



**Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade  
(JSCFADT), through its Trade Subcommittee**

**Inquiry into Australia's tourism and international education sectors  
Submission by the Australian Geoscience Council Inc.**

The Australian Geoscience Council Inc (AGC) is the Peak Council of geoscientists in Australia. It represents eight major Australian geoscientific societies with a total membership of over 8,000 individuals comprising industry, government, and academic professionals in fields including geology, geophysics, geochemistry, mineral and petroleum exploration, environmental geoscience, geotourism, hydrogeology, geomorphology, and geological hazards. <https://www.agc.org.au/>

The recently released **THRIVE 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy (Action 7.5) of the Australian Government** states 'Grow and develop high-quality products and experiences around unique Australian locations and themes, including approaches which integrate sustainable nature tourism with economic opportunities for Traditional Owners, and capitalising on **emerging tourism trends such as geotourism.**'

**Action 7.7 also states:** 'Enhance the visitor experience through use and availability of technology.'

**Reference:** <https://bit.ly/3DzUOeD>

## **ISSUE: The challenges and opportunities for growth in tourism and how Australia can reassert itself as a leader in the international tourism sector**

### **Geotourism ('value-add' nature-based tourism)**

Geotourism adds considerable content value to traditional nature-based tourism (**the primary motivator of travel to Australia**) as well as cultural tourism, inclusive of Aboriginal tourism, thus completing the holistic embrace of 'A' (abiotic – climate, landscape, and geology) plus 'B' (biotic – flora and fauna) plus 'C' (culture) aspects.

Geotourism has been defined as 'sustainable tourism which focuses on an area's geology and landscape as the basis for providing visitor engagement, learning and enjoyment', but it is not a niche market. It has links with adventure tourism, cultural tourism, ecotourism, astrotourism, and agritourism, but is not synonymous with any of these forms of tourism, although in broad terms it embraces them all because it is essentially 'place-based.' Geotourism embraces ecotourism, accepting the fact that ecotourism is practised in protected areas such as national parks, whereas geotourism is undertaken in all areas, including places where primary industry activities (i.e., agriculture, mining, and forestry) are prevalent, and in areas with Aboriginal land tenure.

Geotourism promotes tourism through visits to geological features (geosites), use of 'geotrails' and viewpoints, guided tours, geo-activities (such as geological time trails, fossil walks, rock gardens etc.), and patronage of visitor centres and museums. Supported by UNESCO, geotourism attractions are now being developed around the world primarily as a sustainable development tool for the development of local and regional communities.

According to the National Geographic Society of the USA, geotourism is:

- Environmentally responsible - committed to conserving resources and maintaining biodiversity.
- Culturally responsible - committed to respecting local sensibilities and building on local heritage.
- Synergistic - bringing together all elements of geographical character to create a travel experience that is richer than the sum of its parts and appealing to visitors with diverse interests.

The landmark 2003 Geotourism study, sponsored by National Geographic and conducted by the Travel Industry Association of America, found that 65 million American households are predisposed to support the principles of geotourism. As the global population of travellers increases and destinations become more globalised and homogenous, these principles are resonating with travellers across the globe.

According to the 2017 report 'Unlocking Our Great Outdoors' of the Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF) <https://bit.ly/2WgeNLb> international visitors to Australia are increasingly engaging in nature-based tourism. In 2016, it was reported that 5.2 million international

visitors, or over two-thirds of all the international visitors to Australia, engaged in some form of nature-based tourism. In addition, nature-based tourism attracted 20.1 million domestic overnight visitors in 2016 and 23.6 million domestic day trip visitors. After recording flat growth between 2005 and 2011, nature-based tourist numbers have accelerated up until the advent of the COVID pandemic. This had occurred for all three main categories of tourists – international, overnight domestic and day trippers.

This TTF report also highlighted the potential of 16 identified major landscapes developed by Tourism Australia and Parks Australia (until it was suspended in 2014) as the former Australia's National Landscapes programme (i.e., Australian Alps (New South Wales/Victoria), Australia's Green Cauldron (New South Wales/SE Queensland border region), Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics area (Queensland), Australia's Red Centre and Australia's Timeless North (Northern Territory), Australia's Coastal Wilderness (New South Wales/Victoria), the Flinders Ranges and Kangaroo Island (South Australia), the Great Ocean Road (Victoria), the Greater Blue Mountains and Sydney Harbour (New South Wales), the Kimberley, Ningaloo-Shark Bay and Great South West Edge (Western Australia), and Tasmania's Island Heritage. Many of these landscapes still offer the opportunity for particularly younger FITs (increasingly 'digital natives'), eager to combine a geotourism experience obtained through adventurous self-drive tours, by accessing newly developed geotrails.

