilton family farm supports a small
herd - 50 head of cattle - but their land fronts the Cox’s river on a property, which covers roughly 1,500 acres. Their land is split over seven separate portions and only about a third of their acreage is grazed in summer and in the winter, the cattle move into the timbered areas to forage. The Hamiltons are third generation farmers, having spent their entire lives working in the Valley according them unequivocal and often hard-won “local” status and an unequal generational knowledge of the area and great respect from their neighbours. The Hamiltons are part of a handful of people who live full-time in the Valley and they are, arguably, a part of Megalong Valley heritage.

As one of Callon’s intermediaries mentioned above in the context of Echo Point, texts act to define, explore and stabilise relations between actors. They do this by defining the skills, knowledge, actions of actors in relation to each other. Actors put intermediaries into circulation and the GBMWHA Strategic Plan is one example of a text intermediary that has been put into circulation in the GBMWHA. Heritage texts have a reputation for excluding people from heritage sites (Waterton, Smith and Campbell 2006), despite more recent attempts to make the heritage management process more inclusive (Johnston and Buckley 2001). While the Strategic Plan does not directly exclude other actors from the area, regarding the Megalong Valley, it communicates a different type of heritage values to the way heritage is locally identified and interpreted, as well as causing confusion and disunity between official values and the everyday values (Bentruppbäumer, Day and Reser 2006). This tension between heritage and history is highlighted by the fact that the Hamiltons were not initially worried about the possible World Heritage listing of their surrounding area because their farm existed long before World Heritage. In Bill Hamilton’s words, they can’t see any difference to it being World Heritage as far as the environment goes.

34 Other farmers were contacted for this study but declined to interview or did not respond. While Bill’s farm is not representative of other farms in the Valley Bill, as Chair of the Megalong Valley Landowners Association, was quite willing to speak on their behalf.

35 ‘Hamilton’ is a fictitious name to protect the family’s identity.
Bill argues that any decisions they make about the environment should have been done before it was World Heritage. But then the Council commissioned a number of vegetation assessments on the Hamilton’s property which, according to Bill, resulted in incredible estimations of the number of sensitive plant communities on his property. Bill believes their estimations are generally over the odds due to the preoccupation with finding things that need protection and subsequently over-inflating their number and ecological importance and vulnerability. It is precisely these claims from experts that make Bill nervous about what might happen in the future. These texts are also acting to define who has the necessary knowledge to conserve environmental values. An assumption that grates with actors who have intimate connections to the land in question. Aside from being a threat to World Heritage values, cattle farming is an uneasy fit with the planning and management agenda of the local government area too. The lingering threat of tougher regulations risks a disconnect between the farmer and the land (Russell and Jambrecina 2002, Kato 2006, Pannell 2006) making Bill have to think twice before undertaking routine maintenance on his property, lest it attract the attention of other actors.

Restricting farmers from maintaining their land can promote a reticence to wade through complex planning legislation before constructing buildings for personal or business purposes (Bianchi 2002) so Bill claims that you need to be able to argue environmentally to get anywhere. The Hamiltons circulate their own texts in the form of university-educated neighbours who know the scientific names of plants and lend academic clout against, what Bill calls, made up nonsense from environmental groups. Another Valley resident seeking DA approval for their house caught the attention of environmental lobbies [where] there’s so much zealotry. Bill claims the Council is terrified of the local conservation society who lobby against cattle grazing so close to the World Heritage area and blame the Council for not taking action. Bill has an intimate knowledge of the ecosystems, biodiversity and degraded environments on his own land, but feels that other actors are misusing these terms to their own advantage. He is tired of hearing the same old ‘clichés’ about protecting the environment and would rather participate in open conversations, rather than read about the destruction of the environment
in letters to the editor in the local paper. He regrets that the Council won’t trot out their supposed environmental experts to talk to him face-to-face. The lack of communication and threat of legal action against land use has allowed fear to creep into the Valley. Farmers like the Hamiltons are certain that eventually these intermediaries will result in tougher regulations in the name of protecting World Heritage values.

World Heritage has failed to enrol or interest the farmers in the Valley, possibly as a result of the intermediaries. The Strategic plan, council flora assessments and letters to the editor are not representative. They do not speak to or for the farmers, indeed, they deliberately exclude both the farmer’s heritage and their knowledge, skills, and actions. They have become what Latour terms mediators, which although only subtly distinct from intermediaries, can have the effect of distorting or modifying the meaning they are intended to distribute (Latour 2005). The texts, intended to communicate and mobilise the interests and support for the protection of World Heritage values has translated scepticism and anxiety. The intermediaries (or mediators) are not representative of all actors and are therefore not meaningful. The perception of World Heritage is present also in the Megalong Valley where World Heritage not only factors little in the minds of residents, it can take a negative slant.

**Conclusion**

This chapter had two main outcomes. First, by applying ANT methodology to this study some of the less obvious actors in the World Heritage network have been uncovered. This revelation has allowed us to see past the empirical generalisations that often make up concepts such as World Heritage. And second, by beginning to separate the properties that are so often thought to ‘go together’ in World Heritage, this chapter has revealed that for some actors, especially residents, the dominant narrative of World Heritage is one of disengagement. This narrative will help to situate this group of actors in the World Heritage network later in the thesis, but an important result of this narrative is its effect on downplaying the role of World Heritage in the network and delegating responsibility for World Heritage to other actors.
Echo Point is an actor that translates World Heritage in different ways, according to how other actors relate to the platform. It provides spectacular views, but detracts from the real reason for World Heritage inscription by becoming the only signpost. It points to the Three Sisters and refrains from offering any other information about the World Heritage area except for what the visitors are left to determine for themselves. Outstanding universal value is at odds with what residents value and provides a barrier to translation. The World Heritage values of the eucalypt trees (their biodiversity) is not held in the same high regard by residents, which makes the role of these trees in the network an ambiguous one. The role of trees in the network depends on their relations with other actors. Eucalypts interest residents through their contribution to the famous blue haze, yet as an exemplar of natural heritage, their importance decreases in the eyes of most residents. The narrative of disengagement suggests that actors find it hard to relate meaningfully with the GBMWHA’s official Outstanding and Universal Value, preferring instead to appreciate their own local value. In this case, World Heritage inscription has not helped to enrol the more ecologically important aspects of eucalyptus diversity, nor has it communicated the significance of their biodiversity at a local and possibly even at a national level. Similarly, the farmers of the Megalong Valley are held back from the World Heritage network by the intermediary of World Heritage texts that place farmers at odds with OUV.

In this chapter fixed notions of what is natural and what is cultural are beginning to unravel. An object, be it a tree or viewing platform, is declared natural or social in relation to its surroundings (the other actors in the network) giving both the object and surrounding actors a shifting balance of power, depending on perspective. In this chapter I have highlighted the narrative of disengagement but in the following chapter, exploring the narrative of lost opportunities, the World Heritage network brings new power associations to light. The following chapter introduces different actors whose roles in the network reflect a shift in the balance of power based on how World Heritage is used and, critically, who has the power to use it.
Chapter 6: A narrative of lost opportunities

On Thursday, 25 June 1998, local federal Member Kerry Bartlett MP addressed the House of Representatives with a speech about the World Heritage nomination for the Greater Blue Mountains assuring the Main Committee that the nomination would be ready by the end of the month after four years of ‘hard work … by local community organisations and the NSW and Commonwealth governments’. He stated that World Heritage means ‘many things to many people’ but proposed that a successful nomination would:

increase [the community’s] sense of pride in their local region,
increase their commitment to maintaining the natural beauty of the mountains and doing everything they can to foster and protect it, and provide an enormous boost for tourism and employment opportunities for those people within the region (Commonwealth of Australia, House of Representatives, October 25, 1998).

Two years later, in November 2000, the Greater Blue Mountains Area was granted World Heritage status. This chapter discusses the impact of listing on the management agencies and local population after 11 years of World Heritage inscription. Contrary to MP Bartlett’s statement above, translating World Heritage in the Greater Blue Mountains is more a story of opportunities missed than it is of opportunities gained. Through an ANT analysis, this chapter helps to explain why.

This chapter will introduce actors that, despite being interested by the potential of World Heritage opportunities, have struggled to establish power in the World Heritage network. Power, in this context, refers to an actor’s capacity to act for, with or on behalf of World Heritage. These actors have different associations with the World Heritage area, yet these associations can be translated as a narrative of lost opportunities. As in the previous chapter, these actors form what Law (1992: 380) refers to as a ‘heterogeneous network’ as they are so diverse as to appear to have no connection at all. Yet, these actors have all translated
World Heritage or been enrolled in the network by the potential for opportunity. Actors in this chapter are enrolled through their understanding of World Heritage as something that can be practised or used. Although there are varying opinions on how to practice World Heritage, all the actors see the potential of World Heritage to bring about beneficial change in some way - promotion, education, increased tourism, employment or collaboration. These actors are enrolled through the potential benefits that World Heritage offers, rather than the actual benefits which, suggested by this research, are not obvious enough to be detected. These actors have taken World Heritage at its aspirational face value – a value that suggests some kind of transformation in site protection and increased tourism. Indeed, the World Heritage Convention promotes opportunities for States Parties and local people. One of the World Heritage themes, discussed in Chapter 1, portrays World Heritage as a tool to generate revitalisation and transformation yet, as previous studies have shown, World Heritage inscription alone does not deliver either of these things (Redbanks Consulting & Trends Business Research 2009). Like the previous chapter, this ANT analysis focuses on the association between the actors to explore the ordering of these heterogeneous actors in the network. Differing (and arguably conflicting) hopes for the GBMWHA and disappointment or frustration with the lack of tangible benefits from World Heritage inscription has drawn actors together in the network through a narrative of lost opportunity.

After a brief introduction to local government environmental policy and practice, this chapter introduces the local government for the most populated area in the Blue Mountains. The Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) is enthusiastic about World Heritage management and promotion, but this enthusiasm is curbed by the limitations of their level of government and their relationship with state government. The GBMWHA is inscribed for its ‘natural’ World Heritage values and so this chapter looks at what responsibilities local government has to protect the natural environment, in general, and natural World Heritage values in particular. The chapter then introduces a particularly passionate actor in the GBMWHA through another vignette, which follows Bushcare volunteers at work one morning in August 2013. Next, the chapter looks at an actor with possibly the
biggest hopes for income generation through World Heritage inscription. Tourism numbers have fallen far short of expectations in the Mountains and, though the local tourism industry tries continually to reinvent itself, they are still working out how to sell World Heritage. It then goes on to discuss the role of conservationists in the area’s World Heritage nomination and status and how they view the effects of inscription 11 years on.

**Local Government and environmental responsibility**

The first section of this chapter is based on interviews with local government, which emerged as an actor in the World Heritage network, through their association with Mountains’ residents. As discussed in the previous chapter, many residents mistakenly associated World Heritage inscription, and any related issues, with their local Council. My subsequent interviews with Council staff were indeed suggestive of an actor that had been interested by World Heritage. The interviews revealed staff who were proud of, and enthusiastic about, World Heritage yet, at the same time, often frustrated. The frustration seemed to come from the Council’s political and physical situation in the World Heritage network. Politically, the management of Australian World Heritage properties is the responsibility of state or territory departments. The GBMWHA is managed by the NSW Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), which is an agency of the NSW Government. Physically, the Council’s Local Government Area shares the most populous border with the World Heritage area and therefore poses a threat to World Heritage values. Thus, Council’s role in the network is defined by something of a paradox - by being close enough to a World Heritage area to negatively impact upon it without having any formal role in its management. As the following will discuss, the role of local government in managing World Heritage is, at best, vague and largely determined by the individual councils.

Local government is an integral sphere of government in Australia and plays a key role in delivering a range of services to the local community. It has responsibility for local strategic and land use planning matters primarily governed by the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* which applies to all land use, management and development. Local government is a state
government responsibility recognised in the NSW Constitution and, as such, it operates under state legislation, primarily the *Local Government Act 1993* and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 (NSW OLG 2012). The Council Charter, which is contained in Section 8 of the Local Government Act, is broad in terms of the functions and activities that councils can undertake. The Charter is based on the principle that councils have a wide-ranging role and are empowered to make decisions on behalf of, and with, their communities (NSW OLG 2012). Local governments also refer to other legislation, including the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000*, and specialised legislation, such as the *Rural Fires Act 1997* and the *Coastal Protection Act 1979*. In addition to state legislation, there are state environmental planning policies (SEPPs), regional environmental plans, local environmental plans, development control plans and regional vegetation management plans.\(^{36}\)

In NSW the local government councils are also required to report on the State of the Environment. However, regarding environmental responsibility, local governments are guided by state legislation. The main powers under the *Local Government Act 1993* and the core activities of local Councils are to provide services and infrastructure and develop and implement development regulations through Local Environmental Plans. While these plans can have impacts on World Heritage properties, there are no specific provisions for World Heritage management.\(^{37}\) Collaboration between state and local government on World Heritage matters depends largely on the management plan of the World Heritage property.

Australian World Heritage management principles are legislated under the Commonwealth’s *Environment Protection of Biodiversity Conservation Regulations - Schedule 5* which stipulates under Section 2(f) that a World

\(^{36}\) At the time of fieldwork, the NSW Government began a comprehensive review of the state’s planning system and legislation and a White Paper (or first draft) for the proposed planning system and new legislation was published for comment on 16 April 2013.

\(^{37}\) Under part 5 of LEP 2015 there are miscellaneous provisions for the conservation of local heritage conservation, but not for the conservation of World Heritage.
Heritage property management plan must promote the integration of Commonwealth, state or territory and local government responsibilities for the property. Indeed, the GBMWHA Management Plan promotes local government’s ‘active participation as conservation partners’ but it does not elaborate on the specifics of how local government might participate (DECC 2009: 38). Local governments also have discretionary powers under the Local Government Act 1993, which include the facilitation of community involvement, managing grant and incentive programs and providing financial and administrative support for these programs. Councils could use these discretionary powers for World Heritage programs, but the extent to which councils draw upon these powers and indeed the extent to which they use them for environmental management purposes is greatly varied across Australia (Binning and Young 1999).

A hypothesis put forward by Binning and Young (1999) is that councils will commit more resources to environmental management if they perceive a clear correlation between key threatening processes to the environment and the council’s core responsibilities. Research has further suggested that proximity to World Heritage sites enhances local government’s environmental practices (Wild River 2002). The BMCC is in such a position. The proximity of the population within the BMCC’s Local Government Area is considered a potential threat to World Heritage values by the GBMWHA Management Plan. These same threats are not disputed by the BMCC. They explicitly state their unique position regarding the surrounding World Heritage environment in the aim of their Local Environmental Plan (BMCC 2005), which is to ‘provide a comprehensive and explicit framework for the development of land within the City, as the “City within a World Heritage Area National Park”’ (BMCC 2005: 1.5). This declaration essentially commits the BMCC to undertake environmental programs and, as

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38 Wild River (2006b) has also provided information on the role of local government in environmental and heritage management as part of the 2006 Australian State of the Environment Report. However, in the report Wild River makes a distinction between managing natural resources and preserving cultural heritage, which presents difficulties in using the information in the context of natural heritage values.
discussed in Chapter 4, is consistent with the aspirations of the Mountains community.

However, resources are a major factor in a council’s willingness to commit to conservation. So councils with a larger population, and therefore larger rate-base, have a greater capacity for environmental programs. Generating this revenue is a struggle for the BMCC, since they have a large Local Government Area (discussed below) and a small ratepayer base. For councils to become involved in conservation, there also needs to be shared local, state and national policy objectives. Since 1997, local Councils in NSW are required to ‘have regard to the principles of ecologically sustainable development in carrying out their responsibilities’ (Local Government Act 1993, s7(e)) under the Local Government Amendment (Ecologically Sustainable Development) Act 1997. While Councils must now consider the principle of ecologically sustainable development as part of their services and regulatory activities, they are not obliged to prioritise sustainable development over other considerations in the decision-making process. As Binning and Young (1999) point out, basic services such as sewerage treatment, water supply and planning approvals are all most councils can afford to provide.

In summary, local government has no formal role in managing World Heritage areas. The GBMWHA shares a border with a populated area that potentially threatens World Heritage values. Although local government’s possible functions and activities are broadly defined, their primary responsibility is to provide basic services to ratepayers, and with a small ratepayer base, basic services are often all they can afford to do. However, Councils are responsible for local development that has direct and indirect impacts on World Heritage values. As the City within a World Heritage Area National Park, the BMCC could be expected go beyond providing basic services. Yet this is difficult when the BMCC’s role in the World Heritage network lacks formal or legislated support.
A “City within a World Heritage Area National Park”

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the BMCC have a perceived role regarding World Heritage, according to the residents. Regardless of whether this perception is misguided, the BMCC are enrolled as actors in the World Heritage network. The laxity of formal World Heritage management obligations for local government in Australia essentially means that, while local governments have some responsibility to consider the natural environment (be it World Heritage listed or otherwise), their involvement is subject to funding and partnerships with the state authorising body. This situation presents a conundrum for the BMCC because, as will be discussed below, staff members feel responsible for maintaining and promoting World Heritage values. There are 12 Local Government Areas (LGA) neighbouring the GBMWHA, but the Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) has the largest population adjacent to the World Heritage Area and covers 143,200 ha. It shares a 342 kilometre border with the GBMWHA in an association it uneasily refers to as an ‘edge relationship’ (BMCC 2009a: 138).

Despite the large LGA, the BMCC supports a small population of 80,000 and most of its residents reside in the towns situated along the Great Western Highway within the Blue Mountains National Park (refer to Figure 4.2, page 120 in Chapter 4). The BMCC is committed to addressing these ‘edge relationships’ between the World Heritage Area and the urban, rural and industrial areas through ‘focusing on better integration between on-park and off-park management’ (BMCC 2009a: 138).

However, improving this ‘on’ and ‘off’ park integration is proving difficult, as the following discusses. According to an environmental scientist, working for the BMCC, the amount of protection the Council should provide World Heritage values is a simple equation where the level of protection equals level of impact. She is the first to admit that the Council generates impacts on the World Heritage area; therefore, they have a responsibility to manage those impacts. She refers specifically to the boundary between Council land and World Heritage as a ‘buffer zone’, even though there is no formal buffer zone around the World Heritage area. She is confident that this informal buffer zone is efficiently managed by the BMCC to a degree that prevents environmental degradation
down-stream. For example, they will always encourage developers to build as far back from the ridgeline as practical. She thinks that as far as maintaining the buffer zone goes, there is limited collaboration between state and local government. The first of many tensions between state and local governments is revealed when she claims that the state seem more focussed on the tourism aspects of World Heritage, rather than maintaining environmental integrity, particularly in the buffer zone where much of the maintenance is left to the BMCC. Tourism (discussed in more detail below), enters the network for the first time here as an actor with a power to cause associative tension.

The BMCC is the main contact for residents regarding the dos and don’ts of living near World Heritage. The Council is the main community educator on environmental issues, including pests and weeds, fire and rubbish. Indeed, residents generally regard the Council as being supportive of environmental protection and education within the limits of their economic constraints. Residents recognise that the Bushcare and Swampcare programs are joint community and Council initiatives. They know that the Council employs environmental staff and that they strive to make residents aware of problems arising from weeds, feral animals and pets. This effort is further acknowledged by a senior Katoomba NPWS officer who states that:

_The Blue Mountains City Council, they are totally committed to the landscape we live in and they are strong advocates. I’m proud of them I think. It distinguishes their Council from all the other Councils. So, what makes the Blue Mountains Council different to every other Council in New South Wales is the fact that they are a city within the Blue Mountains World Heritage area._

This is a statement the BMCC would whole-heartedly agree with. They are clearly and publicly aware of their unique situation but, even so, BMCC environmental scientists are disappointed that inscribing the GBMWHA World Heritage property did not ramp up environmental controls to meet their expectations of a World Heritage standard. Indeed, according to a BMCC staff member:
Environmental education has moved away from World Heritage focus and has focussed on more tangible aspects of environmental education like household waste and things that are measurable through surveys and workshops.

This shift has been a result of state government priorities, which bases funding grants on specific target areas.

The evidence from this research supports the hypothesis above by Binning and Young (1999) that councils will commit to environmental management if they perceive a clear correlation between key threatening processes to the environment and the council’s core responsibilities. The BMCC is a council with strong regulatory functions in an urban or fringe development setting. It is aware of the impact its LGA has on the World Heritage area and thus puts resources into environmental management. However, Binning and Young (1999) also posited a correlation between resourcing environmental management and larger Council rate-bases. This is an area of vexation for the BMCC since they have a large LGA but relatively small population and thus, the frustration regarding ramping up controls. This is where the BMCC-imposed environmental levy fills the financial shortfall created by a small rate-base.

Since 2005, Mountains residents have paid an environmental levy which translates to an annual rate increase of 3.65 per cent. The levy was introduced to provide the Council with the extra money it needs, just over $1 million, to counteract serious environmental problems, especially weed invasion; poor water quality; localised flooding; stormwater runoff into bushland; degraded and unsafe walking tracks, worsening degraded lands (including significant erosion); failing on-site sewerage systems and an increasing number of threatened species (BMCC 2009b). At the time of my fieldwork, the levy was set to expire in two years. This had the Council environment team worried that, without the extra money, the Council would prioritise infrastructure maintenance over protecting the environment. There were also concerns about the survival of the BMCC’s environmental team if the levy was not rolled over, once again highlighting Binning and Young’s supposition on the relationship between environmental
management and adequate resourcing. The environmental levy expired in 2015 and has not been renewed. The BMCC received approval from the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW, under the Local Government Act 1993, for a special rate variation to increase rates. Some of the money from the rate increase goes towards funding activities previously funded by the Environmental Levy (BMCC 2015).

However, the Council’s role in the World Heritage network, either through core or discretionary functions, could be considered inconsistent with the state’s broader conservation objectives. The local council’s role in World Heritage is generally one of mitigation which would seem to be, in the most obvious case, an issue unique to councils sharing a boundary with a national park, but magnified when the national park is a World Heritage area. While the BMCC implements land-use zoning and strict environmental controls, there is little developable land in the Mountains LGA and none around the boundary between council land and World Heritage. If the BMCC did scale back their effort on environmental issues they might feel justified in doing so if they deem those issues to be the responsibility of the NPWS (Binning and Young 1999). This grey area in the management of World Heritage values in particular, and the environment in general, appears to confuse residents on the issue of who is responsible for managing the human impact on the World Heritage area. The areas of grey provoke scepticism regarding council’s motives, which is evidenced by some residents’ claims that the BMCC often approves unsuitable development in the area. This contradiction to the comments above, made by a BMCC environmental scientist, is understandable given the situation. Councils are only obliged to consider environmental sustainability in development approvals, they are largely dependent on revenue generated through development in the LGA, and it is common local knowledge that the BMCC are financially stretched. The vice president of the local conservation society is disinclined to praise the Council’s environmental efforts compared to work that the conservation society and Katoomba NPWS are already doing. But to what extent this lack of praise is based on the knowledge that council are not officially responsible for the World Heritage area (and that the Katoomba NPWS is) is not clear. In a similar way,
some residents suspect the BMCC of prioritising tourism over conservation in the belief that the Council are more interested in making money than protecting the environment. Earlier, this same aspersion was cast on the Katoomba NPWS by the BMCC. Whatever the truth behind these accusations tourism is being insinuated by both actors as a corroding affect on World Heritage values.

