# World Heritage Inscription of Caves & Karst

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Venue: Conference Room 1, Darlington Centre, University of Sydney (City Road, side entrance to the Forum Restaurant)

## ABSTRACT

The World Heritage Convention was established by UNESCO in 1972 in order to provide for the proper identification, protection, conservation and presentation of the world's irreplaceable heritage. In 2005, a revision of the "Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention" was published. The basic criterion required for inscription is that any property must be of Outstanding Universal Value. The World Heritage Committee is making efforts to reduce the number of new inscriptions, while at the same time endeavouring to ensure that the list is balanced, representative and credible. Only one inscription per nation per year is allowable and the proposed site or collections of sites must have been previously protected by national and/or international legislation. Within the confines of the new approaches, this paper will review the cave and karst sites that have World Heritage Inscription in Australia and briefly discuss the criteria for which they were included on the World Heritage List. Caves and karst are multidimensional phenomena and multidisciplinary approaches are required to prepare World Heritage nominations. The scope and extent of such nomination documents will be illustrated by the author's work in editing the Chinese nomination of the South China karst and reviewing the nomination of Jeju Island, Korea and its lava tube caves. Finally, there will be a discussion of what is required to prepare a successful nomination for the Nullarbor Plain, South and West Australia. It is the largest contiguous karst in the world and has outstanding universal value as a representative semi-arid to arid karst.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

A/Professor Julia James is a graduate of London University and joined the staff of the University of Sydney in Inorganic Chemistry in1967. She has worked on Speleochemistry and environmental geochemistry since 1972. A caver for most of her life, she is internationally recognised for documenting global cave discoveries and research. She was President of the International Union of Speleology 1997-2001, involved in the establishment of karst institutes and World Heritage applications. She is a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and the World Commission for Protected Areas.