The upsurge in domestic tourism experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic in recent years has reinvigorated interest by Australians in exploring the best of what regional and outback Australia has to offer, and the adoption of geotourism-focused product development offers the opportunity to excite first time visitors and importantly to encourage repeat visitation.

## **ISSUE: The promotion of regional Australia as a world class international travel destination**

### **Geoparks, World Heritage Sites and Indigenous Protected Areas**

One outcome of a geotourism venture is a geopark. Geoparks have been established world-wide to create enhanced opportunities for the people who live within their boundaries and foster economic benefits for them, usually through the development of sustainable geotourism. By attracting an increasing number of visitors, a geopark fosters local socio-economic development through the promotion of a quality label linked with the local natural and cultural heritage. A geopark encourages the creation of local, innovative enterprises and cottage industries involved in geotourism and geological inspired products.

Geoparks also focus on community engagement and ownership. In Australia, national parks focus only on biodiversity aspects of natural heritage, and often with insufficient attention given to geological heritage. Indigenous protected areas and world heritage areas have similar, specific remits. In contrast geoparks can span multiple land tenure boundaries and

are both a regional development concept as well as a branding tool. They achieve these goals through geoconservation, education, and geotourism. Unlike World Heritage Areas and other

protected lands, geoparks can comprise both protected and non-protected areas and enable and celebrate sustainable development, including the provision of housing, resource extraction and forestry within parts of the geopark.

Geoparks can choose to evolve through a series of levels from 'aspiring', 'national', 'state', 'regional' (e.g., European or Asia-Pacific Regions) to 'global'. There are now hundreds of geoparks around the world. Support to individual geoparks is offered through the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) which is currently representing 169 members from 44 countries, most of which are in Europe, the UK and Ireland, and Canada. By April 2022, this membership had increased to 177 from 46 countries. The original target of the GGN is establishing 500 geoparks around the world.

Whilst the USA (no longer a member of UNESCO) is not embarking on developing UNESCO Global Geoparks, the National Park Service, an agency of the USA Government, manages all national parks, most national monuments, and other natural, historical, and recreational properties with various title designations, sharing many of the attributes of geoparks, as has been perceived by Americans as exemplars of geotourism.

**In short, all these economies contain substantive travelling populations who understand the benefits of geotourism and are seeking similar experiences (including geoparks) when they are looking to travel overseas. However, Australia lacks the presence of a UNESCO Global Geopark, although there are three regions with aspirations to achieve this status (i.e., Ku-ring-gai and Glen Innes Highlands projects in NSW as well as the Murchison project in Western Australia). By comparison, New Zealand has been successful in having a nomination for the Waitaki Whitestone Aspiring Global Geopark being submitted to the Council of UNESCO for approval <https://www.whitestonegeopark.nz/>**

There are outstanding geological and palaeontological forms within the Flinders Ranges of South Australia that have recently qualified it as a nomination site for a World Heritage Listing, of which there are 20 major sites in Australia <https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/au> , noting that 14 of these are major, geotourism (i.e. nature-based) destinations located on Mainland Australia and on Lord Howe Island.

The AGC is also exploring a proposed collaboration with the Central Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid (involving 13 Victorian Councils) to be positioned as a National Geotourism Strategy supported initiative, and in return for geotourism to be recognised as a key driver for regional development across the heritage mining sites of Central and NE Victoria.

**It needs to be appreciated that both UNESCO World Heritage Sites and Global Geoparks are major attractions for overseas travellers with a 'bucket list' seeking world class geotourism experiences.**

## **ISSUE: The role of Australia as a hub in support of tourism in the Asia Pacific region**

In China, there are three levels of geoparks: provincial, national, and global geoparks. They are all managed by local county or municipal governments under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Land and Resources. Currently, there are over 320 provincial geoparks (originally labelled as 'scenic areas') in China, among which 200 have already gained national status. With 41 of these now designated as global geoparks (including Hong Kong Geopark) having acquired this status, China manages by far the largest number of global geoparks in the world. Of particular significance (based on some recent visitor surveys taken in geoparks in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong) is the recognition that the largest visiting demographic comprises the 18–24-year-old age grouping.