The association between local and state governments in the network is defined by their so-called ‘edge relationship’ and the actions of ‘on-park’ (or the conservation of World Heritage values) and ‘off park’ (or the mitigation of negative impacts). Protection by the state government inside the World Heritage area only affects the World Heritage area. The association between the Katoomba NPWS and BMCC creates a perception of an inward focus for the BMCC. This inward focus is keenly felt by the BMCC environmental team. An observation from a BMCC staff member was that the Katoomba NPWS never think the other way. The observation is that the NPWS never think that their actions inside the World Heritage boundary will have consequences outside the boundary. The Katoomba NPWS are bounded by their own culture and constraints, which will be discussed in the next chapter, but the practical issue here is that instances of the two levels of government working together on World Heritage issues were difficult to find. This apparent lack of cooperation leads to a breach in communication, which can easily be filled with assumption and speculation about what the other is prioritising, doing or not doing. BMCC staff that I interviewed stated disappointment that there are very few opportunities for collaboration, but they did offer some explanations.

One reason offered, suggests that Council’s visibility and accountability are to blame. While these aspects do not necessarily prevent collaboration, they do place pressure on the council to maintain World Heritage values with or without any external assistance. According to a Council strategic planner, the Local Government Act 1993 is very clear about what Councils do, which is, he says, the bare minimum. As discussed above, councils provide infrastructure and residential services, but they also make decisions on behalf of their community. According to the planner, for the Mountains residents, the bare minimum is not
good enough. They expect more from their Council than garbage trucks and street sweepers (though they expect this too). The planner claims that the BMCC give the community what they want. The BMCC go beyond core business because they are directly connected through the Mountains community through rates and elections (See Wild River 2006a for similar observations). It is a two-way relationship and submissions from residents regarding Council works demonstrate this relationship through voicing their concerns ‘as a ratepayer of the Blue Mountains’, reminding the Council of their reciprocal role in that relationship. The Katoomba NPWS, on the other hand, do not have that direct connection and two-way relationship with the community because they operate at the state level. The BMCC planner tells me that the Katoomba NPWS don’t get community pressure at that level to go beyond core business. She states that the NPWS:

come under pressure from requests for access and permits, but they don’t get pressure to do extra stuff because it isn’t part of their legislation. People pay rates to Council so they have dollar connection, unlike Parks. So there is a sense of ownership of Council services. They don’t see what Council is required to do and how often the Council works outside the box because that’s what the community expects.

These high expectations of Mountains residents explain one reason why the Council may be tempted to think across the boundary into the World Heritage area. According to the planner, the fact remains that opportunities for collaboration between the BMCC and Katoomba NPWS are fettered by legislation that; from a planning perspective restricts where the NPWS can carry out work and so where properties begin and end really defines liability where people can legally carry out activities. This sentiment is echoed by a senior Katoomba NPWS officer:

Collaborative work between Parks and council is definitely not sufficient. We are doing the best with the trade-offs the Parks are making with its budget. We’ve got to declare that the local
government and the state government are two different entities. Our stakeholder groups are different. Council would love us to do a lot more with council because ultimately their effort is potentially going to be better supported or more sustained. There’s a number of examples where they’ve done all of this great work right up to the national park boundary. Then because of a tenure issue, they can’t spend their money on national parks because it’s geared towards environmental improvements on council land. And they would like to see us match their investment on the other side of the equation.

Although keeping the conversation centred on the practicalities of funding, the Katoomba NPWS staff member is hinting at broader political issues that highlight the relationship between the BMCC and Katoomba NPWS. Despite the universal responsibility implied in World Heritage, the practicalities of daily maintenance of World Heritage properties are very much a local process dictated by proprietary rights.

Tenure is undoubtedly considered to be a barrier between collaborative projects in the GBMWHA. Land under the BMCC and Katoomba NPWS is primarily administered under two different pieces of legislation. NPWS land, under the control of the Director-General NPWS and subject to the National Parks and Wildlife Act (1974), is excluded from any controls by local government. Nevertheless, Mountains residents perceive their Council as being responsible, more or less, for the World Heritage area. In my conversations with Mountains residents the Katoomba NPWS involvement in maintaining World Heritage was barely mentioned and community education on World Heritage values was not mentioned at all. Indeed, it was a common misperception among residents that it was the Council that drove the nomination for and secured the status of World Heritage. The Council provides residents with educational material on weeds, pests and sustainable living. It mails out material on weeds management and organises and administers the local Bushcare groups. They actively promote the mitigation of 80,000 people living on the fringes of the World Heritage area.
The role of the BMCC in the World Heritage network looks, at first glance, to have been fully mobilised. The council proclaimed themselves to be a City within a World Heritage Area National Park within a month of World Heritage inscription, yet the Council’s physical and political position in the network have hobbled their chances of achieving the more aspirational objectives of the World Heritage convention. While the BMCC have been interested through World Heritage values and the hope of collaboration with the state government, their enrolment in the network has taken a different form. The BMCC’s role is primarily one of mitigation and general environmental community education. The aspirational attributes of the World Heritage Convention, to provide opportunities for the World Heritage network, are yet to be realised, perhaps, because of the difficulties in establishing a World Heritage network. The difficulty rests in associations between state and local governments which are ordered by legislation, resources and reciprocal associations with Mountains residents, in some cases leading to confusion, a lack of cohesion and a feeling of lost opportunities.

**Conservationists**

The next actors in the narrative of lost opportunity are perhaps the most critical of the management of the GBMWH. As discussed in Chapter 4, conservationists played a large role in the area’s early conservation and World Heritage nomination with the assumption that World Heritage status would provide the ‘ultimate preservation measure’ (Colley 2004, no page number). Conservationists, particularly the Colong Foundation for Wilderness, were enrolled by World Heritage long before other actors in the Mountains. After several failed attempts to attract funding for an assessment of the area’s World Heritage values, the Foundation raised money in-house. The Foundation employed Dr Geoff Mosely to do the assessment with the intent of making the report into a book which, when sold, would raise the funds needed for Dr Mosely’s fee. When the book was published in 1989 it received a warm reception from the then IUCN Chief World Heritage Advisor for natural areas who warned that the submission had less than 20% chance of being successful. The book, *Blue Mountains World Heritage*, was never used as part of the eventual Blue Mountains World Heritage nomination,
however, it does provide a detailed account of the 67 year-long campaign by the Foundation to have the area inscribed.

The Foundation, and in particular its Director Keith Muir, took a hard-line and unrelenting stance for World Heritage inscription and dedicated much time and volunteer resources toward the effort, including sending a delegation to the World Heritage Committee meeting where the Blue Mountains listing was to be decided. The following quote from the book by Mr Muir demonstrates the depth of their involvement in the nomination and influence over inscription:

_Australian and NSW delegations felt a great sense of ownership regarding the fate of the Blue Mountains nomination. This personal commitment and team spirit is what makes for excellence ... I believe that the 21 members of the World Heritage Committee would not have supported the listing if the Foundation had not sent Tom and I to Cairns. At the end of the day the community support won through._

The Colong Foundation claims responsibility for winning the ‘hearts and minds’ of the World Heritage Committee and, subsequently _interesting_ them in Australia’s claim for World Heritage (Colley 2004, no page number).

However, the ‘ultimate preservation measure’ that the Colong Foundation hoped for is not necessarily a condition of World Heritage inscription (Van der Aa 2005). The Mountains residents that regarded themselves conservationists in this study were generally enthusiastic about the area’s World Heritage status. However, this enthusiasm was accompanied by scepticism regarding the level of protection World Heritage actually affords. The opportunity for greater protection is one that conservationists feel has been lost. According to one conservation group spokesperson, the ‘Blue Mountains community is ultimately the strongest protection for the GBMWHA’ (SMH 2004) demonstrating a continuing faith in the power of local activism, rather than in any protection World Heritage may or may not offer. This cynicism was also demonstrated by the following quote from a member of the local Blue Mountains Conservation Society (BMCS) trying to describe what World Heritage means to the area:
I feel like at times it’s just a name on top to help tourism, you know, everyone feels special. But I don’t really have the sense that it really means a lot on the ground, to the actual plants and animals that are in the World Heritage area. It’s just a bit of branding, you know?

Another member of the local BMCS worried that in some cases the World Heritage inscription has made the area more vulnerable than it was prior to listing. World Heritage status raises the tourism profile, yet offers no protection against tourism development. This general grievance against the lack of provisions for World Heritage status in local and state planning legislation, discussed above, is reflective of the tense relations between the local government and the local tourist organisation which, according to the BMCS, is not keen on having a relationship with the council. While another member of the BMCS lauded the efforts of the state to maintain the integrity of the national parks on a small budget there were concerns raised regarding the overall disengagement toward World Heritage status and both members blamed the lack of education and awareness-raising by both state and local governments.

World Heritage status is considered, by many, an opportunity wasted in educating people about ecosystems and human cause and consequence. According to one BMCS member, the problem with not educating people about the reasons for World Heritage inscription is that they are mistakenly assuming the area was inscribed based on aesthetics and thus missing the broader environmental message. He explains that:

[People] think it’s special because it looks nice. People will probably just think because it’s got the Three Sisters, because it looks nice. Now, they’re important things to know but I think it’s a lost opportunity that we haven’t gone “It’s special because there are 100 species of eucalypt”. And why is that important? Because it means that we’ve got a whole lot of different ecosystems that will flourish within that and it means that we’ve also – and this is a large idea but it’s something that many people don’t get at all when we talk about
climate change and going into the future – that it’s got resilience in terms of as the climate changes and as the environment is faced with different sorts of pressures that areas that have got a lot of different diversity will be more resilient, will continue and grow.

The Mountains conservation groups are arguably more enrolled in the World Heritage network through OUV than most other actors, yet they are disappointed that others have not been similarly enrolled. For example, local conservation groups have used World Heritage listing as a defence against local development proposals, such as the visual impact of above-ground power poles (Pollard, Blue Mountains Gazette 2010b), encroaching multi-national petroleum companies (Pollard, Blue Mountains Gazette 2010a), major highway development plans (Taylor, Katoomba Action Group 2010), and even Hollywood (ABC News Online 2004).

The conservationists active in the long campaign and eventual inscription on to the World Heritage list have moved on to other, more pressing, campaigns. Nevertheless, as actors in the network, conservationists play the watch-dog role through associations with local and state governments as well as tourism and residents.

In the following section, the above tensions between actors are further explored by the introduction of an intermediary in the World Heritage network. Weeds were a major topic of conversation in the GBMWHA. Weeds are intermediaries because of their power to transform associations in the network. Once I followed the weeds into the World Heritage area, I found an actor created and mobilised by these intermediaries. The actors consist of groups who perform a coordinated attack on these threats to World Heritage values. However, the definition of OUV has a bearing on the classification of weeds depending on their location in the World Heritage area. If weeds are in the buffer zone or if they are in the less accessible areas of the GBMWHA, the actions taken to remove them are considered very differently by different actors. It is an extension of the ‘conservation versus mitigation’ values argument above, but this time, the opposing values are either social or environmental. These opposing values have
consequences for both weeds and Bushcare volunteers. What follows is a vignette of how this particular intermediary defines the relationship between Bushcare and the Katoomba NPWS with the ultimate effect of blocking the role of Bushcare in the World Heritage network.

**Bushcare - Bringing back the bush**

The Mountains has had a European population for 150 years and weed control programs were not started in earnest until the 1980s. That time-frame of roughly eighty years has given the extensive planting of exotic plants in the area plenty of time to establish outside of people’s backyards along the fringes of the World Heritage area. In the past, as one Park ranger put it *people didn’t give a rat’s arse about weed management*. Here the same ranger acknowledges the combined efforts of the conservation organisations in the Mountains by saying that *if you look at the amount of work the Bushcare network that’s been formed and [conservationists], national parks, council programs they’re all being fairly effective. So, I perceive that 30 years from now a lot of these problems will virtually be gone.*

The important point here is that effective weed management in, and around, the World Heritage area is not only undertaken by the state government department. The area around the GBMWHA provides an opportunity for weed management to become the responsibility of anyone who sets their mind to it. The BMCC Local Government Area (LGA) has a committed and passionate volunteer base as evidenced by the high numbers of Bushcare, Landcare and Swampcare groups in the Mountains. Working primarily in the boundary areas there are currently sixty-two volunteer Bushcare groups supervised by six salaried Bushcare officers. The groups have between 5-10 members and work in designated areas one morning per month, rain, hail, shine and even, as I discovered, snow. At the time of fieldwork, the Katoomba NPWS had two Bushcare groups, which are jointly run with the BMCC. Although Bushcare groups are made up of volunteers, the Council has had a salaried Bushcare coordinator since 1992 who organises the activities of all registered Mountains Bushcare groups.

In NSW the Bushcare movement began in 1989 and is funded by, and administered through, local councils and some NPWS regional areas. Bushcare is
a public sector based, not-for-profit organisation aimed at conservation and restoration of native vegetation. At the federal level Bushcare once was a $1.25 billion Australian Government initiative and flagship program of the former Natural Heritage Trust, which was replaced by the Caring for Country program in 2008. The Bushcare Program served as the primary means to deliver the National Vegetation Initiative, which was one of the major initiatives established by the Natural Heritage Trust of Australia Act 1997. While the federal Bushcare initiative has since expired, volunteer Bushcare groups in Australia have existed independently since the 1960s. The practice of Bushcare groups is based on the bush regeneration principles of the Bradley Method as developed by Joan Bradley in Australia in the 1960s. Aside from a few modifications (such as the moderate use of herbicide), modern bush regenerators continue to use the Bradley Method principles which state that bush regeneration should: always work from areas with good native plants toward weed-infested areas, create minimal disturbance and, let the rate of regeneration of native plants determine the rate of weed removal (Harley 2007: 48). The Bushcare movement today reflects a range of volunteer groups around the country, which are usually funded through local councils and other government grants.
Vignette: A morning with Valley of the Waters Bushcare group

At nine o'clock on a cold Saturday morning in August I fasten a leather holster containing various vaguely familiar tools and some red liquid (that I'm told is Roundup, coloured with food die) around my waist. After struggling with the buckle for a while, one of the volunteers kindly points out that I may find it easier if I remove my gloves first. I get the feeling this little group is here to work and they are keen to get on with it. I'm given a safety briefing by a park ranger and several forms to read and sign to establish my role as an insured volunteer with the NPWS. I'm directed toward the area under attack from the Bushcare group and introduced to the others. Bushcare has an unjust reputation for being an occupation patronised by older women, but in the group I join today there is a single energetic and outspoken octogenarian, but the remaining volunteers are a mix of ages and genders. There are seven of us and I'm the only one who is new to the Bushcare activity. The area we are standing in is behind a Caltex service station on the Great Western Highway in Wentworth Falls. The history of the area is vague, but the park ranger tells me that it might have been privately
owned before being divided between Council and NPWS. To my eye the area looks unattractive – long grass and some dead, scruffy looking bushes that, I’m told, is bracken. It isn’t until later that I see all the newly planted seedlings hiding among the tall grass. The ranger says the place used to look like a tip.

We’re tackling woody weeds, which involves identifying privet, laurel, holly, and honeysuckle, snipping the stems close to the ground and “painting” them with the squeezy bottle containing red coloured Roundup. After a while I see that colouring the weed killer, aside from being a safety issue, makes it easy to see where other Bushcare workers have been – the ground is speckled with little dots of red stained stumps. It’s satisfying work, hunting down the weed, being able to identify it and then employing various tactics to remove and destroy it. Working alongside the ranger I ask him where the boundary is between NPWS and Council and he flaps his hand vaguely in the direction downhill of where we are standing. Some of the others are working there pulling up weeds and it is the first time it occurs to me that the physical boundary line around the World Heritage area, at least on the ground, isn’t precise or even defined. When I ask the ranger about this, he tells me that Bushcare workers do move back and forth across the boundary line at will. This Bushcare group is one of only two (out of roughly 60 groups) that is jointly run by the NPWS and BMCC and neither of the organisers worry about crossing that line – they only hesitate if it’s private property, but the Bushcare workers admittedly struggle to resist the temptation to stray into private properties when the weeds are tantalisingly within their reach.

Of course there’s no line sketched out on the ground like a freshly marked white strip around a football field. Yet, I’m surprised that the ranger does not know where the boundary is. When I ask another Bushcare worker how she knows where Council property stops and World Heritage property begins she replies that there is an informal boundary which is usually the walking tracks or other landmarks because no-one actually knows where the boundary is. For the people working to clear the area of weeds the boundary, symbolically and materially, disappears altogether. Bushcare workers are not bothered by petty things like land tenure boundaries, though they understand that crossing them is a liability
matter and may also be seen as *stepping on people’s toes*. Bushcare does not openly promote this occasional guerrilla weeding tactic, but in this environment of resource competition and strict tenure regulations, Bushcare becomes the benevolent insurgents of conservation – clandestinely following targets across boundaries and not always adhering to the rules to get the job done.

At morning tea, around mouthfuls of cupcake, talk is mostly about the lack of funding or more specifically how funds are diverted away from much needed maintenance of the World Heritage area by other issues. They compare the poor state of various walking tracks in the area and the high cost of rescuing lost bushwalkers. Apparently the higher the public profile of the lost bushwalker, the more money gets put into rescue funding. One volunteer suggests that Bob Debus, an ex-minister for the environment and esteemed Mountains local, get lost to see how much money that would raise. After morning tea I follow the other organiser around. The ranger calls her the ‘real boss’ which is in deference to the fact that she has been working this particular patch the longest and, along with her role as Bushcare officer for the BMCC, she also runs her own bush regeneration business. She tells me that Bushcare is trying to work toward a ‘catchments focussed approach’ rather than concentrating on discrete patches of land that are difficult to coordinate and less effective for environmental outcomes. What strikes me is the way these volunteers talk about what they are doing. I think “passionate” is an overused word but that is what these people are. They are passionate about eliminating weeds from the Blue Mountains. This passion can, and is occasionally, confused with radicalism often associated with the “Greens” as the BMCC organiser points out. Some residents are put off by the Bushcare groups because of this association, but she thinks the stigma is starting to wane alongside the increase in community awareness of what the Bushcare groups do or rather what they do not – that is, they don’t wander on to people’s property and make a nuisance of themselves.

The BMCC organiser is openly disapproving of the general ignorance people (locals and visitors) have about weeds and the poor state of the World Heritage boundary area. This attitude is born out of years of frustration in seeing people
plant the same weeds in their garden with little attention to the negative consequences on the surrounding bushland. She tells me she hates it when people walk past the Bushcare group – as they are often working nearby walking tracks – and remark blithely on the size of their task. She chafes at the implication that it’s ‘her’ job when she believes it’s everybody’s job to manage weeds. While I am kneeling next to her trying hard to look competent, a group of bush walkers step around us and utter, “gee you’ve got a big job!” The BMCC organiser looks at me meaningfully to make sure I’ve not missed this timely demonstration of her point. She and the other Bushcare workers are there because they say the bush needs looking after and the residents do cop some blame for irresponsible behaviour – dumping clippings and plants and other green waste. Later when I’m with another Bushcare group buried neck deep in honeysuckle along the edge of a residential area, it’s easy to see how easily these plants escape their domestic shackles to thoroughly and resolutely thrive in the bush.

This particular Bushcare group is atypical among the Bushcare network in the Mountains. It is jointly run by NPWS and BMCC and, on the face of it, is a textbook example of state and local governments working collaboratively. Bushcare is imbued with a healthy dose of what Escobar (1998: 60) terms ‘cultural autonomy’. As a group, they have particular Bushcare values and practices, but they also share characteristics with Mountains residents, the BMCC and the Katoomba NPWS. They move freely around the World Heritage boundary and, although they are aware of it, they do not feel as restricted by types of land tenure as either the Katoomba NPWS or BMCC do. But after speaking individually to the two organisers it is clear they have different attitudes to the work they are doing. The BMCC organiser tells me that [the ranger] wont like me saying this, but rangers don’t have bush regeneration skills and they should. The ranger says in other areas of the park, rangers do use bush regeneration techniques and stick to spraying only where there are large infestations, like agapanthus or blackberry, but he does not mention that NPWS rangers are not specifically trained in bush regeneration skills. He explains, in that phlegmatic tone I’ve come to expect from NPWS staff, the area we are working up hill from is
one of the Mountain’s most popular tourist spots and is normally manned by two rangers. Because it’s a high visitation area these rangers’ primary concern is visitor safety and hygiene, which means picking up rubbish and cleaning toilets, not bush regeneration, which is a laborious and time consuming business. Volunteers will often do the harder weeding jobs and get to the difficult places more eagerly than the ranger’s own staff, including hiking in to remote areas and camping overnight. Some Bushcare trips even require rafting. The ranger admits it would be hard to get my staff to do that.

After four hours of weeding, I’m dirty and cold and I’m ready to go home and have a hot shower. I look around at the area we’ve been working on and, despite the self-congratulatory chatter of the other workers, I feel dismayed. I realise that the effect of Bushcare work is not immediately apparent. In fact, even after four hours of solid weeding in the before and after shots I’ve taken with my camera the difference is barely perceptible yet the volunteers around me are congratulating each other on a good morning’s work. This appreciation for gradual change goes to the root of the Bushcare movement – like the slow food movement this is the slow conservation movement – and represents the core values of Bushcare which promotes ‘practical, down to earth people’ whose goal is to bring back the bush (BMCC 2011, no page number). Unlike the ever-increasing demand for instant gratification and measurable, quantifiable, economically assessable results over the short term, the Bushcare work has a greater demand on our more precious commodities – time, patience and faith. The faith comes from commitment to a cause – the effects of which can only be observed after months, sometimes years, of hard work with only the certainty that the work is necessarily infinite. Weeds can be controlled but they can rarely be eradicated.

Despite the involvement of the state in this particular Bushcare group, their usefulness in maintaining World Heritage values remains debatable, according to the Katoomba NPWS. When it comes to the work that Bushcare does, the Katoomba NPWS make a clear distinction between social values and the World
Heritage values, which are aligned with natural values, as demonstrated in the following statement by one senior officer:

*I can’t undervalue the community Bushcare groups and things like that as far as an opportunity to engage. The argument is that they are more relationship-building exercises than activities that contribute to the protection of environmental assets.*

That Bushcare only has value in relationship-building is apparently a *corporate argument* based on cost-effectiveness, as determined by the state government. The NSW state-wide framework for prioritisation outlines the realities of weed control in the state of NSW where management is based on asset protection (native species, populations and ecological communities) and directs resources to reducing the impact of weeds on biodiversity values, rather than on total weed eradication.\(^{39}\) The senior officer goes on to explain that:

*If you look at the benefit of [a ranger’s] time on the Bushcare activity ... and fully costed that activity ... and looked at the asset protection approach to directing effort the assets along the urban interface may

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\(^{39}\) Many weed species in NSW are already widely established, and their eradication across large areas is not achievable with existing resources (NSW DPI and OEH 2011). Priorities for the control of these species must be determined, and resources focused on areas where the benefits of control will be greatest. Under the NSW Invasive Species Plan (DPI 2008), weed management objectives can be broadly encompassed under one of four categories: prevention, eradication, containment and asset protection. These four categories typically correspond to an increase in the spatial distribution of a weed through time. Where a weed is absent from a region, resources are directed towards preventing the weed from establishing via activities such as quarantine and surveillance. Once a weed invasion is discovered, high priority weeds are the target of eradication with all infestations treated. Once infestations increase in size and eradication is no longer feasible, control focuses on containing the weed from spreading to new areas. Where weeds can be prevented, eradicated or contained programs rely on weed led strategies that target the specific weeds. However once a weed species has become widely established (widespread), management actions in core infestations are directed toward protecting important assets at risk (native species, populations and ecological communities), as eradication is unlikely over the entire range of the weed species (NSW DPI and OEH 2011).
not be compatible to say protecting a threatened ecological community or a natural heritage asset in the middle of a wilderness area.

For the state government decisions regarding weed management are based on cost. According to a Katoomba NPWS staff member:

*We have a matrix. We ask is the natural asset threatened? Is it part of a World Heritage area? Is it part of the catchment area? Is it relatively undisturbed and threatened by an emerging pest management issue? And when you don’t tick those boxes you’re moving down the pecking order. So it’s doesn’t say is the natural asset a view that people from million dollar houses look at every morning? If an area is heavily impacted upon and the aim is to try and bring that back to a healthy and viable community there are probably other challenges that are of a higher priority than that.*

Reflecting on the previous chapter, there are local and official interpretations of World Heritage values as hinted at here by the Katoomba NPWS staff member. Whether Bushcare protects those values also clearly depends on interpretations.

Bushcare’s cultural autonomy is more highly valued by the BMCC because it has the potential power to *change culture* as one staff member of the BMCC explained:

*if there are five people in every group and they’re scattered in every town in the mountains then that gradually changes the culture in itself because there’s that many people talking about it – there’s that many people being seen on public land during the month doing that kind of work.*

If, like the Katoomba NPWS, values equal environmental assets in the undisturbed sections of the GBMWHA, then Bushcare’s efforts become a relationship-building activity. Arguably this activity promotes World Heritage values and contributes to raising awareness and a sense of a World Heritage network. However, the interpretation of OUV, in this case biodiversity, varies
between actors and it contributes to the difficulty in enrolling actors in World Heritage. Areas that are less disturbed and have less chance of invasion from weeds have a higher biodiversity value, and weed management in those areas reaps a bigger bang for the state’s buck. Areas that are less accessible and have denser vegetation have a higher biodiversity value than areas accessible to tourists with less vegetation at greater risk from disturbance (Odom et al. 2003).

These strategies favour the most efficient approach to protecting assets. The World Heritage boundary is a site of widespread weeds and so the outcome of these strategies means that weed management programs in the World Heritage area direct resources away from the areas that Bushcare workers can generally access. The Katoomba NPWS would like to work with Bushcare, but for the Katoomba NPWS the logic of working on the boundary area does not override their obligation to focus resources on higher biological values in the less disturbed areas, despite the fact that they know there is little to be gained if both sides of the World Heritage boundary are not concurrently being maintained. Like the intermediary of the GBMWHHA Strategic Plan discussed in the previous chapter, weeds have passed between actors to define their relationship.

In this case *interessment* is not fully mobilised because of conflicting priorities and definitions. Bushcare struggles to *interest* others in the protection of World Heritage values, as the intermediary of weeds has defined interactions between Bushcare and the state government as being of little benefit. The outcome suggests that Bushcare has little power in the World Heritage network. Yet, residents’ values are not aligned with the World Heritage OUV either. As discussed in the previous chapter, residents are more concerned with the views and aesthetics of their surrounds than the biodiversity. This appreciation is perhaps a reason why Bushcare remains a thriving volunteer organisation in the Mountains and maintains, if not power, then certainly a presence, in the World Heritage network.
Tourism

Another actor in the World Heritage network is tourism. As mentioned above in comments from both the Katoomba NPWS and BMCC, promoting tourism is perceived as taking focus away from environmental responsibility. The literature discussed in Chapter 1 suggests that socio-economic development is a major driver in nominating for World Heritage inscription. In the GBMWHA there are no available data to verify an increase in tourist numbers, yet there is little evidence that tourism has increased as a result of World Heritage inscription (Hardiman and Burgin 2013). Indeed, although tourism is one of the state of NSW’s significant industries, recently, it has been losing its share of the total Australian tourism market. Tourism has fluctuated in the area, from a peak in the mid-80s when the region was reputed as being ‘Sydney’s premier tourism destination for recreation and relaxation’, to a decline and stagnation in the mid-90s due to poor ‘brand image’ (Global Tourism and Leisure Pty Ltd 2004).

According to the Blue Mountains Regional Tourism Plan 2004–2007, the Blue Mountains had become ‘overlooked, indistinct and uncompelling’ (Global Tourism and Leisure Pty Ltd 2004: 2).

While World Heritage inscription should lend some distinction to the area (Buckley 2002, 2004) the problem, according to the Chair of the local tourism board, is that the Mountains probably haven’t done enough to promote World Heritage in the area. This statement is doubtless symptomatic of the confusion around responsibility for World Heritage promotion, discussed in the following chapter, but is also indicative of a problem that few, if any, in the Mountains suspected – World Heritage is a tough concept to sell. Indeed, the notion that World Heritage needs to be promoted has only recently become clear to the Mountain’s tourism industry. As the speech by Kerry Bartlett MP at the beginning of this chapter suggests – tourism was expecting an enormous boost.

Yet, 11 years on there has been some disappointment in World Heritage inscription as the following statement by a local tourism educator demonstrates:

*I think there were a group, fairly large group of local tourist operators who, while perhaps not being passionate and energetic*
supporters [of World Heritage], certainly anticipated that there would be value for them as a result of it. Just the branding, the name recognition etc. ...

The confusion stems from the tourism promotion of three main areas – the NSW Government, regional tourism agencies and the World Heritage brand. The state is considered to have badly let down tourism operators by losing the market share to other states such as Victoria and Tasmania who were running very effective campaigns. Regionally, the Blue Mountains tourism industry feels it has also been let down through poor local campaigns. So, the impact of World Heritage inscription on the local tourism sector has become almost impossible to quantify as one commentator pointed out, maybe World Heritage listing has stemmed what would have been a dramatic decline in numbers here. Maybe it had little impact, who knows. It’s really hard to know the answer to that.

The current tourism message is best demonstrated in the Blue Mountains Regional Guide (Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism 2009: 5, 7). The main thrust of the brochure is the accessibility of the World Heritage area. The GBMWHA is a place that is ‘Easy to get to. Impossible to forget’. The region is advertised as having something for everyone - 'pristine wilderness and significant cultural and historical sites, right on Sydney’s door step'. The brochure also highlights the Greater Blue Mountains Drive which offers the unique experience of being able to drive right 'into World Heritage' of which the Great Western Highway, discussed below, plays a pivotal role. As well as sightseeing and exercise, the region offers several luxury resorts, restaurants, cafes, boutiques and galleries. According to the brochure, there is something in the Mountains for lovers of nature, adventure, art, music, food, shopping [and] history’. It is ‘a place you experience rather than visit’. The World Heritage accessibility and experience are the two most marketable variables and while the accessibility is rather straightforward, the area being situated on a major highway and railway line, the experiences are more problematic. According to the Chair, tourists need to be told how to experience the GBMWHA and this strategy of spelling it out to the tourists is dominating the current wave of tourism promotion.
The Katoomba NPWS, too, is not sure whether World Heritage listing has increased visitors to the park or whether tourism has directly contributed to additional funding as this quote from the General Manager indicates:

*The benefits of having tourism become layers of argument in favour of supplying us with money. Okay, so, it’s another layer of argument - the fact that there is an economic [benefit] from the lookout track network. And we’ve just been through an exercise of trying to quantify that a bit [by] saying what the marginal returns of investment are for investing money in maintaining or replacing existing assets. So, it is a layer of argument but, once again, it’s not World Heritage that does that really. That becomes return on investment decision-making and it’s really difficult to do because the return is usually realised by private interests, off Park. It’s not realised by the agency. So it makes the argument quite difficult to mount because the people spending the money are the people not getting the return."

There are several contradictions implicit in this argument that are becoming familiar in the confusion surrounding the potential opportunities from World Heritage listing for the GBMWHA. First, that visitor numbers to the park are not necessarily attributable to World Heritage status, and second, that the GBMWHA is placed within a broader economic context largely dependent on tourism dollars from which the managers of the GBMWHA do not benefit. Thus the justification for more funding to manage the World Heritage area is substantially weakened by the fact that tourist dollars do not feed back into the national parks.

The Katoomba NPWS works with the regional tourism organisation in which the General Manager of the Katoomba regional office is an executive board member. Despite the Katoomba NPWS not financially benefiting directly from tourism, the GBMWHA holds a significant amount of decision-making power. In the words of the General Manager, his place on the board identifies him as a *player, a direction-setter, someone who influences policy-making*. He has this influence because he is in charge of the key visitor attraction in the area. As mentioned in
the previous chapter, most tourists are day-trippers who come to see the views over the Jamison and Grose Valleys in the Blue Mountains National Park making the World Heritage area, and by association the Katoomba NPWS a big frog in a small pond. His role on the board is motivated by the desire to appear credible because if you are credible, people listen. Credibility then, rather than money, is the biggest reward for being a popular tourist destination. According to the General Manager, the park is tourism and tourism is the park. We don’t see ourselves as separate from tourism - it’s a team game. Council’s role in local tourism is conspicuously absent from conversations about team games. It would appear that the BMCC, while being a crucial part of the tourist game, might not necessarily be part of the team.

Katoomba is the most populous of the Mountains towns and it is where most tourists will eventually pass through or stay due to its proximity to the popular geological feature, introduced in the previous chapter, the Three Sisters, as well as the Scenic World complex and numerous restaurants and accommodations. As a ‘gateway’ to a World Heritage area, Katoomba remains strangely quiet on the subject. There are no UNESCO or World Heritage signs and there is no information on the OUV of GBMWHA at the Tourist kiosk. There are no World Heritage signposts either on the Great Western Highway or the turnoff into Katoomba if arriving by car, or any near the train station. The missing promotion of World Heritage in the area’s major city is conspicuous and raises questions about how and why such an opportunity for promotion has been missed by the local and state governments and the tourist industry (see Lloyd, Gilmore and Stimpson 2015 for similar observations). As with the Echo Point lookout area discussed in the previous chapter, there are no obvious indications of being on the threshold of a World Heritage area but with its second hand clothing and antique shops, the 19th century grandeur of the Carrington Hotel whose chimney stack presides over the town’s skyline, art deco buildings and The Paragon café, it is clear Katoomba is pushing its own brand of heritage tourism. Yet, it does not overtly act to translate World Heritage or enrol other actors in the World Heritage network.
A potential risk of not having coordinated World Heritage promotion is that some actors may invent their own version of World Heritage tourism. An example is the bizarre Three Sisters World Heritage Plaza. The Plaza, privately owned and leased by a family syndicate, is a striking, and unfortunately ugly, example of how, with no clear guidelines, the concept of World Heritage is manifested in various interpretations. According to the Katoomba NPWS, the Plaza uses the World Heritage brand without any authority but as suggested in this thesis, using the concept of World Heritage is a complicated issue. The Plaza does not promote the area’s ‘official’ OUV. There is no evidence of information or tourist wares related to biodiversity. Ironically, it does promote the area’s Indigenous heritage. This World Heritage promotion is ironic because, as discussed in Chapter 4, cultural values in the GBMWH (both Indigenous and European) were not granted OUV by the World Heritage Committee.

The Plaza is a designated stop for all the tourist buses visiting Echo Point and its overall appearance is one of undisguised targeted tourist operation with tacky merchandising and inflated prices. Inside there is a Bottle-O selling Three Sisters wines, a candy store, and shops selling stuffed toys and opals. Out front there are loin-cloth clad Aboriginal men helping tourists off a mini bus who are part of the Koomurri Aboriginal Centre which advertises live performances, a gallery, art and artefacts. Inside the Centre it looks much like any another tourist shop selling aboriginal dot-paintings and t-shirts, but there is a didgeridoo concert being performed and the owner tells me they have plans to open a Didgeridoo workshop next door. The centre opened in December 2011 after their proposal was snubbed by city planning officials in Darling Harbour and The Rocks - two of Sydney’s most iconic tourists spots. After some initial negotiations, all six Aboriginal language groups from the GBMWH are currently involved in the centre which employs 25 Aboriginal men. The owner sees the Mountains as being a natural setting for the centre, especially with the added advantage of the Three

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40 Now called the Waradah Aboriginal Centre
Sisters Indigenous Story.\textsuperscript{41} It was early days for the centre, though it seemed that, aside from the obvious link to the Three Sisters story, the centre made no other credible claims to cultural associations in the GBMWHA.

In the Blue Mountains the curious World Heritage Plaza provides the only overt promotion of World Heritage yet it is not given any power to communicate the area’s OUV. It manages to capitalise on the area’s status, while remaining completely disconnected from the World Heritage network. Its primary role is entrepreneurial - selling food and Australian souvenirs to day-trippers on organised tour buses. It could be argued that its role in the World Heritage network is to remind us that World Heritage is an opportunity to make money, as some literature suggests, yet according to the manager, at the time of my fieldwork in 2011, the Plaza had only just broke even after losing money for the first three years of operation.

While tourism may not have received the boost from World Heritage it was hoping for, according to the Katoomba NPWS General Manager, the Blue Mountains National Park is the most visited terrestrial park in the country. But, as the General Manager explains, winning popularity contests is not critical to managing World Heritage, but being successful in funding submissions is. Thus, when it comes to attracting funding, being the most visited national park becomes a very powerful argument more so than being World Heritage. The following section introduces the critical route by which most of these visitors reach the GBMWHA: the Great Western Highway.

\textsuperscript{41} A version of The Legend of the Three Sisters: According to the Gundungurra Dreaming, three sisters named Meehni, Wimlah, and Gunnedoo once lived with the Gundungurra people in the Jamison Valley. The sisters were in love with three brothers from the neighbouring Dharruk tribe with whom which marriage was against tribal lore. The warrior brothers attempted to kidnap the sisters causing a war between the two tribes. A wise man of the Gundungurra people turned the sisters into stone for their protection with the intention of restoring them after the danger had passed and the war had ended. But the wise man was killed in battle and the three sisters were never restored to their human form. (Scenic World 2011).
The Great Western Highway

It is the opinion of one senior Katoomba NPWS staff member that a key motive for inscribing the GBMWHA was its proximity to a major city. The rationale is that having the World Heritage area so close to Sydney increased the potential for high numbers of visitors, not only to the Blue Mountains, but to Australia in general. Access to the main tourist attractions in the GBMWHA is via the Great Western Highway (GWH), which cuts a swathe through the centre of the World Heritage area. The GWH is one of two key inter-regional highways connecting Sydney with the western plains and is also a busy freight and tourist route, as well as serving as the principal local traffic spine for many towns along its length (NSW RTA 2006). But the GWH is not just a road; it is a source of opportunity to increase visitation numbers and, at the same time, an environmental threat to World Heritage values.

The presence of the GWH in the World Heritage area is an example of what Stoddart (2011: 19) calls an ecologically ironic situation, where pro-environmental discourse conflicts with environmentally-harmful behaviour. Its role as a double agent, providing both access and harm to OUV, makes it a powerful actor in the World Heritage network. It provides access to the Mountains towns and major tourist attractions, while also being the largest impermeable surface in the area which, at the time of fieldwork, was undergoing major works to become even larger. The road-works made it a major topic of conversation in my interviews which, according to ANT, is what happens when something changes or goes wrong with an object which was previously taken for granted (Latour 2005). When an inconspicuous object like a road interferes with daily routines like getting to and from homes and offices it becomes conspicuous. The GWH, previously not given much thought by residents, is suddenly the major topic of conversation (see figure 6.2). For the state and local governments and tourism businesses, however, its functioning as a double agent in the World Heritage network has always been consequential.
The GWH allows visitors to access the GBMWHA and patronise the towns along the highway, as well as providing a fast, safe transport corridor for residents. It also shapes the urban places along its route. Over time, as figure 6.3 demonstrates, it has transformed the Blue Mountains City from a ‘string of pearls’ to a suburban sprawl. It has also fashioned the aesthetic nature of some Mountains towns. The towns that are not directly situated on the highway are quieter, more pleasant and generally more popular with tourists. A case in point is the recent GWH upgrades to the turn off from the highway to Leura south. Leura is a pretty town and its main street is a popular shopping precinct. The new highway exit is strikingly more pleasing to the eye than exits for other towns along the highway. It was deliberately designed to ‘bring greater emphasis to this part of the highway, reflecting its pivotal tourism focus in the Blue Mountains’ (RTA 2006).
Resident opinions on the widening of the highway are divided. Some maintain that congestion has eased making it easier for a significant number of visitors who travel to the Mountains every weekend. Friday evening and Sunday afternoons were the worst time to be on the road and congestion has been alleviated by the development as one resident states:

Over the periods that we've been visiting or coming up to live I guess we were frustrated by the lack of access to the mountains. As hundreds of thousands of other people would have been frustrated. Now if that frustration has been relieved somewhat by some very worthwhile development on the highway so be it. And it makes access to this wonderful area that much more pleasurable I guess.

Likewise, some residents argue that the area should be accessible with minimal fuss as this resident argues; we don’t see this heritage area as a closed shop. It should be just as open for anyone at all to visit. This opinion was most strongly voiced among weekend residents and those with an interest in tourism. From a tourism perspective, the highway cannot be big enough or fast enough. As
mentioned above, the area has been branded as Australia’s most accessible 
wilderness by the local tourism organisation and the highway upgrade has 
certainly added value to their claim.

The highway is currently undergoing a massive upgrade in many places from two 
lanes to four. The works have been done by the NSW Roads and Maritime 
Services (RMS) and their contractors and funded by state and local governments. 
The upgrade has caused a multitude of problems for residents and tourists alike, 
most of them trivial but in some extreme cases, it has caused considerable 
vexation. In the small town of Bullaburra locals are left scratching their heads at 
the logic of their new left in/left out only intersection. The engineering is 
arguably superior to the previous intersection provided no-one ever needs to turn 
right. Now with four lanes it is, more than ever, fast. It is much faster than the 
train and the vast majority of working residents that I interviewed owned at least 
one car and used the GWH to commute to and from Sydney. While reducing 
commuting times is good for residents, it is a concern for the local conservation 
group. The GWH acts like a giant conveyor belt where you ‘get on’ in Sydney and 
‘get off’ in the Blue Mountains. The major concern, also from some residents, is 
that the speed and ease with which visitors reach their destination disconnects 
them from the area’s World Heritage values, which as demonstrated by this 
resident, was not always the case:

You know, you went up to Katoomba on a two-lane thing. You felt 
much more part of the Mountains, you had trees around you and 
now it’s views because you don’t have that sense of the trees, you’re 
not in the trees you’re overlooking it. And you also, the other thing 
that’s happened at the same time, is Sydney’s got so much bigger, so 
you used to look down the mountains and see a little bit of Penrith. 
Now, from Wentworth Falls you can see all of Sydney.

Indeed, this ‘World Heritage highway’ is a mostly uninspiring drive. The drive 
affords views of semi-industrial stores hiring heavy equipment, a BP service 
station and a Bunning’s store, concrete water towers and anonymous warehouses,
a power station, low concrete safety walls, steel guard-rails and traffic lights. There are some gaps between the houses and trees along the side of the highway, which give way to views of the lower valleys and hills, but many trees were cut down due to the widening to four lanes. The BMCC is concerned with what it terms the ‘landscape character’ that drivers experience along the highway (RTA 2006: 57) and so tree planting is a priority to ‘reinforce the Mountain’s context’ (RTA 2006: 46). The disruption to travel brought about by the upgrades has made residents reflect on how the highway impacts on their surrounds as evidenced by one visitor who remarked; *I cannot get past it. I cannot see how that [highway] runs right through the middle of a World Heritage area (laughs). It doesn't make any sense.*

Aside from the obvious environmental effects of major highway redevelopment, some argued that the four lanes has detracted from the character of the Blue Mountains City and the individual towns. While the Mountains towns along the GWH are not included in the World Heritage area they are unavoidable for visitors headed to the major attractions, such as the Echo Point viewing platform and Scenic World. The GWH provided the opportunity for an increase in tourism due to World Heritage inscription yet, whether tourism has increased is unknown due to a lack of data. While the highway now provides easier and safer access to the World Heritage area my interviews with the tourism sector suggest that visitation numbers have fallen short of expectations.

**Conclusion**

The speech at the beginning of this chapter by Kerry Bartlett was right about World Heritage meaning many things to many people, but there is little evidence to suggest that World Heritage status provided greater protection or an enormous boost for tourism. This chapter introduces actors in the World Heritage network to further demonstrate Law’s metaphor of the ‘heterogeneous network’. The network is heterogeneous because of its seemingly unrelated actors and intermediaries, including governments, volunteer groups, weeds, tourism, conservationists and roads. These actors are closely associated through their *translation* of World Heritage as a potential opportunity, and by post-inscription
disappointment. Essentially, these actors were enrolled in the network by the opportunity for change - preferably an upward change in the number of visitors, environmental awareness, conservation and collaboration after World Heritage inscription. Unlike the actors in the previous chapter, who, through their associations with other actors demonstrated a narrative of disengagement, these actors have *translated* World Heritage as being an opportunity. Though, as this chapter demonstrates, the perception, for various reasons, has been largely misplaced creating a narrative of *lost* opportunities. One exception is the Katoomba Regional Office of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (Katoomba NPWS) who are content for World Heritage listing to have minimal impact on the area. The following chapter takes a closer look at the Katoomba NPWS and explores their role in the World Heritage network.
Chapter 7: A narrative of business as usual

World Heritage site management is becoming increasingly complex, which means that managers and staff are required to be experts in skills as widely varied as biodiversity conservation monitoring and assessment, budgeting, personnel management and staff welfare – as well as being inspirational education providers who can communicate the OUV of a site and the value of the World Heritage Convention in general’ (Stolton, Dudley and Shadie 2012: 53).

A basic requirement of the World Heritage Convention is that sites are managed. As Stolton et al. (2012) point out in the quote above the conservation of a World Heritage site is only one part of a manager's role. The main working tool for World Heritage is the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. Broadly, according to the Operational Guidelines, common elements of a management system for World Heritage site involve protection, conservation and presentation of the site (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2015). However, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the Operational Guidelines focus mainly on the requirements of the Convention prior to inscribing a property. It does not provide managers with a detailed plan of action for maintenance or operations once a property has been inscribed. With 1,052 sites now inscribed on the World Heritage list, and the variations in individual site requirements, the Convention can potentially be implemented in an exhaustive manner of ways.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, our understanding of how States Parties interpret and implement the Convention is limited and standardised monitoring is restricted through six-yearly periodic reports to the World Heritage Committee. Thus, detailed accounts of the day-to-day management of the majority of World Heritage sites, particularly sites where OUV is not threatened, and their
managers, is limited. This chapter explores the management of World Heritage based on documentary analysis and interviews with the Katoomba Regional Office of the NSW Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) who are responsible for managing the Blue Mountains Region. The region includes the Blue Mountains, Wollemi and Kanangra Boyd National Parks, which form the majority of the GBMWHA. What emerges is a narrative of business as usual, the genesis of which is introduced in the first section of this chapter.