In the Asia Pacific region, geoparks are also located in Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, with India and New Zealand (as previously cited), both committed to future UNESCO Global Geopark development.

By acquiring an approved UNESCO Global Geopark, Australia can qualify for admission to the Asia Pacific Global Geopark Network <https://asiapacificgeoparks.org/>

## **ISSUE: The promotion of regional Australia as a world class international travel destination**

### **Geotrails**

The NGS (described below) is being designed to support the orderly development of major geotourism projects and activities in line with overseas trends and **domestic regional development imperatives**.

Apart from geoparks, geotrails can also deliver geotourism experiences through a journey underpinned by an area's geology and landscape and where several geotourism sites can be connected into a single journey linking accommodation destination. Geotrails have universal appeal with safe access, are easy to establish, and represent a very cost-effective means of enhancing regional development. Geotrails can comprise roads, walking and biking trails, and disused railway easements known as 'Rail Trails'.

In addition, regional self-drive journeys such as the Great Ocean Road in Victoria, the Savannah Way stretching from Cairns to Broome, the West Coast Geotrail in Tasmania, the 'Dig The Tropic' Geotrail and other 'dinosaur' trails in Queensland, the Red Centre Way in the Northern Territory, and the Murchison Geotrail in Western Australia represent excellent examples of how the application of geotourism principles is transforming journeys that are already been promoted by the Australian tourism industry.

Other active geotrails proposals are continuing to be being implemented or considered by various government agencies in Western Australia (John Forrest National Park Railway Reserve Heritage Geotrail <https://bit.ly/3LVWymo> and Meckering Geotrail); Tasmania (the

'Created from Chaos' Coastal Geotrail in NW Tasmania <https://bit.ly/2OEKc4t> , and the Furneaux Geotrail on Flinders Island <https://bit.ly/3s4vjeM> ; Queensland (Brisbane Valley Rail Trail, Boulder Opal); New South Wales (<https://bit.ly/3xNrQA3> particularly Port Macquarie Coastal Geotrail – now completed <https://bit.ly/3sdXvhP>, the Newcastle Coastal Geotrail <https://bit.ly/3t5OQNI> Warrumbungle National Park Geotrails <https://bit.ly/3fc6lZs> , Central Darling River, the Muawintji National Park, and the 'Wonder of Gondwana' geotrails across the Outback/Central West region – all under development); South Australia (various projects including the Brachina Gorge Geotrail and proposals for new geotrails in the Goyder/Burra region); Victoria (Kanawinka/Great Ocean Road area); and Norfolk Island.

Geotrails meld the **geological heritage features of a region** with a cohesive story and serve to incorporate and package in the biodiversity and cultural components (including mining heritage) of the region through which the geotrail traverses. An 'Inventory of Geotrails for Australia' documenting a considerable listing of projects is now available <https://bit.ly/3DJllby>

### **ISSUE: The effectiveness of recent tourism campaigns overseas**

As pointed out by the TTF in their 2017 report, the lack of specific focus on Australia's nature-based tourism attractions has become evident in recent national tourism promotion campaigns. Tourism Australia stopped promoting the Australian National Landscape programme in 2014 and has been unable to focus on any alternative 'brand' since. The fact remains that Australia is the only continent in the world which lacks UNESCO Global Geopark development at a time that Australia's tourism competitors are increasingly offering this highly attractive and branded product which has a dedicated 'bucket list' following. <https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/list>

The AGC sees the articulation of a strategy with a staged and incremental approach as being essential to gain government endorsement of geoparks at all levels. The development of a National Ecotourism Strategy in 1994 and subsequent state/territory-based initiatives is considered as a particularly useful precedent and guide. Of significance internationally is the development of geotourism in Australia that lags many countries' approaches, notwithstanding the fact Australia has taken the initiatives in several regional areas in development of the concepts underpinning geotourism, and this includes geotrail development.