After introducing the genesis for the narrative, this chapter will give a brief description of the day-to-day work of the NPWS Katoomba Regional Office. However, to fully understand the current day-to-day work involved in managing the World Heritage area, we first need to understand that the Katoomba Regional Office is one part of a much larger and diversified government department that has undergone many changes over time. So, this chapter looks back at the changing nature of the NPWS through its incorporation in the evolution of the broader government environment. Despite the business as usual narrative in the Katoomba Regional Office since World Heritage inscription, the creation of a World Heritage Unit within the office has been an exceptional structural change. The Unit, which functions within the Katoomba Regional Office operations, is discussed here to round off the actors embedded in the business as usual narrative. The second half of the chapter investigates how the business as usual narrative is negotiated with other actors in the World Heritage network. Throughout the chapter it is suggested that the NPWS Katoomba Regional Office acts as an obligatory passage point, an ANT concept, in the World Heritage network.

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42 Notable exceptions are Haynes’ 2009 PhD thesis on the anthropology of joint management in the Kakadu National Park, Ingram’s Masters thesis on the relationship between parks, people and planning on the Ningaloo Coast (2008) and Russell and Jambrecina’s study on the management of Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage (2002).
Introducing ‘business as usual’

Before discussing the day-to-day work of the NPWS, it is important to first introduce the narrative of business as usual. It is important because, unlike the previous two chapters the narratives, to a large extent, were observable through repeating patterns and indicators or instances in the data. The narrative of business as usual did emerge from the data in much the same way as the narratives of ‘disengagement’ and ‘lost opportunities’ in Chapters 6 and 7. The difference is in the clear and immediate manner in which the narrative took shape, instigated and directed by the General Manager of the NPWS Katoomba Regional Office with primary responsibility for the GBMWHA. When I asked the General Manager what difference World Heritage had made to the day-to-day management of the area he responded that:

*From the point of view of maintaining integrity and values, it’s business as normal. And that is, in fact, part of the deal of creating a World Heritage property. It was actually created around a place where the values and integrity were pretty secure and improving over time. So, that was already locked in place during the negotiation process between the two tiers of government to maintain that in perpetuity or at least as far into the future as you could foresee. People were happy with that.*

This response is somewhat in conflict with Stolton et al.’s assessment above of what it takes to manage a World Heritage property. Their statement, that managing World Heritage is a formidable job involving many and varied skills, implies that management of a site after World Heritage inscription changes; becomes more complex. Yet, according to the Katoomba General Manager a condition of nominating a property for World Heritage is that a successful nomination will not put additional strain on existing operations. The inference is that World Heritage inscription would, and should, change nothing. The General Manager’s statement raises questions about why ‘business as normal’, or business as usual, to use a more common phrase, is the preferred approach and how this approach shapes associations with other actors the World Heritage network. To
begin exploring these questions we turn first to the day-to-day work of the NPWS Katoomba Regional Office.

**NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Katoomba Regional Office**

**Day-to-day work**

The NPWS office with primary responsibility for the Blue Mountains Region of the GBMWH & is situated in the most populous Mountains town of Katoomba. The day-to-day operation of the NPWS Katoomba Regional Office (subsequently referred to as Katoomba NPWS) is guided by the Regional Operations Plan, which requires updating every year. A typical Operations Plan might include key achievements, challenges and risks and priorities for that year and provide an overall picture of the kinds of work the Katoomba NPWS do. The work is variable, and encompasses a broad suite of administrative and practical activities. The following operations are summarised from the Katoomba NPWS Regional Operations Plan 2010/2011 (DECCW & NSW NPWS 2011), which was the current plan during my fieldwork. In conserving the natural heritage there may be a collection of weeds, pests and conservation programs. Associated work involves developing partnerships with similar agencies, grant applications, investigating emerging threats to flora, implementing recovery programs for endangered fauna, licensing and regulating commercial recreation activities, compiling information for various reports, eradicating weeds, establishing new reserves, fire risk assessments and fire information sessions with Rural Fire Services, scientists and communities, and hazard reduction.

As a state government agency providing a service to the Australian public, there are also many public events on the Katoomba NPWS calendar. Activities might include developing relationships with industry, environmental, Indigenous and recreation groups, as well as regional fire and police forces, operating visitor centres, conducting forums on topics, such as wild dog management, running the Discovery tours, exhibiting at regional Shows and hosting major events held in
the park such as mountain bike, and trail running events. Additionally, there are co-management activities, which might involve culture camps, Bushcare conferences, NAIDOC celebrations and repatriation or naming ceremonies. Some regions of the GBMWHA contain cultural heritage, which requires maintenance, and often, where the heritage is a network or complex of sites, the Katoomba NPWS needs to develop additional management strategies and conduct assessments and conservation works. As well as administration and on the ground works, there are organisational activities such as staff education programs in leadership, occupational health and safety, and management training.

The Katoomba NPWS conducts these day-to-day activities within a legal framework: the *NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act (1974)*. However, its operations are also governed by an armoury of planning documents which are continually modified and updated. This ever-expanding library of documents might include regional pest management strategies, threat abatement plans, biodiversity priorities for widespread weeds, Special Areas (water catchments) strategy plans, various regional wild dog management plans, regional wild horse management plans, other Acts such as the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993* and the *Species Conservation Act 1995*, Aboriginal Co-Management plans, World Heritage management plans, Aboriginal employment strategy plans, Aboriginal Parks Partnership manuals, Sustainable Tourism Action Plan, cultural heritage management strategies, volunteer management strategies and visitor safety plans. Fire management is a priority in the Katoomba NPWS and so there are a disproportionate number of strategies and manuals for managing bushfires.

The NPWS is part of the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), within the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet. After the Liberal/National coalition ended a 16 year Australian Labor Party reign in 2011, the renamed NSW OEH

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43 Discovery tours are children’s educational programs designed to develop an understanding of the bush. In 2010/11 there were almost 2,000 tours.
44 NAIDOC stands for National Aborigines and Islanders Observance Day Committee
(formally the Department for Environment, Conservation, Climate and Water (DECCW)) was, at the time of my fieldwork in 2012, undergoing structural changes ‘aimed at achieving better customer service, being more accountable to local communities, and making significant savings in costs’ (NSW OEH 2012b).

The red flag on costs savings was waving ominously at the time I was conducting interviews at the Katoomba NPWS. An element of uncertainty was just starting to creep in as Katoomba NPWS staff were warned of a reduction of around 350 jobs within the OEH, with a focus on senior managers and administration staff. This raised concern among staff, who, already responsible for doing most of their own administration work, were now expected to do more. The rationale for the job cuts was for the new OEH to focus more resources on operational areas managing pests, weeds and fire; delivering programs for communities; and providing services to customers. The restructuring was in line with the new NSW Government’s 2021 Plan, which outlines a transition of government policy focus on local projects. The effectiveness of these projects was being re-assessed in light of a declining resource environment (NSW Government 2011).

From the above account of day-to-day operations, it is clear that the Katoomba NPWS office is genuinely busy. Staff need to provide for the maintenance of the GBMWHA, as well as undertake associated administration, training, grant applications, research and assessments and run programs and activities. Time is also consumed by the updating of reports and plans on issues, such as weeds and fire. The day-to-day work of the Katoomba NPWS is apt to change according to new threats. For example, at the time I was conducting fieldwork in the Mountains, the fungus Phytophthora cinnamomi (myrtle rust) was a priority concern for the agency and staff. Katoomba NPWS resources were being diverted toward implementing phytophthora containment strategies and research. There had recently been a change of state government and staff were understandably unsettled regarding possible changes.

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45 The fungus, which infects Myrtaceae species including eucalyptus, was widespread between NSW and Queensland along the eastern seaboard and considered a significant threat to the GBMWHA (Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute 2012).
It is in this current situation of increasing administration, declining resources and potential staff cuts where the narrative of business as usual begins to emerge. There is very little wiggle room for the Katoomba NPWS to plan and implement activities peripheral to their every-day work. To shed more light on the current situation of the Katoomba NPWS, it is helpful to situate the NPWS within the state government framework. The following looks at how the NPWS has changed with protected area management practice and shifting political priorities. A useful way to trace the history of Australian government departments is to conduct a documentary analysis of corporate plans and annual reports. The GBMWHA was inscribed in 2000, thus the following provides an analysis of Corporate Plans and Annual Reports from 1999 up to the present. The analysis focuses on mission or vision statements, focus on community engagement and specific references to World Heritage. It demonstrates that while the responsibilities of the NPWS have increased over time their autonomy and resources have decreased. At the same time, the analysis shows that references to World Heritage have decreased over time.

‘A long and proud history in natural and cultural heritage conservation’

In late 1999 the NPWS developed a new corporate plan for the period 2000-03. This plan was firmly based on the NPWS’ ‘long and proud history in natural and cultural heritage conservation in New South Wales’, but incorporated some crucially important changes in both management directions and emphases, primarily in adopting a holistic approach to conservation which integrated natural, cultural and community values (NSW NPWS 2000: 16). This new corporate plan was influenced by recommendations from the 1998 Visions for the New Millennium report, the culmination of a major review of the NPWS commissioned by the NSW Government (NSW Visions for the New Millennium

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46 This new corporate plan was a response to significant changes to the traditional paradigm of protected areas management in the latter half of the Twentieth century. Worldwide, management frameworks now require the involvement of local people and various agencies and are planned as part of national, regional and international systems (Phillips 2003).
Review Steering Committee 1998). The report identified the need for the NPWS to:

*shift toward greater community involvement and to move beyond the concept of conservation on the reserve system toward one of conservation across the whole landscape where the reserve system is managed within a regional landscape context* (NSW NPWS 1999: 7).

To help meet this end, the report recommended the establishment of four regional directorates (northern, southern, central and western) in an effort to focus on a ‘stronger regional focus and identity for the Service, as well as improving communication with our stakeholders, with local communities, and with Aboriginal owners’ (NSW NPWS 1999: 7). The Visions recommendations stressed the need for the NPWS to work more closely with the public in general and so an Education and Community Programs Directorate was established to focus on interpretation and community education.

In 1999, the NPWS had a broad and unambiguous mission of ‘working with the community to conserve and foster appreciation of nature, Aboriginal heritage and historic heritage in New South Wales’ (NSW NPWS 1999: 8) (See table 7.1 for a summary of mission/vision statements from 1999-2016). The key program areas were straightforward and heavily weighted toward conservation including conservation policy, assessment and planning, protection, promotion, as well as park management and support and development (NSW NPWS 1999). In 1999 the role of the NPWS was defined clearly in the terms of its functions as provided in the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, together with the provisions of the Wilderness Act 1987 and the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 (see Box 7.1) By 2000, although the legal functions remained the same, the role of the NPWS was articulated to reflect a stronger emphasis on leadership and landscapes. The NPWS was committed to ‘lead the community in the development of a system of ecologically sustainable and integrated landscape management which conserves natural and cultural heritage and has as its centrepiece the public reserve system’ (NSW NPWS 2000: 12). After the corporate restructuring a year earlier now 75 per cent of NPWS staff were in regional offices
in four field directorates making the NPWS a highly decentralised organisation. In the 2000 Annual Report overview the ‘key program areas’ are replaced with five ‘key result areas’ necessary for the achievement of landscape conservation – conservation assessment, conservation planning, conservation management, conservation facilitation and capacity building. Accordingly, ‘these five key result areas provide the framework for the planning and programming of activities, for annual budget submissions to Treasury and for the evaluation of NPWS performance’ (NSW NPWS 2000: 16). This “outcomes” oriented move takes the emphasis away from programs and places it on results and reporting on those results.

Box 7.1 Conservation responsibilities of the NSW NPWS (Source: NSW NPWS 1999: 8).

The conservation responsibilities of the NSW NPWS arise from the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, together with the provisions of the Wilderness Act 1987 and the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995. They can be summarised in the following objectives:

. to ensure the conservation of protected native animals and plants throughout the State; 
. to protect and manage Aboriginal sites, objects and places of special significance to Aboriginal people throughout the State; 
. to manage historic places within the park and reserve system of the NPWS and to acquire historic places of significance for management as historic sites; 
. to manage these areas and culturally significant features for the enjoyment of present generations and to conserve them for future generations; 
. to promote community awareness, understanding and appreciation of the conservation of nature and of our cultural heritage, by way of: facilities and services provided on parks and reserves, information dissemination and community education programs; 
. to investigate and acquire land for inclusion in a system of national parks and nature reserves to conserve a complete range of the natural environments of the State; and 
. to identify, protect and manage wilderness throughout the State.
In a radical restructuring in late 2003, the NPWS along with the Environment Protection Authority, Resource NSW and Botanic Gardens Trust were brought together to form the newly created Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) to deliver a ‘whole of environment perspective’ and a ‘one-stop environmental shop’. Due to the public’s familiarity with the NPWS and the national parks ‘brand’, the new Department continued to use existing NPWS logos, signs and uniforms to maintain a sense of continuity for the public (NSW DEC 2005: 4). The amalgamation of four separate agencies is reflected in the four corporate goals for the DEC in 2004, which were:

1. Protecting ecological and human health;
2. Conserving natural and cultural values across the landscape;
3. Sustainable consumption, production, resource use and waste management; and
4. A credible, efficient and effective organisation

Consequently, 2003 was also the last year the NPWS published its own Annual Report, significantly reducing the amount of detailed public information at the NPWS agency level. The final NPWS Annual Report stated that in the coming years one of the major areas of focus would be reporting on performance in park management through the comprehensive State of the Parks system47. There have been subtle shifts in measures of performance since then with the most pervasive being an emphasis on quantification. For example, the 2003 Annual Report corporate performance indicators stress increases in the resources allocated to protecting conservation values, in the number of pest control programs, in the area of land outside the reserve system formally managed for conservation outcomes, and in the number of partnerships with local government. In previous Annual Reports, these indicators were often illustrated with graphs showing periodic increases or decreases in specific performance areas. By 2005 under the DEC, performance indicators suggested a preference for measuring organisational legitimacy, rather than environmental outcomes. Indicators such

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47 These reports were released in 2001, 2004 and 2007 (NSW NPWS 2001c, 2004c and 2007).
as total visits to DEC websites and number of requests for information to DEC’s Environment Line were stated as priorities. The 2005 report continues the theme of quantification by focusing on the increase of threatened species with threat abatement plans, or the increase of management strategies, or the amount of land under DEC control, without actually providing current numbers or an indication of past performance. Partnerships with local government or other groups were no longer stated as a performance indicator (NSW DEC 2005).

In 2007, the DEC became the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) expanding its portfolio to encompass major programs from the former Department of Natural Resources, the former Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability, the former Greenhouse Office and the Resource and Conservation Unit from the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Most notably, DECC was also given the added responsibility for management of marine parks and aquatic reserves. By 2007, the Department’s vision statement, formally ‘A healthy environment cared for and enjoyed by the whole community and sustained for future generations’ (NSW DEC 2006: 1) was constricted to ‘a healthy environment for life’ further submerging the role of the NPWS in working with people or communities while emphasising the Department’s growing focus on the links between a healthy environment and a healthy economy and community (NSW DECC 2007: 5).

The linking of environment, economy and community was perhaps the result of the Department’s newly created Climate Change portfolio with an emphasis on sustainability consistent with the ‘dominant rhetorical device for environmental governance’ (Adger, et al. 2003: 1095). This rhetoric is further reflected in the change of corporate values regarding protecting the environment. In previous years, the DEC demonstrated its commitment to protecting the environment simply by stating that it was ‘strongly committed to protecting the environment’ (NSW DEC 2005: 1; 2006: 1; NSW DECC 2007: 1. Whereas in 2008, the DEC qualified their commitment by stating that they ‘understand that the health of the environment underpins our social and economic prosperity, as well as the health and wellbeing of the community’ (NSW DECC 2008: 5). The same Annual
Report sees a return to the strategic priority of integrated landscape management – the first explicit reference to it since the final NPWS Annual Report in 2003. However, after a further two iterations of the Department (Department of Environment, Conservation, Climate Change and Water and then Office of Environment and Heritage under the Department of Premier and Cabinet) the goal of integrated landscape management has altered the NPWS’ original vision to work with the community (NSW DECCW 2010; NSW P&C 2011). The subtle rewording transfers responsibility from public to private spheres. This neoliberal, shift to ‘support the community to protect, strengthen and enjoy a healthy, productive environment and economy’ is a reflection of the budget tightening measures of the new OEH (OEH 2013: 12). In 2014, ‘support’ disappeared altogether in a vision where the environment and heritage is passively valued, protected and enjoyed but by who or what, is not clear (OEH 2014).

Table 7.1 NPWS Mission/Vision evolution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Report/Corporate Plan</th>
<th>Mission/vision statement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NPWS 1999</td>
<td>Working with the community to conserve and foster appreciation of nature, Aboriginal heritage and historic heritage in New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPWS 2000-03</td>
<td>Working with people and communities to protect and conserve natural and cultural heritage in the NSW landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC 2004-06</td>
<td>A healthy environment cared for and enjoyed by the whole community and sustained for future generations</td>
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<tr>
<td>DECC 2007-09</td>
<td>A healthy environment for life</td>
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<tr>
<td>DECCW 2010</td>
<td>A healthy environment for life</td>
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<tr>
<td>OEH 2011</td>
<td>A healthy environment for life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OEH 2012</td>
<td>To support the community to protect, strengthen and enjoy a healthy, productive environment and economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OEH current</td>
<td>Our environment and heritage is valued, protected, enjoyed and supports a prosperous and healthy NSW</td>
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</table>

**Wither World Heritage?**

The Annual Reports tell a story of World Heritage inscription in the GBMWHA gradually losing its prominence. Between 2003 and 2005 there are accounts of land purchases, volunteer efforts, a book by the Colong Foundation, the promotion of a tourist drive and signage all related to World Heritage activities
in the GBMWHA. In the reports between 2006 and 2010, under the DECC, there is no mention of any specific projects related to World Heritage in the GBMWHA. In the year under the new OEH 2011-2012, there is mention of the GBMWHA only regarding improving fire regimes in the area (OEH 2012a). It is the years between 2000 and 2003, when the NPWS were undertaking their own annual reports, that World Heritage activities in the GBMWHA get the most attention.

Whether this attention was because inscription was still fresh or because of the increased NPWS autonomy in what to include in the reports, is unclear. However, in these reports World Heritage activities are listed under the ‘Contributing to Communities’ project which aimed to ‘contribute to the environmental, social and economic wellbeing of local and regional communities’ (NSW NPWS 2003: 48). Under this project World Heritage status, along with tourism, was considered the primary opportunity for contributing to the community, cementing the brief, but discernible, official position of World Heritage in the GBMWHA as an opportunity for engagement. Between 2001 and 2003 there were a number of projects in various stages of development including:

- An Interpretation & Visitor Orientation Plan which outlined the possible publication and distribution for sale of touring maps and posters and the construction of directional and interpretive signage projects;
- A ‘World Heritage partners’ initiative with local councils and revising the GBMWHA Strategic Plan.
- The World Heritage Integration Project to identify opportunities for local communities to benefit from World Heritage listing, with specific emphasis on economic benefits and tourism opportunities.

Other activities include various forums with Aboriginal organisations regarding joint and co-management negotiations (NSW NPWS 2001a, 2002, 2003).

From the above discussion, on paper at least, it seems as if the NPWS have lost their public voice in the last of the NPWS Annual Reports. Rather, they seem to have become one of many agencies under the OEH espousing a corporate line which prioritises austerity, efficiency, effectiveness and productivity. From a practical perspective it is now difficult to know, in any detail, what the NPWS do
or what their ‘business’ might entail. This is a result of reducing the comprehensive in-house NPWS Annual Reports to a department-wide report where the activities of the NPWS are integrated with other agencies and produced as a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). What is most revealing is the significant decrease of any mention of World Heritage programs in the GBMWHA after 2003. According to the Annual Reports between 2001-2003, the NPWS were working on a number of World Heritage inspired projects encompassing community engagement, tourism, joint management and possibilities for collaboration with local governments. However, after 2003 none of these projects are mentioned in subsequent Reports.

The above, brief, discussion makes an attempt to peer inside the confusing, complex and ever-changing world of bureaucracies. It is by no means a complete picture. Annual Reports and Corporate Plans provide only a public view of the internal workings of government departments. However, this public view, along with insight into their day-to-day work, helps to contextualise the Katoomba NPWS in two important ways. First, it situates the NPWS as a state government agency replete with legislation, restrictions, bureaucratic processes and a shrinking voice and budget. And second, it suggests that impressions can be misleading. On the face of it, the Katoomba NPWS, as the authorised manager of the GBMWHA, is the dominant actor in the World Heritage network. Yet, despite their legal standing, the Katoomba NPWS are not immune to the pressures and exigencies of government departments. These pressures may have an effect on Katoomba NPWS ‘business’ and, subsequently, the way the Katoomba NPWS approaches World Heritage matters.

**Negotiations and local networks**

The General Manager’s statement above, and the emerging picture of the NPWS Katoomba Regional Office as but a single cog in a much larger machinery, begins to shed light on why ‘business as usual’ is the preferred approach to managing World Heritage. To begin exploring how this approach shapes associations with other actors the World Heritage network, I have borrowed, from ANT, the concept of the obligatory passage point which positions the NPWS Katoomba
Regional Office as a kind of gateway, through which all other actors must pass to achieve their interests regarding World Heritage. These interests might include activities that promote the World Heritage area or attempts to conserve it as the following will discuss. Negotiation in World Heritage matters begins long before implementation of the Convention at a World Heritage site. As discussed in Chapter 1, the World Heritage system and processes exert considerable power, particularly in negotiating terms of nomination and inscription, of World Heritage. That this World Heritage system can be seen as an obligatory passage point in the World Heritage network, has been argued elsewhere (Brattli 2009)\(^4\). While the World Heritage system may be an obligatory passage point during the nomination and inscription process for potential World Heritage properties I would argue that the passage point changes post inscription. Callon (1986) first coined the term to describe the process by which actors establish themselves as indispensable in a network where attaining a goal or solving a problem is only attainable through them. More broadly, an obligatory passage point creates a precise situation that makes it possible for all actors to satisfy their interests (Luck 2008). In the case of the GBMWHA, the power of autonomy, and thus, the obligatory passage point, shifts from the ‘upstream’ processes of World Heritage to the ‘downstream’ responsibilities of the Katoomba NPWS.

The Katoomba NPWS are given autonomy by ‘the global network’ to create a ‘negotiation space’ in order to build a ‘local network’ (Law and Callon 1988: 289). As the official managers of the World Heritage area, the Katoomba NPWS become the obligatory passage point: the locus through which all network representations, transactions and understandings pass (Davies 2002: 196). There is no doubt that the NPWS Katoomba has been granted autonomy by the global network, that is the World Heritage Convention and Australia’s State Party

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\(^4\)Brattli’s argument is not without its critics. See the discussion piece by Burström, Smith, Omland, Vinsrygg, Holtorf, and Brattli, 2009: ‘Comments on Terje Brattli: Managing the Archaeological World Cultural Heritage: Consensusor Rhetoric?’. Smith in particular questions whether Brattli’s use of the obligatory passage point concept, in particular, and his use of Actor-network theory, in general, helped to generate new knowledge on the subject of World Heritage archaeology.
obligations, to manage the GBMWHA. However, the Katoomba NPWS must then develop a local network in order to facilitate a negotiation space and it is this transfer from global to local network that is less prescribed. As discussed in Chapter 1, while the Convention outlines States Parties obligations regarding the World Heritage processes the actual implementation of the Convention at a World Heritage site is more flexible and open to interpretation. Thus far, this chapter has foregrounded the state bureaucratic environment and the different situational spaces in which the Katoomba NPWS must operate. The remainder of this thesis discusses the extent to which the NPWS have developed a local network. Following Law and Callon (1988), to develop a local network and establish themselves as the obligatory passage point it is imperative that the Katoomba NPWS first create negotiation spaces. However, the following will argue that through the approach of business as usual the Katoomba NPWS likely secures their role as obligatory passage point as much through negotiation as non-negotiation. One of the reasons for this equivocality is the rather technical and vague interpretation of World Heritage and OUV. The World Heritage Unit, a section of the Katoomba NPWS, provides an example.

**World Heritage Unit**

The World Heritage Unit represents a unique structural change within the Katoomba NPWS, as a direct result of World Heritage implementation. The Unit is housed under the main NPWS Katoomba Regional Office. The Unit is managed by the Executive Officer, whose main role is to perform executive functions for the GBMWHA Advisory Committee which was formed in 2006 and meets quarterly to discuss the protection, conservation, presentation and management of the GBMWHA. The Unit also employs a full-time Aboriginal Co-Management Officer and a part-time administration officer. The Executive Officer (EO) needs to supplement 50 per cent of her salary, as well as the expenses of the Advisory Committee with Commonwealth funds. Being a World Heritage Unit does not open up a direct link to Commonwealth funds, and so each year preparing a round of funding applications is the EO’s first priority. The Commonwealth program Caring for our Country is the main source of funds administered through the World Heritage Grants project. In 2014, the Unit secured a grant of
around $500,000 over 29 months for ‘Protecting, Conserving and Celebrating World Heritage across the Greater Blue Mountains’. It is clear that World Heritage inscription is no guarantee of increased resources and thus, negotiation is key in securing funding. Once the Unit secures the funding, however, the resources are not necessarily, as might be assumed, spent on managing the GBMWHA’s OUV.

Funding is not necessarily ‘tied’ to maintaining the area’s OUV, which is primarily sclerophyll diversity, and thus the Unit’s EO can negotiate, to a great extent, how the money is used. Thus, rather that work on the area’s official OUV, the EO works mainly on ‘other values’, discussed in Chapter 4, like projects that strengthen ties with the Mountains Indigenous community and creating awareness of the GBMWHA through creative educational programs for children. The projects have a distinctly cultural flavour with an emphasis on community engagement and Indigenous and cultural issues, reflecting the EO’s passions and expertise which are driven, in part, by the EO’s commitment to see those ‘other values’ become official OUV. The EO has never lost sight of the failure of the first World Heritage nomination to secure mixed natural and cultural World Heritage status. Thus, an added motivation for the Unit’s cultural projects is to build the library of information necessary for a potential second attempt at nominating for cultural values. Given the requirements of World Heritage nominations, discussed in Chapter 1, this attempt would necessarily require cooperation between the EO and relevant Commonwealth officer. However, negotiations between the two levels of government are less than ideal.

We have seen that World Heritage inscription does not guarantee extra funding, nor, to address another possible World Heritage misconception, does it open a direct line of communication between the World Heritage site and UNESCO. Indeed, it does not guarantee more or better communication between state and Commonwealth departments. According to the EO, since listing of the GBMWHA in 2000, the flow of information between the Commonwealth Government and the World Heritage Unit has been very poor. She attributes the poor flow to the complexities of Australia’s three levels of government. The EO
feels that it’d be easier to manage information flow and responsibility, more consistent legislation if, like World Heritage sites in the USA or New Zealand, there were only two levels of government. During my fieldwork, the heritage division in the Commonwealth Department had cut funding and resources by 30 per cent. The EO tells me that this is a bad sign. She explains that:

There was a review in December 2009. Minister Garrett called for a review of the effectiveness of [heritage] advisory committees and executive officers and everyone put a lot of effort into proving that we were all doing great jobs. There is no published report from that. No official recommendations that came out of that.

Such a report could have provided a sound justification for future funding applications, as well as a professional and personal reassurance on a job well done. More importantly, it would have provided the Unit with some evidential negotiation power. The slashing of the National heritage budget has had an opposite, and predictable, effect. The EO is left feeling unsure about future potential funding sources, as well as the government’s commitment to heritage conservation. Negotiations with state government become difficult when there is little obvious appetite for heritage issues at the state level and has the added effect of burdening the EO with the responsibility of convincing others in the Katoomba NPWS that World Heritage is worthwhile. This agenda is difficult to drive when ‘worth’ is so often translated into a dollar value.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, there is a common misconception that World Heritage inscription automatically attracts funding. There is a World Heritage Fund administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to which all States Parties are eligible in theory. However, in practice, financial assistance is restricted to States Parties who are struggling to protect their World Heritage sites. The Fund is a small pool of $4 million annually and so the most threatened sites are given priority. The EO is aware of the difficulties in funding World Heritage properties, but the myth of automatic funding is tenacious even within the Katoomba NPWS office, as she explains:
When this area was listed, staff expected buckets of money from the Commonwealth to rain down and it never happened. So we haven't really had a consistent budget for interpretation and promotion. Under Caring for our Country we had nothing. We had no money from the Commonwealth to celebrate the 10th [World Heritage] anniversary last year. So we did what we could and I think we did quite well.

Celebrating the 10th World Heritage anniversary was critical to the EO in raising the profile of the GBMWHA and like the Unit itself, represents a noteworthy departure from the business as usual approach. However, the absence of the Commonwealth’s involvement is troubling for the EO and contributes to the feeling that she is isolated from the broader World Heritage community.

Applying for funding is a large part of the EO’s role. Promoting the GBMWHA requires funding from external sources, but receiving money from various sources may mean that the EO has little negotiation power over how, or where, the money is spent. She explains that shortly after World Heritage inscription, in 2001, they appealed to the Commonwealth for funding for a visitor centre to showcase World Heritage status. Their appeal was granted, but the funds fell far short of what was needed to build a new centre. As a consequence, there was some sort of deal cut for the centre to be retrofitted as an exhibition in the Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens. The ‘deal’ allowed the centre to add to the Commonwealth funding through the NPWS and the Botanic Gardens Trust, however, as mentioned in Chapter 6, the EO is not happy with where the World Heritage exhibition was eventually built. She feels the obvious place would have been Katoomba, being the largest tourist hub in the area. Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens is 45 minutes from Katoomba and is not accessible by public transport. The EO feels that the exhibition is divorced from the GBMWHA and that, in the end, there wasn't enough of the original Commonwealth money to make it really special.
A lack of funding is exacerbated by a less than clear process involving promotional material. For some actors, like tourism, promoting World Heritage is as simple as saying come to the World Heritage area. According to the EO:

*The BMCC does a great job using this strategy because they’ve got the existing tourism infrastructure and trade they can promote on that and then promote on top of that the World Heritage stuff.*

*Promoting the GBMWHA for Katoomba NPWS is not so straightforward, in part, because it has been difficult to convince [NPWS] staff [that promotion is worthwhile].*

Designing and installing new, large signs is expensive; estimated at around $20,000. So in an attempt to reduce costs the EO:

*spent some money a couple of years ago creating metal plates that would go on existing signage so then it would have the lyrebird on one end and the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage logo on the other. Some people have taken that up, others have not. Those signs are still sitting in workshops.*

This lack of cooperation from others is frustrating for the EO, as is the internal complications regarding ‘official’ signage as the EO explains:

*Then we have the national parks signage manual which says, no, you can’t use [the metal plates] you have to use the official World Heritage logo. Which is fine but we had some feedback from the Commonwealth that said that this particular one was quite inappropriate because it makes it look like the Blue Mountains National Park is the World Heritage Area. There’s nowhere that it says it is the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. So the bureaucracy of NPWS, the person who represented this branch on the steering committee for the parks signage manual didn’t push enough to make it clear, overarching.*

Attempts to promote the GBMWHA have been stymied by a lack of resources, cooperation, understanding about official World Heritage promotion, and miscommunication between the World Heritage Unit, state and Commonwealth.
governments. The end result is that the GBMWHA is promoted, to a greater extent, from actors other than the Katoomba NPWS.

There are clearly areas of resistance that the EO must negotiate on a daily basis simply to keep World Heritage on the agenda. Information flows, levels of government, funding sources, budget cuts, staff attitudes, bureaucracy, process and procedures are all necessary aspects of doing World Heritage ‘business’ for the World Heritage Unit. The Unit does the best it can with what it has to work with. There is little extra funding, making it difficult to convince staff that World Heritage is a worthwhile addition to their busy workload. Thus, the limited occasions to celebrate World Heritage values means that other priorities like funding applications and issues surrounding promotion are the stuff of everyday work for the World Heritage Unit. As such, the Unit focuses on cultural values and other aspects of the GBMWHA that benefit from the experience and expertise of the EO and Aboriginal Co-Management Officer. One important outcome of this focus is how the Unit has, to a large extent, re-negotiated the area’s OUV. This renegotiation of OUV gives the Unit considerable power in the network, largely as a result of its ability to fund projects aimed at promoting ‘other values’ in the GBMWHA. These projects will arguably be influential in how, rightly or wrongly, other actors in the network understand GBMWHA values. Moreover, the promotion of these ‘other’ values will determine to what degree the Unit acts as an obligatory passage point if other actors are encouraged to align their interests with those of the Unit. It is to these other actors that this chapter now turns beginning with the World Heritage area itself and a brief walk through it.

The following section draws back from the business of the Katoomba NPWS and the World Heritage Unit to explore their associations with other actors in the World Heritage network; specifically in the managerial designation of the ‘developed setting’. The business of the Katoomba NPWS extends well beyond the confines of the office and out into the GBMWHA. Thus, the section begins with a quick walk through a small section of the World Heritage area to provide a picture of a visitor’s ‘first taste’ of World Heritage. It serves to describe a section
of the GBMWHA that cuts across the jurisdictions of different actors and the ‘mess’ that can result. The chapter then moves on to explore what normal business practices look like through negotiations with actors in the developed setting of the World Heritage area.

**Vignette: Prince Henry Cliff Walk, June 2011**

Today, I decided to do the other side of the Prince Henry Cliff Walk (PHCW) – to the west of the Echo Point lookout. Most of it was closed due to recent fires, apparently deliberately lit, in November last year. The fire covered the near side of the gully wall coming right up to the road. It threatened several buildings including the Scenic World Skyways station where the Skyways cable car stops to pick up or offload passengers before its return journey back across to the Scenic World complex on the far side of the gully. The Scenic World complex is a series of square, dark coloured buildings with glass sides to maximise the view down into the Jamison Valley. Thick, black cables sprout from the buildings to stretch across the gully and down into the valley disappearing into the bush canopy which supports the steeply descending Cableway. The smaller trees (tea trees and scribbly gum according to a sign) that have been burnt in the fire have taken on a sculptural quality – black and stylised. Where some of the dangerous branches have been lopped, there is a gash of starkly contrasting orange innards with the coal black outer. The leaves have started to grow back already in the way that gum leaves do – covering the trunk of the tree like a green furry stocking.

The track winds around to the Katoomba falls. They are quite pretty though I’m told by the Council that the water, and subsequently all water in the area, is too polluted to drink. The walk downstream from the falls is not particularly pleasant. Both sides of the path are covered in long grass, someone has carelessly left a copy of Citywalker, an Asian fashion magazine, on a bench and there is recent evidence of tree lopping. The logs have been piled up on the side of the track or just left where they fell into the creek. There’s the distant sound of chainsaws. Where the track terminates there are two big, heavily graffitied, black steel boxes housing enormous flood lights. Presumably this is for the benefit of the Scenic World Skyway travellers which pass directly in front. The other three detours from the main path have the same boxes. The unmistakable theme track from the
Indiana Jones movies drifts across from the Scenic World complex. At the base of the Furber Steps there is a sign to the left reading ‘You are now leaving the Blue Mountains National Park’.

The walking track in this vignette was one of my regular walks while conducting fieldwork in the GBMWHA in 2011 and 2012. It is one of dozens of walking tracks in the GBMWHA which offer the visitor anything from a 20-minute loop-walk to a full-day trek. The tracks are extensive, extending several hundred kilometres. Many of the walks descend the steep cliff face into the valley floor - far away from the populated areas - unlike the PHCW which follows along the cliff edge from Katoomba to Leura. The track essentially hugs the side of the ridge that runs parallel to Cliff Drive, right at the edge of the residential area, and is accessible from many spots along the road. The PHCW offers views across the Grose Valley and the Three Sisters and is a popular walking track for residents and tourists. Although there is no visitor data as such, the Katoomba NPWS estimates that the track attracts up to 300,000 walkers every year (NSW NPWS 2001b: 73).

The picture presented by this vignette is of a section of the GBMWHA that appears far from World Heritage worthy. The combination of closed paths, burned trees, fallen logs, weeds, rubbish, chainsaws, graffiti, and movie sound track combine to create a distinctly ‘unnatural’ setting in a natural World Heritage area. This is an area where many of the actors in the World Heritage network are connected and, it would seem is partly for this reason, the area suffers from a lack of World Heritage-ness. The PHCW falls into the area, referred to by many participants in this research, as the buffer zone of the GBMWHA. The track is a patchwork of NPWS and Council owned land. This patchwork means that the tracks are managed and maintained by both agencies, up to a certain point. However, the BMCC track-funding program is separate to Katoomba NPWS, which has its own program and sometimes, according to the BMCC, gets more funding for track upgrades than the Council. The track also runs along private and commercial properties as the presence of fire, graffiti, cables, spotlights, weeds and rubbish suggest. The situation is a microcosm of the bigger issues that are repeated throughout this thesis. Broadly speaking, the issue is symptomatic of land management policies complicated by ‘long held divisions
between tenures, land uses, values and portfolios of responsibilities’ (Dovers and Wyborn 2009: 973). Specifically, due to a lack of a coordinated track management plan, and few opportunities for cooperation between actors, maintenance and promotion outcomes of World Heritage values are never fully negotiated.

For many actors in the network such as local government, residents and tourists, their focus is mainly on the publically accessible areas, like the PHCW, typically around the edges of the World Heritage area. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Katoomba NPWS has different management styles for the core and perimeter of the GBMWHA. Katoomba NPWS management plans discuss maintenance and management according to four separate themes of the natural setting, developed setting, wilderness setting and restricted setting. The natural setting is the area between the developed setting and the wilderness setting in the core of the World Heritage area. The developed setting covers the cliff tops and escarpment, residential and recreation areas. Restricted settings are areas within three kilometres of water catchments. The focus of this section of the chapter lies within the developed and natural settings or what I refer to as the edge of the GBMWHA. The focus is justified by the many areas of overlap between the two settings, like the PHCW, and thus between different land managers, where lookouts, car parks and bush walking occur. The local council have long seen this area as problematic. In 1996, the NSW Government responded to a request from BMCC to establish a committee to oversee the process of rationalising the ownership of public land within the Local Government Area (LGA).

The idea of rationalising was to tame the convoluted boundary between the agencies and arrange formal and coordinated management arrangements. The committee, comprising Council, NPWS and Department of Land and Water Conservation, aimed to simplify and rationalise public land ownership and management through transferring the land primarily to the NPWS in stage one of the Public Lands Rationalisation process. While some land has been transferred, there is indecision on which agency should manage the remaining Stage 1 lands, comprising largely of contiguous land parcels along the eastern and western escarpments (BMCC 2005). Stage two of the process, which over a decade later, is
yet to go ahead, is aimed to rationalise the management of multi-tenure and/or multi-classification reserve systems within the more developed areas of the Blue Mountains City. Thus, as the vignette of the PHCW demonstrated, many of the tourist facilities such as lookouts, car parks and walking tracks, remain located partly inside the GBMWHA and partly outside it causing an overlap in responsibility in these areas. In theory, there is an agreement between Katoomba NPWS and other land managers to work co-operatively in these areas (NPWS 2001b). However, this agreement has not been easy to put into practice.

The difficulty in successfully negotiating in these areas of overlapping management is aptly demonstrated by another vignette. While the power of the World Heritage Unit was demonstrated by their ability to renegotiate World Heritage Values, the PHCW demonstrated how difficult negotiation can be on the edge of the World Heritage area. This vignette further demonstrates the difficulties of negotiating on the edge of the World Heritage area: even in situations where actors are forced to work together. Importantly, this vignette demonstrates how the Katoomba NPWS can establish its role as an obligatory passage point by not negotiating with the local network. The Katoomba NPWS is, conspicuously, absent from the following account of actors assembling in the GBMWHA. This assemblage of actors happens usually without incident but inevitably, in certain circumstances, something will go wrong in what Law (borrowing from Perrow 1999) describes as a ‘normal accident’ (2006: 236). In this case we have an ageing storm water system, regulatory and inspection lapses, sensitive ecosystems and downhill topography, which created the perfect storm for a normal accident to occur. This vignette is a unique account of a fishkill in the GBMWHA, which highlights the ‘microprocesses’ that tie actors together in unique spatial situations (Murdoch and Marsden 1995: 369). How resources were negotiated and mobilised in this case helps to explain how these actors are associated at the edge of the GBMWHA and how the Katoomba NPWS does not need to negotiate to maintain its status as the obligatory passage point.
Vignette: Fishkill

It is reassuring to know that the source of the contamination has been found and cleaned up. I commend the inter-agency response to this pollution incident by Council, the EPA, the Fire and Rescue NSW, and NSW Department of Primary Industries Fisheries Division. BMCC Mayor, Cr Daniel Myles in a statement to the local newspaper (Blue Mountains Gazette, August 8, 2012).

On Saturday the 7th of July 2012 a local bushwalker was ambling along the Darwin’s Walk which runs along-side the Jamison Creek in the BMNP. The bushwalker knew something was horribly wrong when he noticed there were dead crayfish floating in the creek. In fact, there were hundreds of dead crayfish along with native fish and macro-invertebrates (water bugs) floating belly-up in the water. The bushwalker reported the dead fish to the BMCC which, in turn, notified Katoomba NPWS and the DPI. The BMCC warned residents and visitors to avoid contact with the water and sent their environmental scientist to take water and sediment samples. Jamison Creek cascades into the Jamison Valley in the BMNP and the die off extended from the Great Western Highway to the waterfall at Wentworth falls inside the BMNP. Of note in the beginning of this story, is that the bushwalker reported the incident to the local council rather than the Katoomba NPWS despite finding the dead fish in the national park. This point was not lost on a staff member of the BMCC who remarked on how lucky the council were to have such an engaged and aware community.

A BMCC aquatics systems officer had not seen a fishkill in the national park of this magnitude in the seven years she had been working for the council. Quickly identifying the cause of the contamination was critical. The water samples from Jamison Creek were taken by a senior BMCC environmental scientist to the EPA for further testing, but weeks went by without any word on what the EPA had found. According to the BMCC aquatic systems officer, the DPI and EPA were the lead agencies in this incidence. But given the amount of time that had lapsed since the water sample had been sent to the EPA, the impression at the BMCC
was that neither agency was treating it as a high priority. According to the BMCC they ‘had to push it but it became a bit political when politicians started asking for information’. Despite becoming a ‘bit political’, it took the EPA another week to send scientists to sample the water, despite having already been sent samples. They identified the contaminant as a termaticide which is a pesticide commonly used for residential termite control. The BMCC’s environmental scientist and the EPA sampled more water and sediment from further up-stream and the results suggested the contaminant entered the creek via the storm water outlet in Wilson Park, Wentworth Falls.

The Council, with the assistance of the Fire and Rescue NSW hazardous material team, coordinated the removal of contaminated sediment from a stormwater basin located in a privately owned retirement village. The tematicide entered the Jamison Creek through a cracked drainpipe on the property, which had escaped the routine checks of council maintenance. In fact, the council had not noticed the cracked drainpipe because the retirement village comes under particular council zoning regulations that exempts it from regular infrastructure checks. The council also reported the incident in the local newspaper and, referring to existing baseline data, has continued to monitor the creek for signs of returning species.

Normal accidents, like this fishkill, are hardly surprising, given the number of variables that depend on each other in order to avoid a disaster. What is surprising is that it does not happen more often. A close reading of the fishkill incident reveals a number of important points about negotiating on the edge of the GBMWHA. Firstly, the Katoomba NPWS disappear from the story once the pollution is contained. In the analysis and clean-up process that followed the fishkill, the Katoomba NPWS were not involved at all, nor are they acknowledged by the Mayor, Cr Daniel Myles, in the above quote. The leading local agency is the local Council. Their role was to identify and fix the problem through a process that, from the council’s perspective, appeared resistant. Thus secondly, the local council has established itself as an actor in the network to protect World Heritage values yet it must pass through other agencies to achieve its
interests to establish the cause of the contaminant. Thirdly, the fact that the local government had to pass through other agencies within the state government, and had very little negotiation with, or assistance from, the Katoomba NPWS, suggests that, at least where the local council and environmental threats are concerned, the Katoomba NPWS have not yet forged a local network. A local network would arguably see the Katoomba NPWS and BMCC as allies in dealing with an urgent threat to OUV. The following further explores to what extent the Katoomba NPWS has created a local network through communicating World Heritage values: another critical actor to be found in the developed setting of the GBMWHA.

**Communicating World Heritage values**

As discussed in the previous chapter, there are no signs in Katoomba promoting World Heritage. While there appears to have been some negotiation between the Katoomba NPWS and BMCC about promotional material it is not clear to anyone involved in this research why there is not more signage. Some are frustrated by the lack of coordination and organisation regarding interpretation material and signage. Yet there remains a doubt as to who has the authority to promote World Heritage outside of the GBMWHA. Promotion is further complicated by other issues so far discussed, such as a poor budget, rules around the accredited use of the World Heritage logo and misunderstandings about why the logo was incorporated into some park signage and not others. As mentioned above, squeezing the World Heritage logo into already visually busy national park signs in high tourist traffic areas has been noted to cause confusion regarding which national parks have World Heritage status. The confusion extends beyond the question of who can *promote* World Heritage to who can *protect* World Heritage as the following demonstrates.

World Heritage promotion is not simply a matter for those whose responsibility it is to protect World Heritage. Or is it? The Council attempted to introduce voluntary visitor contribution boxes at some of the more upmarket Bed & Breakfast accommodation in Katoomba. The idea behind the boxes was to collect the money to reinvest in council infrastructure that would help mitigate urban
run-off into the GBMWHA. The council, ostensibly attempting to inspire donations, used the World Heritage brand to promote the scheme as, they argued, the money would contribute to better management of World Heritage area biodiversity values. A Katoomba NPWS staff member was confronted by the idea as she recounts her conversation with the Council:

"And I thought, hang on a minute, and they said 'well, because we are at the top of the catchment if we manage this better then it will have less impact in the World Heritage area'. But I don't think you can say we are going to use this money to manage the World Heritage area when that is not your specific responsibility."