### **The National Geotourism Strategy**

Launched by the Australian Geoscience Council in April 2021, the National Geotourism Strategy (NGS) <https://www.agc.org.au/geoscience-in-australia/geotourism/> with its seven key strategic goals has been developed to support the orderly development of major geotourism projects such as geoparks and other activities in line with overseas trends and domestic regional development imperatives. <https://bit.ly/3yWex5u>

As an interim measure until the NGS is finalised and approved by governments (all part of a current structured dialogue with appropriate government agencies), the AGC has

recommended that any intending geopark proponent should, in the initial stages of geopark assessment, adopt a nomenclature which removes reference to the word 'geopark' and focus instead on communicating the concept of a 'GeoRegion.'

This approach offers the opportunity for proponents using the language of 'GeoRegions' to explore various alternative options for geotourism development, including a strong focus on the establishment of geotrails between sites of geological merit as interpretive sites, including robust geoheritage sites, some of which may already have been established as geological 'monuments' or recognised in state or national geoheritage registers. As a first step, a full audit of natural and cultural heritage attributes in the region as well as early discussions with state/territory based Geological Surveys, Planning and Environment agencies, and any other state/territory government agencies responsible for land and resource management is recommended. This level of activity is currently underway in the two approved GeoRegion projects in Ku-ring-gai and Murchison, as well as in the Glen Innes Highlands, which is seeking GeoRegion status.

In summary, the pursuit of geotourism through the NGS offers the potential for new industries and employment opportunities through the development of major projects within Australia.

The NGS is being directed by a Steering Committee appointed by the AGC (and chaired by the Immediate Past Chairman of the AGC, Dr Jon Hronsky OAM) to implement seven strategic goals.

1. Assessment and promotion of new digital technologies to highlight and interpret natural and cultural heritage, highlighting geology and landscape.
2. To define an approval pathway for major geotourism projects. Currently the AGC is of the view that the establishment of the NGS offers the best means of ensuring an orderly development of geotourism based on having first gained government support and endorsement, recognising that each state and territory has individual needs and priorities. The NGS is aiming to establish a national set of administrative procedures for 'georegional' assessment to provide for potential geopark nomination at state and national levels and, as approved by governments, at a UNESCO Global Geopark level. GeoRegions are explained in the following video <https://bit.ly/3TW3LWz>
3. To establish a framework for creating high quality, sustainable geotrails.
4. To establish a national listing for geoheritage sites suitable for geotourism, noting again the revised global framework for the application of criterion (viii) of the World Heritage Convention as it applies to World Geological Heritage has recently been released by the IUCN. Geodiversity provides many essential ecosystem services, e.g., surface and groundwaters, soils, rock weathering and carbon sequestration, habitat diversity. Geodiversity in the form of landscapes also generates many key tourist attractions. Geodiversity is also an essential element of Aboriginal culture, with landscape respected as an ancestor.



5. To develop geotourism in regional mining communities with potential geoheritage and cultural heritage sites. This goal focuses on geotourism opportunities in regional areas which occur outside parks and reserves, but which may contain interesting features and narratives including geological, biological, and cultural elements. Goal 5 is designed to develop geotourism in areas with regional communities (especially past and present mining communities) not covered by significant conservation legislative protections, but which are still worthy of recognition and promotion. It unites a cross-section of representatives from mining groups, Aboriginal heritage and tourism groups, conservation, tourism, as well as academia to explore tourism potential in places containing geodiversity that have been exposed or modified by human activities (especially mining & quarrying), or has significant additional value to people, through cultural history, recreational use, or educational opportunity.
6. To strengthen Australia's international geoscience standing through geotourism excellence.
7. To develop and enhance geoscience interpretation and communication skills for everyone actively involved in the presentation of geosites, enabling the provision of accurate and thematic information in an accessible manner.

Key documents relating to the launch and further development of the NGS can be downloaded.

- NGS Goals <https://bit.ly/34lfCiq>
- Media Release, Launch of the National Geotourism Strategy, 7 April 2021 <https://bit.ly/3HEcyaB>
- Media Release explanatory notes and contact details for participating in Working Groups <https://bit.ly/3n6yiT2>
- Media Release, THRIVE 2030, 7th April 2022 <https://bit.ly/3ufYI9w>

#### NGS Goal 1: Innovation: digital and new products

In developing the NGS for Australia through the implementation of Goal 1, the AGC has recognised that state-based geotourism maps, supplemented by publications, may well be eventually replaced by digital technologies (e.g., 3D visualisation, augmented reality, virtual reality, holograms, and live streaming using smartphones and drones) and GIS and other technologies as a cost-effective means of accessing and better communicating geological content for tourists and visitors.