This situation may be the result, like the fishkill incident, of what the Katoomba NPWS Operations Manager refers to as a pecking order issue. Authorised responsibility for the World Heritage area is with the Katoomba NPWS. In this case the donation box, installed by the BMCC, was a direct, albeit not deliberate, challenge to this authorised responsibility. The BMCC made the assumption that they too are responsible for protecting the World Heritage area without negotiating first with the obligatory passage point. This oversight, and subsequent reaction from the NPWS, suggests that the success of such endeavours depend on a local network. More importantly, it suggests that the alignment of actors’ interests, to promote and protect the World Heritage area, alone is not enough to create that network.

Negotiations about World Heritage promotion with the local conservation society seem to be less adversarial. Indeed, a senior Katoomba NPWS staff member called the Blue Mountains Conservation Society (BMCS) the delivery arm of the Katoomba NPWS for communicating World Heritage values. The implication is that the Katoomba NPWS are happy to outsource a task that they cannot perform. Also implicit in the statement is that the Katoomba NPWS trusts the BMCS to communicate World Heritage values to the public. Given that communicating World Heritage values to the public is a State Party’s obligation under the Convention, this is no small declaration of trust. Indeed, it is unlikely, as the donation box incident suggests, that the Katoomba NPWS bestow the
BMCC with such trust. The Mountains conservationists seem equally happy to help where they can. The ‘lovingly crafted’ Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Experience website is an example of their dedication to promoting the area (BMCS 2011). While they are frustrated with the poor state of some areas of the GBMWHA, they are sympathetic to the limited resources within which the Katoomba NPWS operates. One member of the BMCS states that:

*So from the point of view of not getting the action we would like from the NPWS for instance - again, we have a good relationship with the people who work there but - there is just such minimal funding for a massive area to look after. They are always behind the eight ball. Anything we do in that direction is generally aimed at the politicians, rather than the local NPWS management or staff, because we can see so clearly where the problem is.*

However, as far as being a delivery arm for communicating World Heritage values the conservationists question their effectiveness:

*Organisations like the Blue Mountains Conservation Society are continually trying to reach a wider audience without a great deal of success. Sometimes we find someone in the media that will run with a story, but generally only if there’s something a bit sensational there. It’s never something along the lines of general appreciation for what we’ve got.*

The implied irony is that, from the media’s perspective, outstanding universal values are far from sensational. World Heritage is only newsworthy when it is being threatened. Yet, as the following shows, not all World Heritage promotion needs to be sensational. It can be promoted in other, more pragmatic, ways.

A senior manager sums up the lack of World Heritage promotion as a victim of competing priorities. He states that:

*We get funding for the protection of natural and cultural values and the argument is the promoting of the World Heritage relative to all*
other priorities. Should we be doing on-the-ground works or promoting our business?

Despite the lack of obvious signage in the area, I am assured by a Katoomba NPWS staff member that for a national park, World Heritage is the ultimate brand. Indeed, branding is considered to be one of the few perks of World Heritage listing but, rather than have World Heritage status as a headline, it is often relegated to the tagline, as this senior Katoomba NPWS officer explains:

*Probably the major benefit has been the promotional benefit, promotional marketing benefit of the World Heritage listing. If you look at all the taglines, all the branding, it all carries World Heritage. It’s in the tagline. It would say World Heritage listed Blue Mountains. So it’s using, actually leveraging off, the [World Heritage] listing for marketing purposes.*

The major benefit of World Heritage for the Katoomba NPWS, then, has been the added value of the World Heritage brand and the ease with which it can be applied to promotional material. Standardising World Heritage taglines remove the need for the Katoomba NPWS to invent slogans or justifications to attract visitors or funding. World Heritage is allowed, rightly or wrongly, to speak for itself. However, the promotion is of the understated kind where World Heritage is used subtly and just strategically enough to give the GBMWHA distinctiveness from other national parks. A more overt kind of promotion, as in signage, requires negotiation with other actors in the network and is perhaps the reason why signage is lacking in the developed setting. There appears to be little negotiation with other actors regarding communication and the subsequent benefits. This lack of negotiation becomes problematic when actors must pass through the NPWS, as the obligatory passage point, to gain these benefits. For the BMCC, a benefit of donation boxes is the ability to protect the World Heritage area. For the local conservation society the benefits of promotion are also to protect the area, but through indirect means by raising awareness of World Heritage values. The obligatory passage point becomes more like a blind alley when interested actors intervene with the business of the Katoomba NPWS
or challenge notions of who should be directly involved in protecting or communicating the area’s values. The following continues with the theme of communicating World Heritage values in the residential area of the developed setting.

**Residential areas**

During the first round of interviews with Mountains residents, the Katoomba NPWS was largely absent in people’s conversations about World Heritage. I asked what they knew about managing the World Heritage area and one resident confidently informed me that the role of the Katoomba NPWS is to ‘*maintain the walks and all that sort of thing - not the World Heritage*’. To most of the residents involved in this research, the national parks and World Heritage were two separate entities. The Katoomba NPWS was responsible for the former and, as discussed in Chapter 6, the local Council was assumed responsible for the latter. For the residents, the Katoomba NPWS were rarely seen, never encountered and not proactive in providing information about World Heritage, as illustrated by this observation from a Bullaburra resident:

> *I think to get information from National Parks and Wildlife you need to go to them. I mean if you go to the national park Heritage Centre in Blackheath is heaps of wonderful information. But you actually have to go there. And it’s really not advertised a lot.*

From a general managerial perspective, residents are a potential threat to World Heritage values. During the World Heritage nomination process the IUCN, advisory body to the World Heritage Committee on natural values, claimed that the resident population threatened the integrity of the Greater Blue Mountains Area. Additionally, the GBMWHA Strategic Plan raises the potential threat from the developed urban area adjacent to the World Heritage area. However, residents are, according to one senior manager, *a part of the World Heritage*. Having spent some of his career in the World Heritage listed Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory, this manager viewed Mountains residents as part of the landscape observing that they had *always been there*. There remain some
issues however, that complicate negotiations between the Katoomba NPWS and residents living on the edge of the developed setting. Unlike Kakadu, the GBMWHA is inscribed for ‘natural’ OUV, of which cultural values or human associations to the natural environment are not a part. Despite the senior manager’s opinion that the residents are part of the landscape, they are not part of the GBMWHA’s OUV. The omission of cultural aspects of the GBMWHA from official World Heritage values and the excised residential area within the GBMWHA send a very clear message about what aspects of the broader landscape are World Heritage worthy. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, the area’s OUV, primarily sclerophyll diversity, relies on the integrity of the broader landscape, including the conservation of a number of ‘other values’. Arguably then, the NPWS must engage with this broader landscape to fulfil their obligations under the Convention, which means the NPWS, must negotiate with residents.

However, negotiation is often reduced to discrete, practical issues where residents pose a threat to World Heritage values. For example, some residents whose properties back on to the World Heritage site exceed their property boundaries by parking trailers, storing outdoor equipment or disposing of lawn clippings. As a result, encroachment is a minor irritation for the Katoomba NPWS. According to one ranger, negotiation in this case constitutes the Katoomba NPWS and residents talking the issue [of encroachment] to death. There is a sense of frustration on the side of the Katoomba NPWS where issues stem directly from neighbours not behaving according to the rules. The problem, according to one ranger, is that [private properties] are not adequately inspected or regulations put in place to actually force them to do things. Particularly when it comes to the pest management side of it. This inability to regulate is yet another situation resulting from a lack of resources, but some Mountains residents are apparently more conscientious regarding their World Heritage surrounds.

Much like the issue of communicating World Heritage values, the Mountains residents are low down on a long list of other priorities and concerns, as illustrated in the following observation from a senior manager:
So when you say the residents, well the residents are only 70,000 people living in the mountains. There are 5 million people visiting every year. We’ve got a train line that travels through it. We’ve got major highway upgrades. We’ve got the Sydney Water Catchment Area. We’ve got fire. We’ve got phytophthora. We’ve got a host of other issues.

This list of threats hints as the complexity of managing the GBMWHHA. Residents are considered low risk among a host of other issues. While some residents may stretch the boundary of their property into the World Heritage area, the Mountains residents are considered to be protective of their surrounds. In particular, the residents living along the ridgeline can be counted on to confront potentially threatening behaviour, as noted by the General Manager:

*There is quite a large concentration of lifestyle-motivated residents. It’s yesterday’s developer; tomorrow’s greenie. There are some classics here. So they are quite protective, and resistant to change. So if someone wants to propose a development that would impact on the aesthetics, because it is mostly the aesthetics of the escarpment, particularly the escarpment then, they will be shot. A proponent would be run out of town. You would never get community acceptance on that.*

The General Manager, while praising the residents on their diligence is, at the same time, poking fun at them. Stressing the residents’ protection of the aesthetics implies that, for residents, views are what they value the most. This thesis certainly does not contradict this implication. Resident’s values are discussed in detail in Chapter 5 and it is indeed the aesthetics of the area that they value over biodiversity. However, there are a contingent of Mountains residents, like conservationists and Bushcare volunteers, that are aware of and value the areas inscribed ‘natural’ values. These groups are concerned about potential threats to the GBMWHHA, however, the Katoomba NPWS believes that much of their concern is overstated as the following explains.
In conversation with a Katoomba NPWS park ranger, about threats to the GBMWHA, he shrugs and exclaims matter-of-factly that *it’s fuck’n huge, pardon my French.* He is quick to explain that the national park closest to the residential area is *a sea of national park and a small ribbon development* and this is a good thing. The argument is that the GBMWHA is so big it is mostly resilient to the effects of a small neighbouring population. This faith in the area’s size accurately reflects how the Katoomba NPWS perceives not only the World Heritage area, but how it situates itself among the other actors in the area. The area dominates both in size and importance – it is undoubtedly, as the General Manager states, a *big frog in a small pond.* This dominant position holds a lot of sway for decisions regarding tourism, as discussed in Chapter 6, but the park is also much, much larger than the developed area which is estimated to be around 1 per cent. The scientific basis for the assumption is not forthcoming during my interviews, but science is not the basis of my conversations with rangers in the Katoomba Regional Office. The basis of the conversations about the GBMWHA is the significance placed on *skills and knowledge gained through experience.* This significance is reiterated on the first page of the Blue Mountains Regional Operations plan which lauds the Katoomba NPWS’s ‘diverse skill set and a depth of knowledge highly recognised within the NSW Public Service, the community and by visitors to the region’ (DECCW & NSW NPWS 2011: 2).

Taking into account the Katoomba NPWS’ depth of knowledge on the integrity of the GBMWHA, the overall picture is positive. There are clearly some problems caused by the steeply descending World Heritage boundary, but the sudden drop in altitude means things are not as bad as they could be. The resident population sits high along the escarpment and so naturally any runoff flows straight down into the World Heritage area whereas, according to a ranger, *most areas in the world – it’s the opposite way around. The ribbons developments are in the valley systems and things don’t spread up-hill as readily as what they do down-hill. So there’s gravity.* This down-hill, or down-stream effect is well known to the Council, discussed in the previous chapter, who strive to find better ways of decreasing the amount of runoff that gets carried down the steeply sloping sides of the escarpment. But there are also one or two advantages that few people
outside the World Heritage area are aware of, as one ranger explains: *A lot of people go ‘oh, it’s all doom-and-gloom’ the urban-rich environments that are favouring weed species.* The doom-and-gloom people the ranger is referring to are members of various conservation societies and Bushcare volunteers who, as discussed in the previous chapter, are an influential voice in the Mountains.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the conservation groups are vigilant watchdogs in the area and, although they are sympathetic to Katoomba NPWS’ lack of resources, discussed above, they speak out about developments or management decisions they see as being contrary to conservation. They are especially concerned about pests as a threat to the GBMWHA but according to the ranger:

_Technically, he explains, “They’ve got it wrong because the reality of it is that most of the Blue Mountains landscape is very nutrient-poor environment as far as sandstone soils go so the only bits that can only ever be invaded are along the riparian zone. So a lot of these species are never going to colonise the broader area. But then there’s another thing which most people don’t realise. If you look at the species composition across the Blue Mountains there’s probably about 500 exotic species that have been brought in. But the big advantage is that the majority of these species are brought in because they grow in this climatic zone. The minute the seed goes off the plateau and into the [World Heritage Area] it’s a hostile environment to them. So what I’m saying is yes, there are some species that will go nutso all through the system, but there’s a whole range of species that are basically restricted to the urban fringe.”_

Weeds then are not too much of a concern for rangers, as long as they remain in the developed setting. While a lack of regulation regarding encroachment, pests and weeds is a minor issue it can be deadly serious when the issue of fire is raised. Much of the 2011/12 Operations plan for the BMNP is dedicated to managing bush fires, which threaten the region every year. The last big fire to destroy hectares of
the World Heritage area and threaten homes and lives was in 1997. According to a Katoomba NPWS senior manager, the backlash from the public and conservation groups following the fire was vicious and directed at the perceived negligence and inadequacies of the Katoomba NPWS. Fire management of the area (discussed in Chapter 4) mostly involves clearing around properties through slashing or burning. To be effective through their fire management program, a good relationship with neighbours is essential. However this “relationship” can amount to little more than persistent and aggressive demands from residents for the Katoomba NPWS to clear around private properties.

The real and present threat of fire creates an uneasy relationship with these neighbours. As a senior officer points out it’s a complex issue. I don’t know if there’s ever a happy relationship with some members of the community. He highlights the sensitivity of the association by explaining that relationships run generally smoothly, but can be incited easily by outside parties. Using the issue of insurance as an example he explains that the Katoomba NPWS are in an exposed situation in that:

all it would take is for the insurance companies to change their insurance policies with regard to people living in bushland environments and I believe everybody would be against us – the relationship is that sensitive with people whose house is the number one asset for people. If the insurance agencies change their insurance requirements and their number one asset is at risk then they can look toward [the NPWS] in fear of losing it.

This fragility in the relationship between Katoomba NPWS staff and some residents again highlights the difficulties in managing a property when not everyone is following the rules. It additionally emphasises the problems of managing a large property on a small budget. Decisions to squeeze resources are coming from high up in the OEH which, for some long-term staff, is a familiar routine which causes frustration as the following quote demonstrates:

A lot of the problems in parks originate off-park, but we don’t have the resources to get that message across. Under the Acts there are
regulations to enforce or educate for that, but a lot of it is just lip service. That’s why when I look at the austerity measures, cutback of the public service there’s a lot more to what makes a society happy and healthy and compassionate than base-line economics. It’s stupid because when you cut back a lot of those environmental services fall by the wayside and all of a sudden they go “shit, this is a problem” they throw resources at it, it builds back up and then you’re back into this cycle of cut-backs.

This cutback cycle has been most recently demonstrated by the redundancy of the Pest Management Officer (PMO) position within the Katoomba NPWS for the GBMWHA. The role of the PMO was to work in conjunction with everybody who had pest problems – inside or outside the park. Subsequently, pest management has become a mainstreamed operation within the World Heritage area that no longer has a leader or point of contact for pest issues that straddle the buffer zone. Further consequences of losing the PMO is the loss of the big picture – how and where pests are a problem for the whole of the World Heritage area and surrounding property. As one ranger notes:

There is nobody in [the NPWS] championing cooperative control. You’ve got a series of players at a series of different levels – everything from area manager to field officers to rangers … all contributing their bit. There is no person with a strategic overview anymore.

The ‘strategic overview’ is a casualty of one of the ‘cycles of cutbacks’ the NPWS has undergone since World Heritage inscription in 2000. It leaves the Katoomba NPWS with a critical gap in the ‘big picture’ needed to create a local network. While the Katoomba NPWS must adapt to the changing environment, the lack of roles like the PMO arguably translate to a direct loss in opportunities or ability for negotiation when it comes to communicating the areas OUV. Establishing the lines of communication between the different areas is a tall order, especially when there is no coordinator role and little resources. The biggest problem is
that the Katoomba NPWS staff are often office bound with administration work. Administration, budgeting and meetings are referred to by staff in the Katoomba office as *other work*, which is considered to take staff away from the real work *on the ground*, such as *track work or battling weeds and feral animals*. The increase in ‘other work’ means that the Katoomba NPWS is lucky if it can, at times, put three rangers on the ground on any given day. With three rangers in the one million hectares of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area the situation is less than ideal for maintaining and communicating World Heritage values to residents. Given the residents, misconceptions regarding World Heritage, discussed in Chapter 5, better communication is needed however this, among other things, is not high on the list of priorities for the Katoomba NPWS, despite provocative replies from residents when questioned about biodiversity conservation:

Me: Do you think that if you did know why the place was listed you would think differently about it?

Resident: Well no. No, no. If it’s just the eucalypt trees? Well they’re going to be there. We don’t really need to protect them I don’t think.

When presented with this comment, the General Manager admitted to me that they could have done a better job of communicating the reasons for World Heritage inscription to residents. I mentioned the lack of awareness in the Mountains community regarding the area’s OUV, discussed in Chapter 5, and he was not surprised. As highlighted above, the World Heritage Unit does take some of the responsibility for communicating and interpretation of World Heritage, but decreasing budgets mean they have had to push World Heritage communication down the list of priorities. According to the General Manager, maintaining the ecological integrity of the GBMWHA is a *priority above telling stories about World Heritage*. This comment hints at a slight scepticism among senior managers at the Katoomba NPWS as to whether local people actually care about World Heritage status. Although they acknowledge that there is a strong contingent of conservationists in the Mountains, they also suspect that the
The majority of the population were motivated to move to the Mountains to escape Sydney’s rising property prices. One senior manager jokes that most Mountains residents *think they’re living in a World Heritage area*. The misconceptions about World Heritage boundaries and the reason for inscription appear to be benign enough to Katoomba NPWS as they have made no overtures to correct them.

This section has further demonstrated how the Katoomba NPWS can act as an obligatory passage point through the act of non-negotiation. Negotiating with residents of the Mountains towns is problematic at the outset if residents do not associate the Katoomba NPWS with managing World Heritage. Including the residents in the World Heritage landscape could be taken to mean that the Katoomba NPWS see them as merely another aspect to be managed, rather than actors with which to negotiate or communicate World Heritage values. This rendering of residents as management objects, rather than fellow land managers complicates the creation of a local network, as does the lack of staff with specific responsibilities and skills to engage with residents. Given the physical characteristics of the World Heritage area and small population, it is more likely that negotiations between Katoomba NPWS and residents are rare because they are not seen as posing a threat to the area’s values. Possibly, this ‘non-threatening’ role of residents disinclines the Katoomba NPWS to use already stretched resources to communicate World Heritage values.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated that natural World Heritage management involves more than Stolton et al. (2012) suggest in the epithet to this chapter. While it does involve biodiversity conservation, budgeting, personnel management and staff welfare as well as providing education on the OUV of the site – these activities are the tip of the iceberg. These activities are critically dependent on systems, mechanisms, institutes and *negotiations* with other actors which need to support, reinforce and promote these activities. This chapter has provided an insight into the ‘business’ of managing a World Heritage area. It has also indicated that ‘business as usual’ is a dynamic situation. As the first section of the chapter suggests, the structure and administration of the NPWS has
changed since GBMWH A inscription and so business as usual is as much about an approach to management as it is about adapting to these changes. It is clear that, within the current bureaucratic environment at least, a business as usual approach makes good business sense. However, their business as usual approach to managing World Heritage has severely impacted their ability to create a ‘local network’ in part due to the nature of the negotiating spaces where the Katoomba NPWS form, or does not form, associations with other actors. This chapter has demonstrated that the NPWS Katoomba maintains its role as obligatory passage point regardless: even with a patchwork local network and irregular or non-existent negotiation. However, the Katoomba NPWS’ reluctance to define and distribute roles to actors other than local conservationists, has a considerable impact on the World Heritage network, which is explained only in part by the business as usual narrative. All three narratives posed in this thesis interact and co-constitute the World Heritage network; therefore, a deeper analysis of the three narratives and their broader implications follows in the next chapter.
Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusion

In the aftermath of World Heritage inscription, media coverage and celebrations what becomes of World Heritage sites? Those involved in the decades-long drive to put the Greater Blue Mountains Area on the World Heritage list - conservationists and state and national governments of the day - live on in the record books. The reality of what to do with World Heritage is left to the site managers to decide. In this moment, between inscription and implementation, World Heritage makes a profound transformation from concept to reality. The idea, hope and desire that the Greater Blue Mountains be inscribed with World Heritage status becomes a practical undertaking. In other words, it becomes reified. This research suggests that the reification of World Heritage in the GBMWHA is not immediately obvious. Indeed, the absence of any indicators would make it difficult for a visitor to ‘fortuitously’ learn of the area’s World Heritage inscription. Chapter 1 revealed the ‘process’ of World Heritage that is made up of intergovernmental relations, advisory bodies, administration, documents, procedures, ‘decisions’ and other materialities. This research suggests that following World Heritage inscription, as Law (2004:29) suggests, ‘the materiality of the process gets deleted’. The labour, people, objects, time, scale and the process itself fade away after World Heritage inscription. World Heritage, in itself, is not material nor, for that matter, is OUV. Both World Heritage and OUV are concepts that must be attached or anchored to something in order for them to be materialised. Put simply, World Heritage must be communicated because it does not speak for itself.

The three narratives that emerged in this research are demonstrative of how and why World Heritage depends on others for a voice and what can happen if not all actors translate World Heritage the same way. The narratives of disengagement, lost opportunities and business as usual, are unique contributions to research on World Heritage sites. From a methodological perspective, a significant outcome of this research is that it is not the existence of World Heritage in the GBMWHA that has created these narratives. It is the narratives that have influenced and
shaped the way World Heritage has been implemented. In other words, to return to the aim of this thesis, the effects of World Heritage, disengagement, lost opportunity and business as usual, depend on how World Heritage has been translated. Furthermore, the translation of World Heritage is not the result of one actor, or a group of actors or even several groups of actors. Its translation resides in the associations between these actors. The translation of World Heritage is an effect of the network.

The network of narratives

The narratives of this thesis are the result of engaging in a continuous dialogue with the empirical data (Becker 1998). The outcomes of these three narratives - disengagement, lost opportunity, and business as usual compose a complex relationship with World Heritage inscription in the GBMWHA. By staying true to my decision to use ANT as the primary method of analysis, I have drawn these narratives from associations between actors, human and non-human, in the GBMWHA, which include residents, state and local government, tourism, conservationists, trees, OUV, highways, viewing platforms, signs, views and more. There is overlap among these actors where residents were involved in tourism, work for either state or local government and some were additionally members of conservation societies and local Bushcare groups. Trees and viewing platforms were simultaneously loved and hated and both viewed as the embodiment and antithesis of World Heritage values. In other words, these heterogeneous materials formed networks within networks and actors, Latour (2005) reminds us, are also networks. Thus, these three narratives, to follow Law’s modest sociology, must do more than tell stories; they must tell of how they are ‘performed or embodied … in the network of relations’ (Law 1993: 20).