There exists a major challenge to structure digital frameworks which capture and interpret key elements of natural and cultural heritage sourced from a wide range of directories, and which define the holistic nature of geotourism, having regard to the process of digital



transformation which is impacting on all industries. The imperative driving this goal will be meeting consumer needs, particularly from international visitors, now increasingly accustomed to the use of digital devices to underpin all aspects of their tourism experience, including the booking and sharing of experiences.

Moreover, it is recognised that these technologies provide a means of interpreting geosites (including sites of cultural significance) where measures need to be put in place to protect geological heritage or have regard to Aboriginal cultural sensitivities. These technologies can also be applied to reimagine visitor information centres (VICs) to include geosite interpretation capabilities and to assist visitors in accessing digitally enabled information. The AGC is now funding the development of a pilot project to provide a publicly accessible digital platform for this information using a ArcGIS Hub provided by the University of Tasmania.

More information about what Goal 1 sets out to achieve relating to virtual and augmented reality experiences are explained in the following two video presentations to a recent Earth Sciences (AESC 2021) conference.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzhjHq4XQ7Q&t=5s>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KqC\\_r7esrj0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KqC_r7esrj0)

The application of digital tools in recent geotrail development in New South Wales is outlined in the following two video presentations.

- Warrumbungle National Park Geotrails <https://bit.ly/3fc6lZs>
- NSW Geological Survey <https://bit.ly/3xNrqa3>

Recent developmental work in support of the Flinders Ranges WHA nomination from South Australia highlights the use of virtual reality <https://ab.co/2TW8Fty>

The following link details an interesting example of a virtual tour from Rottnest Island, Western Australia <https://bit.ly/3HCsjPI>

In another prime geotourism location (the Ku-ring-gai GeoRegion of New South Wales), drone technology has been used to highlight coastal geomorphology and sedimentary rock features <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=holu30ie8OE>

In effect, the outcomes arising from the implementation of **Goal 1 represents a direct response to Action 7.7 of the THRIVE 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy.**

#### NGS Goal 3: Delivering geotourism products and experiences through geotrails

This goal underpins and supports geotrail development nationally (as explained already in this submission), encouraging the application of the latest developments in digital technology and best practice in interpretation techniques.

#### NGS Goal 5: To develop geotourism in regional mining communities with potential geoheritage and cultural heritage sites.

This goal focuses on geotourism opportunities in regional areas which occur outside parks and reserves, but which may contain interesting features and narratives including geological, biological, and cultural elements. It unites through collaboration representatives from mining groups, Indigenous heritage, and tourism groups, to explore new geotourism opportunities. This goal recognises that there are a range of landscapes in Australia that contain either Indigenous and/or European settlement value, and which do not fit into more 'traditional' narratives of geotourism in unmodified or protected areas. Mining landscapes, both past and present, possess important educational values and offer interesting aesthetics and experiences that could be of considerable interest to tourists, given the richness and extent of Australia's mining heritage.

Geotourism opportunities could also arise from the consequences of mine closure, much of which is currently oriented to environmental remediation. There is scope to include the preservation of mining heritage in situ with the geotourism or geoheritage potential being accepted as the rationale for conserving these assets as important cultural heritage assets for new geotourism product development.

Indigenous cultural elements and landscapes cut across widely accepted, post-settlement landforms and landmarks, and have values specific to various groups and individuals. Therefore, there is potential to incorporate and/or communicate (with permission or via collaboration) creation stories and narratives of landscapes and features through geotourism. In this context, there is an opportunity to see a greater emphasis put on the connection across geotourism, geoheritage, and the cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the potential for future collaborations.

**Goal 5 of the NGS seeks to embed the Indigenous experience into the overall visitor economy, thus improving business capability and awareness, with a particular focus on engaging with mining communities.**

#### The Development of major geotourism projects through the National Geotourism Strategy

Currently the AGC is of the view that the establishment of the NGS offers the best means of ensuring an orderly development of geotourism based on having first gained government support and endorsement, recognising that each state and territory has individual needs and priorities.

The Australian Government's THRIVE 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy sets out to assist the tourism industry and governments in setting a plan for sustainable long-term growth of the visitor economy over the next ten years. The Strategy is underpinned by a vision that delivers quality experiences for visitors, includes businesses that are globally competitive that are profitable, grow sustainably and providing jobs, growth and infrastructure that benefit Australian communities.

One of the key Actions of this strategy is to 'grow and develop high-quality products and experiences around unique Australian locations and themes, including approaches which integrate sustainable nature tourism with economic opportunities for Traditional Owners, and reflect emerging tourism trends such as geotourism.' The AGC is pleased to see that the goals of the AGC's National Geotourism Strategy (NGS), launched well over a year ago, are complementary to this Action, and that there is recognition within the THRIVE 2030 Strategy for the need to integrate natural and cultural heritage. These are core to the design of geotourism offerings. The inclusion of a geotourism case study within the Strategy documentation – the NSW Glen Innes Highlands aspiring 'GeoRegion' – represents a major step in and advancing geotourism concepts.

#### Implication of the THRIVE 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy for geotourism development nationally

Within the framework of the National Geotourism Strategy (NGS) and as a significant first for Australia, the Glen Innes Severn Council (in the New England Region of Northern NSW) has recently approved a comprehensive Tourism Destination Management Plan (DMP), which is now being incorporated within a regional planning instrument. <https://lnkd.in/g5yk5aNu>

The DMP has embraced 'geotourism as a holistic approach to featuring natural and cultural heritage into the relevant customer experiences.' The DMP also proposes the development of various trails including a rail trail, all with potential development as geotrails. In addition, the Council has decided to seek approval for the Glen Innes Highlands being developed as an outstanding 'GeoRegion' with input anticipated from the Geological Survey of NSW as well as from other geoscientists with local knowledge and experience, particularly from the University of New England located in Armidale.

The THRIVE 2030 Strategy document features the aspiring Glen Innes 'GeoRegion' and the National Geotourism Strategy feature in a prominently displayed case study, inter alia, *'Geotourism puts Glen Innes Highlands on the map In the Northern Inland region of New South Wales, Glen Innes Highlands is embracing an emerging global trend: geotourism. Geotourism is a nature-based experience that describes how geology shapes the character of a region. It uses storytelling to connect: • landscapes, landforms, and the night sky • flora and fauna • First Nations and European cultural heritage. Geotourism helps communities develop experiences that protect and explain the natural and cultural heritage of important regions. This ensures tourism has community acceptance and delivers socioeconomic opportunities. A region rich in natural and cultural heritage The Glen Innes Highlands region boasts major landforms, waterways, vegetation, wildlife, and cultural heritage. It aims to become a model geotourism destination in line with the National Geotourism Strategy. Local First Nations peoples, state government agencies, local councils and other interest groups are working together to develop 'geotrails.' These will connect the region's: • Australian Standing Stones monument • local mining heritage sites • World Heritage national parks • museums • festivals and events. The geotrails being developed include: • New England Rail Trail • Glen Innes Highlands Skywalk • Fossickers Way Touring Route • Stonehenge Recreational Reserve • World Heritage Way • World Heritage Walk • State Tourist Drive 11 – Miners Way. The geotrails will be brought to life through interactive visual and sound experiences and digital*

*interpretations. Aiming to be recognised by UNESCO. UNESCO recognises 169 Global Geoparks in 44 countries (sic, currently 177 in 46 countries). Glen Innes aims to be one of three Australian GeoRegions nominated as an Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark. The others are: • the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park and Northern Beaches coastline of New South Wales • the Murchison region of Western Australia.'*

The NGS working groups can provide advice and assistance to those organisations and government agencies which are focused on developing new nature/cultural heritage-based tourism products through the application of the geotourism approach.

**As provided for in Action 7.5 of the THRIVE 2030 Strategy, a geotourism approach enables the development and highlighting of Australia's Indigenous cultural heritage, not separate to, but fully integrated into products featuring natural heritage elements.**

Angus M Robinson FAusIMM (CP)  
Coordinator, National Geotourism Strategy  
Australian Geoscience Council Inc.  
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