Disengagement

This network of relations begins with the performance or embodiment of World Heritage by the residents of the GBMWHA. While some World Heritage authors have noted the existence of disengagement or indifference in research into World Heritage sites (Evans 2002; Harrington 2004; Pannell 2006) it has not, until now, been explored in any detail. For many residents in this case study World Heritage
is little more than an appendix to other more pressing concerns of life in the Blue Mountains. The area was, and still is, protected as a national park replete with rules and regulations that residents are aware of and generally support. These regulations are administered and policed by the NSW NPWS, and are rarely questioned or considered. The local council is the residents’ main relation with the local and broader environment and with issues related to their day-to-day lives. For this reason, residents often relate World Heritage issues to the local council and, by extension, consider their compliance with council regulation to be a satisfactory means of contributing to the area’s conservation. If they are aware of residential environmental controls and regulations such as recycling, fire prevention, and weed management then they are doing their bit to maintain World Heritage values. Yet, they are not particularly interested in what those values are.

The result for World Heritage, in this narrative of disengagement, is that it loses its intended meaning. Its UNESCO assigned importance, indeed its very existence, is overshadowed by the day-to-day lives of residents. World Heritage asks nothing extra of them and so, generally, it gets nothing extra from them. This disengagement is perpetrated by the area’s OUV and the difficulty residents have engaging with it. OUV in the GBMWHA, like any other World Heritage area, is defined by a precise and carefully articulated set of criteria. These criteria, along with integrity and authenticity, are the corner-stone of the World Heritage Convention. But residents do not relate to heritage in this technically articulated way. Consider the terms ‘biological diversity’ and ‘sclerophyll ecosystems’ and it is perhaps not difficult to understand the difficulty. As argued elsewhere, attachment to heritage is more likely motivated by ‘moods and feelings’ than by technical or rational thinking (Arrhenius on Alois Riegl 2003: 51). However, it is a small but significant step between misunderstanding World Heritage and being disengaged from it. Biodiversity, as the area’s OUV, takes this step and the result is that residents mistakenly attribute OUV to aesthetics to a degree where they are reluctant to consider any alternative. So embedded is the certainty of the World Heritage worthiness of the area’s beauty that residents, if told of the reasons for OUV, remain unconvinced. The fact that the World Heritage
Committee did not inscribe the property for aesthetic reasons, makes little difference to how World Heritage is performed by, or embodied in, the area’s residents.

Lost opportunities

The narrative of lost opportunities points to a gap between ‘expected’ opportunities and ‘actual’ opportunities of World Heritage implementation. For the local government, these expectations were based on the presumption that they would be a ‘partner’ in managing the World Heritage area. In the World Heritage network the local council is in a precarious position, physically and politically. Its LGA sits at the top of the World Heritage area yet, largely due to Australia’s constitution, it does not have any formal responsibility for managing the area (BMCC 2001). The expectations of the local tourism industry, on the other hand, were not grounded in any evidence that World Heritage makes a significant change to tourism. Surprisingly for the local tourism board, they have needed to sell World Heritage. A selling-point of the GBMWHA is its accessibility via the Great Western Highway, which is not without its problems regarding aesthetic and environmental threats to the area. The local volunteer Bushcare organisations and conservation societies are disappointed with World Heritage implementation for entirely different reasons. They did not expect improvements in their own organisations, like the local council, nor did they expect profits from World Heritage inscription, like the tourism industry. They expected others to increase their commitments to conserving the GBMWHA. In a sense, the actors in the narrative of lost opportunities are the most affected by other narratives in the network. The narrative of disengagement prevents residents from greater appreciation of World Heritage values and the narrative of business as usual means the Katoomba NPWS have used existing conservation operations for the area. The outcome for the narrative of lost opportunity is that World Heritage implementation has been performed, for the most part, as a story of continuity, rather than change.
Business as usual

Stolten, et al. (2012: 12) refer to World Heritage management as an art. Yet, the narrative that emerges from the managers of the GBMWHA is one of business as usual. Far from sounding like a declaration of artistic expression, the narrative, nonetheless, embodies a type of artistic device: that of illusion. They manage a vast area which is difficult to access and equally difficult to monitor. They perform this magic trick with little staff, resources and many competing priorities. Yet, they appear to have the situation, largely, in hand. The art, perhaps, is in not letting World Heritage overwhelm existing priorities and resources in an area that, for all intents and purposes, is well-managed. For the Katoomba NPWS the performance of World Heritage is confined by existing norms and routine practices which, to a large extent, are artefacts of government departments, but also related to funding and other constraints. Questions of what to do with World Heritage, how it is to be communicated, what changes should/could be made and by whom, and what, would be the purpose or outcome of making these changes pose theoretical and practical dilemmas.

The result is a display of mixed feelings about how to practice World Heritage. The answer to this question is as varied and numerous as the number of World Heritage sites, but the simplest and most efficient way to practice World Heritage is to make it fit within existing practices. The Katoomba NPWS developed guiding principles on the management of the area in the form of the GBMWHA Strategic Plan. Yet the day-to-day operations of the World Heritage area are still wholly embedded in the Operational Plans for each individual national park. The result is that the narrative of business as usual fundamentally interacts with the other narratives in the network through the negotiation of territories. Territoriality, put simply, is a ‘geographic strategy to control people and things by controlling area’ (Sack 1983, 1986: 5). Through this ‘extended action’ of access and control (Sack 1983: 56) territoriality positions the Katoomba NPWS as the obligatory passage point. However, to suggest that it is simply territory that defines Katoomba NPWS as the obligatory passage point is missing the point of an actor-network analysis. The three narratives, which are networks too, work separately and together to translate World Heritage.
Translating World Heritage

Returning to the ANT cannon of following the actors, this final chapter recollects the questions regarding how actors behave in certain circumstances, how they enrol other actors, how actors interact with each other and how these interactions help define the roles of other actors. First, who are the GBMWHA actors? Actors in this World Heritage network were most commonly described in the data as groups of actors, rather than individual actors. These groups are referred to by colloquial names for government departments such as ‘parks’ (short for NSW Parks and Wildlife Service) or ‘locals’, ‘the council’ or ‘greenies’. Empirically, there emerged a clear habit of associating certain behaviour with certain groups - groups whose roles were defined through their relationships with other groups.

If actor-networks are formed through the process of translation then a most crucial question to ask in the final chapter of this thesis is - how has World Heritage been translated in the network? The short answer is that World Heritage has been consistently translated as, what can be best defined, a concept. Through tracing the associations between actors it is the idea of World Heritage that is enrolled and transformed into various versions of a World Heritage concept according to the three narratives. The result, or effect, of this network translation is a rather slippery and confusing reification of World Heritage. It has not been generally translated as a function or a thing to be put to use, but rather as a notion, a possibility, that, through the various associations within the network, allows actors to contemplate its potential functions and uses without being fully able to act on them.

However, as Callon (1986: 19) reminds us ‘translation is a process before it is a result’. Thus, before we can talk about the translation of World Heritage it is necessary first to recall the process of translation and this is done by following Callon’s four moments of translation discussed in Chapter 2. The four moments of translation are problematisation, interessment, enrolment and mobilisation. The following section attempts to deconstruct the process of how World Heritage has been translated. It is clear that if we express World Heritage, in ANT
translatory terms, as a problem in need of a solution, without clearly defining that solution, then the subsequent steps in the translation process are severely compromised.

The first step in the process, problematisation, is critical in the successful translation of a program or innovation. It provides the necessary groundwork for the pre-formation of a network. Problematisation, defining a solution to a problem or a particular goal, is necessary to use as a device to attract potential actors. Problematisation, if in this case is taken to mean World Heritage as a specific, cohesive concept, is conspicuously absent in the GBMWHA. While there is clearly a specific, common goal among actors tasked with nominating the property (to get the area inscribed on the World Heritage list) there is no plan for what happens after inscription. In this case, I would argue that the absence of such a definition has not prevented attracting actors in the GBMWHA. Indeed, as this research suggests, there are actors that had expectations of World Heritage inscription. But as a consequence of having no precise idea of what the outcomes of inscription would be, the actors have been attracted by the concept, rather than by the reality of World Heritage. A concept is, however, not a specific cohesive definition and this erroneous problematisation has, from the outset, affected the subsequent moments of translation.

The problematisation of an imprecise concept has subsequently compounded the difficulty in completing the second movement in the translation of World Heritage - interestment. As suggested in the three narratives of disengagement, lost opportunities and business as usual there are more than one understanding of the concept of World Heritage. While the actors in this research are interested by World Heritage as a concept, the absence of a goal based on the reality of World Heritage inscription has consequences for the next step – enrolment.

That World Heritage was able to enrol actors at all, without an explicit goal, is testament to the credible and perhaps idealistic nature of World Heritage. Indeed, the absence of a unified goal may even be a strength of the World Heritage concept. It is perhaps the hope and aspiration that it holds for many actors
(tourism and conservation especially) that makes it unnecessary to interest actors with a single explicit outcome. In the absence of an explicit goal, the actors in this case have devised much more optimistic conceptual goals on their own. So World Heritage does manage to enrol actors, but without the cohesiveness of a unified goal, enrolment is partial and patchwork. Thus, the next step, mobilisation, flounders.

Despite the initial enthusiasm and interest regarding World Heritage, without a common, specific goal the network has failed to mobilise to any great extent. At least, mobilisation has not occurred at an integrated, network scale. Much like a philharmonic orchestra playing a multilayered and complex musical composition without a conductor, the individual musicians have difficulty keeping time and slowly as the sections no longer listen to each other, the orchestra is unable to perform as a unified ensemble. Or, as Callon would describe it: to successfully translate is ‘to establish oneself as a spokesman. At the end of the process, if it is successful, only voices speaking in unison will be heard’ (Callon 1986: 19, my emphasis). The major point of difference between Callon’s study of translation and this one is that for Callon, at the beginning of the translation process, the actors were separate and had no means, or reason, to communicate with each other. At the end of the process, the actors had been unified, in an intelligible manner, by a discourse of certainty (1986: 19). By contrast, in the GBMWHA, the actors already had the means and the reasons to communicate with each other. Some of these reasons are motivated by required regulation and administration of state and local governments and their constituents. But reasons, particularly regarding World Heritage, are often irregular, reactive and extemporaneous. These established relations between actors in the GBMWHA are not altered by the inscription and implementation of World Heritage and this is perhaps why, as the three narratives suggest, the translation of World Heritage is defined, more accurately, by a discourse of uncertainty.

This discourse of uncertainty is consistent with much of the World Heritage literature discussed in Chapter 1. The themes that I identified from the literature emerged from a critical reading and, though not all the sites are inscribed for
natural values, they provided what Charmaz (2006: 16) refers to as ‘sensitising concepts’ for my research into the GBMWHA. However, a missing discourse of World Heritage in the GBMWHA generally, and any tangible effects of World Heritage inscription specifically, came as a surprise. What Muir termed as the ‘dream proposal’ for the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage nomination, indicated that there was no opposition to the nomination. It may be that controversial nominations, like some other Australian World Heritage sites mentioned in Chapter 2, do help to catapult World Heritage onto the public stage (ACIUCN 2013). Nevertheless, in this case, over a decade after inscription, what emerges is not a contradictory or conflicting World Heritage, but an ‘everyday World Heritage’. World Heritage was something of a conversation killer. Residents were indifferent about it and conservation groups and the local Council appear disappointed with World Heritage. The official managers absorb World Heritage into the every-day, business as usual running of the national parks where efficiency and effectiveness are necessary.

That is not to say that this everyday World Heritage is not without tensions, but these tensions are not at once obvious to the casual observer. There is evidence of confusion regarding the World Heritage criteria, reasons for inscription and responsibility for management cutting across all three narratives. Residents, the Katoomba NPWS and BMCC were confused about responsibility for promotion and who should benefit from World Heritage status. In some cases, the confusion has led to muddied waters regarding both promotion and benefits – particularly funding which was an expected outcome of inscription and so disappointment has crept in to the day-to-day dealing with the area’s World Heritage status. This disappointment is most starkly demonstrated through the World Heritage Unit, which feels it needs to reinforce the significance of World Heritage status without being able to substantiate the significance with tangible outcomes like extra funding. Mistrust has always existed between certain groups, particularly the conservationists and farmers, whose views do not always correspond to the management of the GBMWHA and routinely question the motivations of both the Katoomba NPWS and BMCC.
Expecting to find more obvious tensions in the World Heritage area, based on my reading of the literature, made the data analysis for this thesis by far the most difficult and time-consuming aspect. Because my interviews were semi-structured and open-ended, interviewees were free to discuss any issues, regardless of whether they related to World Heritage. As mentioned in Chapter 5, a regular phrase from the interviewees was ‘I don’t know if this has anything to do with World Heritage but …’. This response led me on many a ‘wild goose chase’ looking for evidence of whether something was or was not ‘anything to do with World Heritage’. It is a conclusion of this thesis that this response is a symptom of the lack of awareness or concern residents have about World Heritage inscription and contributed to the narrative of disengagement. However, the responses were also an indication of a much larger pattern emerging in the data: that almost anything could be attributed to World Heritage. The effects of World Heritage, as distinct from the effects of other processes or management and planning, were difficult to isolate. World Heritage could be associated with almost anything that was, or was not, happening in the GBMWHA from blocked access into the national parks to the installation of paid parking stations. Likewise, when I began interviewing staff from the Katoomba NPWS and BMCC, they were free to speak of any projects or programs they were working on or any events or incidences they felt would be useful for me to know. Like the residents, they were just as likely to speak of issues that were not directly related to World Heritage inscription.

Aside from being an arduous task, determining what effects, empirically, could be attributed to World Heritage inscription, raised questions about the academic and popular perceptions of World Heritage. The ease with which World Heritage can be linked to all manner of problems and the associated difficulty of substantiating those links problematises a component of the World Heritage literature (see Hølleland 2013; Labadi 2005 for related reflections). Arguments about values (natural, cultural, universal, local) and other measures or categories of defining heritage or processes for assessing heritage are a valid and perhaps necessary contribution to the World Heritage literature. The UNESCO World Heritage Convention’s (as well as other peak heritage bodies such as ICOMOS
and IUCN) categories and definitions are generally regarded as universally representative and, for this reason, should be questioned and contested. However, when the literature turns to issues of politics, especially World Heritage politics, then, at the site level, the waters become muddied. The quotidian aspects of some World Heritage sites are likely to be plagued by local, regional or national problems with policy, planning and decision-making. I would argue that it is possible that political imbroglios of this nature often have little, if anything, to do specifically with World Heritage.

The World Heritage network

Following on from the four moments of translation, we can speculate that the World Heritage network is an astringent one that draws actors together, yet lacks the capacity to truly enrol them. Arguably, the strength of World Heritage lies in its almost universal acceptance and ratification. World Heritage alludes to a unifying power that sends an unequivocal message to the world that the conservation of heritage is, we all agree, worthwhile. Yet, narratives of World Heritage in the GBMWHA are far from universal in nature. The World Heritage literature shows that World Heritage is interpreted and used in a range of different ways and that even sites within countries are not the same. So why is this? What makes World Heritage so susceptible to varying interpretation and corresponding use or non-use? The imprecision of the Convention is partly to blame and, according to the literature, the political and economic agendas of States Parties influence how World Heritage is used. This research suggests that there are a complex of network factors at play in how World Heritage is perceived and used. Actors in, and around, the World Heritage site are all influential depending on their relations to each other. The site itself; its particular characteristics encourage, discourage and influence how it is interpreted and used through its relations with other actors. Exploring World Heritage and following the actors using ANT methods suggests that it is not the actors acting on their own that determine what World Heritage is and how it is used. It is an effect of a network of relationships between the actors and their narratives.
In an ANT analysis, nothing about these actors is predetermined (Callon 1999). Rather, the analysis has attempted to highlight, as Callon suggests, the *radical indeterminacy* of these actors (1999: 181 original emphasis). For example, I did not, *a priori*, ascribe characteristics to World Heritage such as universal, outstanding, or functional as it is represented in the UNESCO texts. An ANT analysis suggests that World Heritage is less the embodiment of these ‘textual’ characteristics and more the idea of them. World Heritage possesses the potential for these characteristics through its *translations* by other actors in the network, but essentially fails to enrol any of the other actors fully enough to realise this potential. The group who originally pushed for World Heritage nomination and, after many years, were successful now constitute only a small and ancillary part of the network. After the initial celebrations there remained a vacuum where the original, dedicated group went on with other things and the network gradually came to largely consist of actors who, though supportive of World Heritage inscription, were not instrumental in the process. After nomination of a World Heritage site there is little contact between the site and the World Heritage Committee or UNESCO, with the exception of Periodic Reporting or Reactive Monitoring Missions. The main GBMWHA authority, the state, does not have the resources to launch dedicated, sustained programs that focus on communicating World Heritage values (with the exception of the World Heritage Unit programs within the Katoomba NPWS), instead electing to focus on the area’s maintenance. The actors with the most desire for promoting World Heritage, the local government, do not possess the authority or autonomy to do so.

Despite the inability for World Heritage to *translate* from idea or concept into something tangible and functional, it still carries universally sanctioned weight as a ‘brand’. This ‘brand aura’ provides World Heritage with the assertion of authenticity (Alexander 2009) which, by States Parties at least, is rarely questioned. From a heritage conservation perspective, World Heritage is an award of the highest order and therefore must be important even if, like the residents, the reasons for World Heritage inscription are not fully known or understood. World Heritage is a well-known, though nebulous, concept that, in this case, evokes little negativity or critique. While it neither promotes nor
encourages resident action, it is a popular concept in that it is readily accepted by the general public. If popularity is a measure of success, then World Heritage has been extremely successful in the GBMWHA. However, if judged against the criteria of the Convention’s requirement of World Heritage having a function in the life of the community, then World Heritage has not been able to act as more than an occasional and token, if somewhat misunderstood, source of pride. The fact remains that even if World Heritage is considered the gold standard in heritage conservation, the state authorities have been acting as the accepted and effectual guardians of the area long before World Heritage inscription. Perhaps the outcomes of this research would be very different if the GBMWHA had no pre-existing protection and World Heritage inscription was the sole means of protection for the GBMWHA.

So far in this chapter, the actors and their associations in the World Heritage have been dealt with directly and to some extent the three narratives as actors in the network have been alluded to. Here we address this possibility of the narratives as actors directly by asking the question of what kind of network is constituted by the relationship between disengagement, lost opportunities and business as usual? It seems that these narratives of World Heritage are inadvertently conspiring to limit the potential of World Heritage implementation in the GBMWHA. What is less clear is what the function/utility/worth of World Heritage inscription in the GBMWHA could be if these narratives were not acting together to subdue World Heritage potential. ANT analysis would suggest that this ‘stalemate’ of narratives is a type of black-boxing. Once a network is stable the relations that constitute it become routinised and consequently invisible. It is safe to claim, at this stage in the thesis, that the three narratives are only observable under close inspection. That is to say, that this research has brought these three narratives to the fore and, without it, they may have remained camouflaged by the inconspicuousness of everyday, normative routines. In ANT, this is exactly the kind of camouflaging that characterizes a black box. The network is stable in order to sustain itself; but once stabilised, its network of relationships becomes taken for granted. Relationships and roles become accepted and overt
tensions within the network are minimal. The network is functional and, most importantly, predictable and ordinary - it has become normalised.

Latour states that ‘the operation of black-boxing is made possible by the availability of credibility’ (Latour and Woolgar 1986: 242). Few would argue that World Heritage status is credible. The increasing annual number of nominations for World Heritage alone suggests that the World Heritage brand is highly coveted. For whatever reason this may be, the brand is associated with some of the most iconic heritage places in the world and remains a popular guarantee, at least in tourism, for a quality tourism experience. However, this ANT analysis has offered little in the way of uncovering the practical outcomes, functions or tangible uses of World Heritage in the GBMWHA that would be expected to be a natural extension of such a credible brand. Indeed, the credibility of World Heritage inscription makes the value of inscribing World Heritage sites difficult to dispute. Latour defines credibility as a product of credit such as money, authority, confidence and reward - in fact, all the things assumed, rightly or wrongly, to be part of the World Heritage package. Whether these assumed attributes are evident in World Heritage sites or not, the assumption that World Heritage is credible is self-sustaining. The outcome of the three narratives means that World Heritage has become less susceptible to scrutiny and, provided the actors in the World Heritage network appear convinced by its credibility, the network is black-boxed.

As a consequence of this black-boxing, the popular perception of World Heritage continues its universal appeal without question. How it works or if there could be other, better ways of using it remain unexplored areas of investigation. However, as Luck points out in her ANT analysis of teaching software, it is difficult to study an actor network after it has been black-boxed (2008). Ideally, World Heritage would need to be studied (and the actors followed) prior to, or just after, the inscription of a property as World Heritage is being introduced to the site and the concept is being implemented. In the GBMWHA, 11 years after inscription, the World Heritage network is firmly established. Despite the pockets of discontent hinted at in this analysis, World Heritage is a stable and accepted
every-day feature of the area. Only open dissent or subversion by actors is likely to open the black box. Although, Latour warns that some little thing is always missing to prevent the black box from closing indefinitely (1987). This ‘little thing’, in the case of World Heritage could come from the World Heritage Committee. The Committee is an actor in the World Heritage network, but it acts from afar and has little bearing on activities in the World Heritage area except to insure, through the World Heritage Convention, that States Parties are maintaining the OUV of their World Heritage properties. UNESCO can revoke World Heritage status if it feels the OUV is, or will be, compromised by development to the area. This threat is largely theoretical in the case of the GBMWHA, as the area is considered too vast to be at any real risk of losing its OUV. However unlikely, the threat is real and may just be ‘that some little thing’ that Latour is referring to.

At this point, there is another aspect that needs to be dealt with directly and that is the role that World Heritage plays as an actor in the network. First we need to determine whether World Heritage is really an actor at all. As discussed in Chapter 2, in an ANT analysis, it is not only the actors that make up the network. There are also intermediaries - an ANT concept introduced in Chapter 5 in the form of Echo Point and the GBMWHA Strategic Plan and in Chapter 6, in the form of weeds. For Callon (1991), an intermediary can be anything passing between actors which defines the relationship between them. Callon focuses on four types of intermediaries - texts, technical artefacts, humans and money. As earlier chapters have demonstrated, these intermediaries have been put into circulation by actors to define, explore and stabilise things like skills, knowledge, actions, values and the relations between actors. So with this definition in mind, is World Heritage an actor or an intermediary? I would argue that World Heritage more closely conforms to the latter in the case of the GBMWHA.

Callon (1991) explains that the differences between actors and intermediaries can be ambiguous. It can either be seen as merely a link between those who conceived the idea for creating a list of heritage places of universal importance, or something that is deliberately distinguished from everything surrounding it.
Thus, World Heritage could be an intermediary put into circulation by actors or it could be ‘a dignified actor that may introduce unexpected and unprogrammed sequences and associations’ (Callon 1991: 142). By this definition, it seems unlikely that World Heritage is an actor in the network – although I cannot argue absolutely against its potential to introduce unexpected associations. The three narratives are indeed unexpected. However, World Heritage does seem to more accurately fit the definition of an intermediary, both social and technical (Law 1994) which has been conceived, redefined, negotiated and managed by actors.

This negotiation of World Heritage suggests that there is no single World Heritage. Rather than speak of World Heritage as a universal or general concept, it is more accurate to speak of it as something specific. Its specificity depends on how (or if) it is being practiced (Law and Lien 2013: 366; Lien and Law 2011).

If we return for a moment to the process of translation, then viewing World Heritage as an intermediary, rather than an actor, provides further clarity. Latour addresses intermediaries directly in mapping the process of translation (Latour 1991) where actors use them to define borders and goals and to distribute and delegate responsibilities. However, translations are subject to the convention of the day. In the GBMWHA that means that roles of actors are dictated, to a large degree, by legislation. Specifically, the current convention, that is the rules and regulations that govern us, determines who can speak for the GBMWHA. These rules and regulations and the designation of an authoritative body (the Katoomba NPWS) undoubtedly impacts the translation of World Heritage and the outcome, according to Callon (1991), is that the network stabilises in a predictable, conventional way.

Despite this stabilisation, the network develops the characteristics of what Callon (1991) calls ‘weakly convergent’. Rather than the network speaking with a unified voice and focusing on a single, unified goal, as would be the case in a totally convergent network, the actors question their status in the network and struggle to mobilise others in pursuing their goals. Usually, total convergence would lead to a stable, or black-boxed network. However, if the regime of translations is well established through an obligatory passage point, then weakly convergent
networks like this one are rendered stable and predictable. Put simply, where one (or more) actor in the World Heritage network is secure in their role due to convention or legislation then other actors, less certain of their role, will question their status in the network, creating instability. In the GBMWHHA it would seem that, to a large degree, the actors have, even if reluctantly, accepted their role within the convention of the day and where networks are accepted they are also black-boxed. However, as an intermediary, the concept of World Heritage is slippery and malleable which further complicates this stability.

While the Katoomba NPWS may be certain of their to role conserve the World Heritage area, they are less certain about their responsibilities in translating World Heritage values to other actors in the network. Indeed, translation requires negotiation and this is a practice of the Katoomba NPWS that appears to be lacking. The consequences of poor translation is demonstrated in Chapter 7 in the confusion over communicating World Heritage values and suggests that intermediaries have a big part to play in the translation of World Heritage in the GBMWHHA. World Heritage, put into circulation by actors, has defined the relationship between actors - in this case the, sometimes, tense relationship between state and local government - and who can and who cannot speak on behalf of World Heritage.

While the state and local governments cannot decide who should be responsible for promoting World Heritage, or in ANT parlance, who is responsible for translating World Heritage to actors in the network, the translation is often left to chance. Subsequently, enrolment into the World Heritage network is severely limited which may, in turn, compromise the potential power to inscribe other roles within the network. Without the clear translation of World Heritage values the area remains under threat from backyard encroachment, weeds, contaminated water and fire. Thus the power to enrol other actors' interests in the World Heritage network is further weakened through relational effects in the network. If, to follow Law's advice, we talk about World Heritage in specific, rather than general, terms then the World Heritage network is a specific network. It must be carefully observed, as in this research, or either provoked to really
notice it. The three narratives impact the network’s stability through their capacity to normalise and question conventions. Thus, the network is both stable and precarious precisely because narratives are actors that are both accepted and judged.

At this point, we are faced with something of an enigmatic rendering of the effects of World Heritage implementation in the GBMWHA. This type of ‘explaining without simplifying’ is arguably a weakness of ANT analyses. Indeed, Latour warns that the best conclusion to an ANT analysis one can hope for is to ‘add in a messy way to a messy account of a messy world’ (Latour 2005: 136). In the ordering of heterogeneous materials there is no simple explanation that will bring any kind of purity to the order (Law 1993: 4). However, as a sociologist, I feel compelled to take chaos and, using the tools of my trade, transform it into order. I have attempted to focus on evocative and faithful description and overcome this urge to ‘order things’, but I find that I am like Latour’s ‘Student’ lamenting to the ‘Professor’ that:

I have to complete this doctorate. I have just eight more months. You always say ‘more descriptions’ but this is like Freud and his cures: indefinite analysis. When do you stop? My actors are all over the place! Where should I go? What is a complete description?

The ‘Professor’s’ reply is that the text, this thesis, is ‘thick’; that if my ‘description needs an explanation, it’s not a good description, that’s all’. Like the ‘Student’ I do not find this a particularly satisfactory answer and, like the ‘Student’, I have often wondered at ANT’s usefulness in providing a ‘critical edge’ at the conclusion of all my careful description.

But ANT simply does not offer any critical repertoire. Such iconoclasm goes against the ANT tenet of allowing the ‘actors themselves’ to tell their story. In Law’s modest sociology, ANT treats everyone like a ‘social philosopher’ (Law 1993: 4) and this flattening of the knowledge-making field is what most attracted me to ANT. I am certain Latour’s insufferable ‘Professor’ would find flaws in my deployment of an ANT analysis. However, I am aware of most of these flaws.
They are what make this thesis unarguably mine and I do not see them as an indication of cracks in its validity or logic but, rather, as mistakes that others can learn from - myself included. Flaws in any study are opportunities for the research to be improved or done differently. Rather than provide a perfect thesis - an industry example of how to do ANT research - I wish to present my thesis, flaws and all, as an example of Law’s modest sociology. This thesis is, after all, now another intermediary in the World Heritage network replete with its own traces, associations and story.

A constant struggle has been maintaining the discipline of affording analytical symmetry to humans and non-humans. Keynes sums up the struggle eloquently by stating that ‘the difficulty is not in the new ideas but in escaping from the old ones which ramify, for those brought up as most of us have been, into every corner of our minds’ (Keynes 1936: vii). It is this escaping from the old ideas of nature and non-humans as separate from society and humans that has been challenging. Geertz’s view is that conventional frameworks should remain the objects of study, but should have their capitals removed (1973). Having a sociological background, it has been a challenge to study Society with a little ‘s’. I have regularly had to check myself for thinking in terms of Sociology, binaries or affording analytical bias to social actors. A lifetime of thinking this way is difficult to change even when I have the will and tools to try. Writing about nature when it is no longer a homogeneous object in the background requires a new set of vocabulary (Asdal and Ween 2014). This thesis is an attempt at deploying this new vocabulary and making sense out of all the ‘actor-network noise’ (Law 2006: 1). ANT has provided a refreshing and thought-provoking method that has proved particularly useful in tackling a secondary aim of this thesis: the society/nature dichotomy.

**Closing the ‘Great Divide’: the society/nature dichotomy**

As a methodology for overcoming the society/nature dichotomy in World Heritage research ANT, despite its weaknesses, has been valuable. Many actors in this thesis blur the boundary between ‘natural’ and ‘social’. As Lien and Law (2011: 83) argue, explaining the society/nature divide is not straightforward – it is
heterogeneous, complex and inconsistent. In other words, the society/nature divide is ‘messy’ and vulnerable to such blurring. For example, the World Heritage eucalypts are actors that straddle both natural and social roles in the World Heritage network and are at odds with both their ‘World Heritage eucalypt’ and ‘backyard gumtree’ personas. While their diversity is prescribed natural World Heritage status, the Mountains residents prescribe them very social, or in some cases, anti-social, attributes. Likewise, Echo Point struggles with a dual social/natural identity. It is clearly a ‘man-made’ cultural artefact, yet its primary purpose is to enable a view of the natural World Heritage area. Its massive concrete structure sits uncomfortably in its ‘bush’ surrounds precisely because it is so jarringly social. The modern, social hustle and bustle of the vast concrete platform, parking meters, tour buses, visitor centre and people place it in opposition to the tranquil and ancient World Heritage nature that it was built to observe.

The naturalness of World Heritage is also at odds with current and traditional farming practices in the Megalong Valley despite, or perhaps due to, there being no clear physical boundary between the two. The boundary between uncleared farmland and World Heritage land is barely distinguishable, as many a wayward bushwalker has discovered. Yet, these two areas are conceptualised very differently. The farmland is considered to be the socially domesticated version of its undomesticated or wild World Heritage neighbour. The social aspects of farming, such as the domestication of non-native animals, pose a direct threat to the naturalness of World Heritage. At the same time, for the farmers, the ‘naturalness’ of World Heritage translates to ‘neglect’ and, in a reversal of circumstances, the farms are at risk of the, once domesticated but now feral, animals crossing back over the boundary. In a similar way, Bushcare volunteers operate in a strictly ‘natural’ environment that is based on preserving ‘natural’ values. Yet, their existence relies on the social activity of volunteering and their primary aim is to rid the natural area of weeds: the outcome of socially cultivated gardens.
This ‘patchwork’ of social and natural values (Lien and Law 2011) demonstrates the messiness of attempting to explain the society/nature dichotomy. In many respects, World Heritage reinforces the modern society/nature dichotomy. We can explore the role of World Heritage in the society/nature dichotomy if we continue with the argument that World Heritage is an intermediary. But first we may need to nudge forward the concept of ‘intermediary’ towards the more autonomous concept of ‘mediary’. The reasons for this nudge are explained below by Latour (1993: 80) who describes the role of an intermediary in the ontological worlds of nature and society as being nothing more than a link between two modes of explanation:

Nature and Society allow explanation because they themselves do not have to be explained. Intermediaries exist, of course, and their role is precisely to establish the link between the two, but they establish links only because they themselves lack any ontological status. They merely transport, convey transfer the power of the only two beings that are real, Nature and Society. To be sure, they may do a bad job of the transporting; they may be faithful or obtuse. But their lack of faithfulness does not give them any importance in their own right, since that is what proves, on the contrary, their intermediary status. Their competence is not their own. At worst they are brutes or slaves; at best they are loyal servants.

Latour’s warning is clear. We cannot explain World Heritage by looking toward either nature or society for an explanation. This is not because the World Heritage Convention addresses both natural and cultural values or because it has the capacity to move beyond the modern dichotomy where appropriate.\(^{49}\) It is because, in ANT, nature and society do not offer such meta-explanations. In an ANT analysis, World Heritage is endowed with its own ontological capacity because it can redefine what nature is and what society is. And this is the

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\(^{49}\) In 1992 the Convention officially recognised cultural landscapes that represent the ‘combined works of nature and of man’ (Article 1, paragraph 3).
important distinction, made by Latour (1993, 2005) between intermediaries and mediaries. As a mediary, World Heritage is not simply a link between two modes of knowledge; it has the capacity to translate what it transports, but also to redefine it and ultimately betray it. But this nudge from intermediary to mediary only makes sense if we consider World Heritage as an effect of the network. World Heritage does not undertake this redefinition seen purely as a Convention. World Heritage redefines nature and society as an effect of a heterogeneous network. Precisely because World Heritage does not speak for itself, it must be translated by others. The act of translating, as the three narratives suggest, is not a simple process of sharing knowledge about World Heritage. Indeed, translating World Heritage may say more about the actors doing the translating than it does about World Heritage. That is where the potential for either betrayal or faithful translation lies.

When actors are speaking on behalf of World Heritage they may only be ‘talking about themselves’ (Latour 1993: 143). There is no way to be sure if World Heritage is being translated faithfully, except to suggest that the role of World Heritage in the society/nature dichotomy is contingent on the roles that have been given other actors (Callon 1987; Law and Callon 1988). In the GBMWHA, these roles have translated ‘natural’ World Heritage values, rightly or wrongly, as a specific World Heritage that is neither natural nor social, but is rather a ‘quasi-object’; a hybrid of ‘object-discourse-nature-society’ (Latour 1993: 144). Latour celebrates the quasi-object ‘whose new properties will astound us all and whose network extends from my refrigerator to the Arctic by way of chemistry, law, the state, the economy and satellites’ (Latour 1993: 144). But rather, in the case of World Heritage, the network extends to Paris, 192 ratified countries and over one thousand World Heritage sites by way of legal instruments, texts, governments, meetings, decisions, criteria, values, places, conservation and people.

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50 Indeed, it can be argued that the very aim of the Convention, to safeguard the world’s outstanding universal heritage, remains dependent on the paradoxical notion that humans are the protectors and destroyers of natural and cultural values (Claeys, et al. 2011).
Conclusion

Looking back at my experience in the Fez Medina, I am forced to admit that I made assumptions about the plight of the people who lived and worked there during the ‘rehabilitation program’ as part of World Heritage implementation. Beginning my PhD and reading the World Heritage literature, I was certain that sites, like Fez, were simmering with conflict between residents and people and organisations working toward restoring the medina to its former glory. I assumed residents resented World Heritage inscription. I never got the chance to find out what was really going on in the Medina but I suspect now, at the conclusion of this thesis, that the situation was not as volatile as I had assumed. Reading back through my observations on activities in the Medina I see that:

‘There was construction going on everywhere, in the name of World Heritage conservation, yet the residents and merchants seemed to be going about their daily affairs without any pause. They did not seem particularly moved by their World Heritage status’.

Indeed, I now know better than to make assumptions.

Nevertheless, many years on I feel better equipped to investigate the effects of World Heritage on the Fez medina. I would no longer assume a priori that World Heritage has an inherent power or is ‘good’ or ‘bad’. Indeed, these attributes should be evidenced by the outcome not assumed as an inherent quality (Law 1991). Returning to Fez, a decade after inscription, I may have discovered a very different scene where the constructions were complete and the planners and managers of the site may be lamenting lost opportunities for promotion and education and I may well discover that, once the dust has settled, managing, working and living World Heritage is simply business as usual. However, generalisations of this nature should be made with caution. This research does not suggest that all World Heritage sites are the same. Indeed, it suggests that the actors involved in a particular World Heritage site will strongly influence the effects of World Heritage. Thus, to borrow from Becker (1998), the generalisation would be that variations in conditions at a World Heritage site create variations in how World Heritage is translated and thus influence the effects of World
Heritage. While there is much to be learned from a single case this thesis should ideally be positioned within the context of the wider World Heritage research to fulfil its greatest contribution. The academic and applied benefits of comparison are undeniable, particularly in the Australian context, but fully exploiting these benefits depends on much needed additional research.

The central aim of this thesis was to explore the effects of World Heritage implementation in a ‘natural’ World Heritage area. In doing so, it confronted two major challenges - the lack of Australian World Heritage research, and the limitations of traditional sociological research on the relationship between humans and the environment. The literature on World Heritage sites in Australia is inadequate and it almost exclusively focuses on controversies in sites where there are obvious threats to World Heritage values. Research on humans and their environment often reinforces social/natural binaries that risk simplifying complex and sometimes intractable situations. To overcome these challenges I, not without difficulty, renounced the notion of World Heritage as something inherently powerful or as something that has internal function, logic or coherence (Latour and Woolgar 1986) and set about the task of following actors and tracing associations in an attempt to reassemble World Heritage (Latour 2005). I pulled together threads and links between humans and non-humans to reassemble the ordering of a contingent and specific World Heritage network in situ. In doing so, I have revealed a World Heritage that is not controversial. It is an everyday World Heritage.

That is not to say that the GBMWHA is without tensions. The narratives of disengagement, lost opportunities and business as usual are the effects of associations between actors and these associations resonate softly with the sound of relationships under strain. However strained the relations may be, they are not so tense as to obviously threaten World Heritage values and so the network is rendered stable.

The three narratives of disengagement, lost opportunities and business as usual are instrumental in shaping the effects of World Heritage. The effects are
relational – the narratives shape World Heritage and at the same time World Heritage reinforces the narratives. World Heritage is defined in this context – not as a set of universally agreed criteria – but rather as a reflection of how heritage is translated every day. In a sense, World Heritage is a relational term (Becker 1998) where, in order for a universal heritage to exist, so must a local heritage exist. These two heritages are similar in name only. The former is defined by a set of universally approved criteria that measures World Heritage worthiness and the latter is a network of narratives that are undoubtedly less universal, yet indispensable to our understanding of World Heritage.

In this thesis, the effects of World Heritage are exposed as translations that are interactive and idiosyncratic. Extending Smith’s (2006) metaphor of heritage as a multilayered performance, I suggest that World Heritage is a multi-actor performance. The translations of World Heritage implicate not simply one performance, but many simultaneous performances that shape and influence other performers. What emerges is an effect that is endemic to the actors and associations peculiar to the site. The three narratives presented in this thesis are a unique example of the reification of World Heritage. How World Heritage moves, is translated or is transformed from an idea or a concept into something tangible and workable, is a central question of this thesis. These three narratives offer a powerful insight into this movement.

Moreover, the narratives strongly suggest that the implementation of World Heritage has consequences beyond the site. The key message to World Heritage implementers from this thesis is that a unified translation of World Heritage, beyond its conceptual state, is problematic when there is no clear, realistic definition of what World Heritage is or how it can be used. Where it is possible, clearly defined or assigned roles for actors that go beyond the official managers may help, particularly when associations between actors are traditionally hegemonic and when OUV is misunderstood, too abstract or less appreciated than other, local values. How to design and implement strategies and instruments that address these issues is a clear indication for further research.
While there is no escaping that an ANT analysis can be a long and bumpy road, the benefits to World Heritage research are two-fold. By adopting a ‘sociology of associations’ we open up for exploration the information-rich spaces between heterogeneous actors. These spaces in-between are where actors are associated with one another and form networks within networks; an *actor-network*. It is in these spaces where network effects are created and it is these effects that give a voice to narratives in the World Heritage network. Thus, the twin contributions to World Heritage research are the revelation of an everyday World Heritage and demonstrating the methodological benefits in applying analytical symmetry, decentralising power, questioning modern dichotomies and, following the actors, no matter who, or what they may be.
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Appendix 1: prompting questions for resident interviews.

1. What do you know about World Heritage in general?

2. What was your reaction to the Blue Mountains being nominated for World Heritage inscription?

3. How do you feel about it now, 10 years later?

4. How has World Heritage inscription affected you and in what ways do you think it has affected the community?

5. How has your understanding/feeling/view of World Heritage changed and do you think differently about where you live since inscription?
Appendix 2: example Contact Summary Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF CONTACT</th>
<th>Mtg:</th>
<th>Place:</th>
<th>Site:</th>
<th>Contact date:</th>
<th>Today’s date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview: Mr John and Mrs Marie Hollingdale</td>
<td>Place: BANC</td>
<td>Site: Megalong</td>
<td>Contact date: 21/04/2011</td>
<td>Today’s date: 24/04/2011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone:</td>
<td>Place:</td>
<td>Site:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Place:</td>
<td>Site:</td>
<td>Contact date:</td>
<td>Today’s date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pick out the most salient points in the contact. Number in order on this sheet and note page number on which point appears. Number point in text of write up. Attach theme or aspect to each point in CAPITALS. Invent themes where no existing ones apply and asterisk those. Comment may also be included in double parentheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAGE</th>
<th>SALIENT POINTS</th>
<th>THEMES/ASPECTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>WH and mistrust of council create a concern regarding what restrictions may be enforced</td>
<td>OUTCOMES PRACTICE/ACTIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Their lives and farming practices had not been changed directly by WH listing but almost certainly indirectly through tougher environmental legislation</td>
<td>OUTCOMES CONTROL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The lines between Council, Parks and WH are blurred. Tendency to lump them all in one basket as an entity that complicates, what were once simple issues, for no apparent reason</td>
<td>OUTCOMES RESTRICTIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Felt that council was reticent to push forward its “scientific experts” to directly answer questions and concerns.</td>
<td>PRACTICE/ACTIONS CONTROL RELATIONSHIPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Felt that Parks didn’t do anything more than they were already doing for their own land and actually felt that Parks’ “locking up of land” was more damaging that using it sustainably.</td>
<td>PRACTICE SPACE-LANDSCAPE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Felt there was a hegemonic relationship</td>
<td>RELATIONSHIPS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
between farmers and Parks, mostly because of the use of scientific terminology.

7. Is mostly concerned with immediate area rather than whole GBMWHA

8. Overall, seemed dismissive of the WH concept

What new or remaining target questions do you have in considering the next contact with this site?
Appendix 3: participant information sheet and consent form

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS / GENERAL INFORMATION SHEET

PHD RESEARCH PROJECT – KRISTAL COE

LIVING IN A WORLD HERITAGE SITE: A CASE STUDY

What is this research about?
I am conducting research into how World Heritage listing affects residents of World Heritage sites.

The World Heritage Convention is the most widely ratified international heritage conservation tool in the world. It is people that are at the heart of efforts to preserve World Heritage sites yet there has been little research about what it means for people to live in a World Heritage site and how their lives are directly and indirectly affected by the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

The purpose of my study is to fill gaps in the knowledge about how local people negotiate or manoeuvre within the terms of the WH Convention and how they live with and respond to the changes imposed by the Convention. My research will examine how a better understanding of the local context can contribute towards better outcomes for sites and residents through the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

What does the research involve?
I am interested in the views and experiences of people living in or near the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. I would like to interview you if you are willing to participate.

If you do participate, I will ask you to attend an interview which will last up to one hour, at a time and place of your choice. This will involve signing a consent form and answering questions about your experiences of living in the GBMWA. You can choose not to answer any question or withdraw from the project at any time without giving reasons. I will not use any information you ask me not to use. If you agree, I may record the interview using a voice recorder and ask if you would be prepared to attend a second interview. Your participation is purely voluntary. There will be no repercussions if you choose not to participate.

What will happen to the information?
The results of this research will be published as my PhD thesis or in academic journals or presented in public seminars. I will invite all participants to a presentation of my preliminary findings.
CONSENT FORM

PHD RESEARCH PROJECT – KRISTAL COE

LIVING IN A WORLD HERITAGE SITE: A CASE STUDY

Researcher:  Kristal, PhD student, The Australian National University
Supervisor: Prof. Richard Baker, Fenner School of Environment and Society
            The Australian National University

1. I. .................................................................................................(please print) consent to take part in this PhD project about the effects of World Heritage listing on people living in World Heritage sites. I have read the information sheet for this project and understand its contents. I have had the nature and purpose of the research, so far as it affects me, fully explained to my satisfaction by the researcher. My consent is freely given.

2. I understand that if I agree to participate in the research I will be asked to attend an interview. This will take up to one hour and will involve questions about my experience of living in the GBMWHA. I may be invited to attend a second interview. I understand that I may withdraw from the research at any stage without providing any reason, and that this will not have any adverse consequences for me. If I withdraw from the research or decide to withdraw any information I have given, the researcher will destroy my information.

3. I understand that while information gained during the research project may be published or publicly presented, my name, position title and other obvious identifying information will not be used in relation to any of the information I have provided, unless I explicitly indicate that I am willing to be identified.

4. I understand that my personal information such as my name and position title will be kept confidential so far as the law allows. This form and any other identifying material will be kept in locked storage in accordance with ANU requirements. Data entered onto a computer will be accessible by password known only to the researcher.

5. I understand that although any comments I make will not be attributed to me, it is possible that others may guess the source of information, and I should avoid disclosing information to the researcher which is particularly sensitive or confidential or which is defamatory of any person.

Signed................................................................. Date.................
Appendix 4: interview schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location/category</th>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th>Round 2</th>
<th>Round 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullaburra</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katoomba</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leura</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megalong Valley</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional (government and tourism)</td>
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**Other sources**

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Are you passionate about your World Heritage status?
Maybe you don’t really think about it much?

Whatever the case, I’d like to hear your story. I’m a PhD student exploring what it is like to live within a world heritage site. I’m looking for people to interview from Bullaburra, Mt Wilson, Megalong and Winmalee but am happy to have a chat with anyone about World Heritage.

If you’d like to tell your story, please contact me to arrange an interview. It takes about an hour and can take place here at the centre.

Kristal Coe

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