Australian Heritage Database

Places for Decision

Class : Natural

Identification

List:	**National Heritage List**
Name of Place:	Grampians National Park (Gariwerd)
Other Names:	The Grampians
Place ID:	105852
File No:	2/03/121/0016
Nomination Date:	22/07/2005
Principal Group:	Flora Species Sites and Habitats

Status

Legal Status:	25/07/2005 - Nominated place
Admin Status:	23/08/2006 - Assessment by AHC completed

Assessment

Assessor:	
Recommendation:	
Assessor's Comments:	
Other Assessments:	:

Location

Nearest Town:	Halls Gap
Distance from town (km):	
Direction from town:	
Area (ha):	166880
Address:	Grampians Rd, Halls Gap, VIC 3381
LGA:	Southern Grampians Shire VIC Ararat Rural City VIC Horsham Rural City VIC Northern Grampians Shire VIC

Location/Boundaries:
About 168,880ha, Grampians Road, Halls Gap, comprising the whole of the National Park.

Assessor's Summary of Significance:
The Grampians National Park is a dramatic landform with sweeping western slopes, craggy eastern peaks and massive sandstone cliffs that contrast with surrounding

plains; extensive forests interrupted by water bodies; and rock outcrops, deeply fissured cliffs and weather-sculpted sandstone.

The powerful and unusual landscape represents the most important area for floristic richness and endemism in eastern inland Australia, and is important for species richness of freshwater and terrestrial invertebrates. There is an outstanding display of geological features at the Grampians, and archaeological evidence telling the story of indigenous occupation over the last 20,000 years. The park also contains the densest concentration of rock art paintings in Victoria and has the single largest assemblage of Aboriginal art motifs in Victoria.

The Grampians is important as a defining image in Australia, that has inspired Australian artists in a range of media including painting (Arthur Streeton and Arthur Boyd), poetry, literature, photography and film.

Draft Values:

Criterion	***Values***	***Rating***
A Events, Processes	The Grampians are the most important area for floristic richness and endemism in eastern inland Australia, with high levels of endemism in the Christmas bush family (Cunoniaceae), southern heaths (Epacridaceae), the pea family (Fabaceae), orchids (Orchidaceae) and the pimeleas (Thymelaeaceae). The Grampians have high rates of endemism for the ash group of eucalypts (*Monocalyptus),* and grevilleas. The Grampians are significant at a national scale for richness in terrestrial and freshwater invertebrates including beetles (Dytiscidae, Gyrinidae, Hydrophilidae and Hygrobiidae), huntsmen spiders (Sparassidae), and butterflies (Lepidoptera). The Grampians, notably Billimina and Drual, are important for evidence of early occupation in the semi-arid zone and later temperate environments over the past 20,000 years (Bird et al.1998).	AT
D Principal characteristics of a class of places	The Grampians display an outstanding succession of strata, igneous intrusions, faulting and many well-preserved sedimentary structures such as cross-bedding of all scales, ripple marks and dessication cracks.	AT
E Aesthetic characteristics	The Grampians National Park has aesthetic characteristics that evoke strong emotional responses: a dramatic landform with sweeping western slopes, craggy eastern peaks and massive sandstone cliffs that contrast with surrounding plains; extensive forests interrupted by water bodies; and rock outcrops, deeply fissured cliffs and weather-sculpted rocks that give character to the exposed sandstone. Aesthetic responses are experienced from the scenic drives and dramatic lookout points that give access to panoramic views	AT

across the park and surrounding countryside (Robin Crocker and Associates 1997, Crocker & Davies 2005, National Trust 1995).

The Grampians is important as a defining image in Australia, that has inspired numerous works by significant Australian artists in a range of media including painting (Arthur Streeton, Arthur Boyd, Eugene von Guerard, Nicholas Chevalier, and Louis Buvelot), poetry, literature, photography and film (Crocker & Davies 2005: 35).

The Grampians National Park contains the densest concentration of rock art paintings in Victoria and constitutes one of the major rock art regions of south-eastern Australia (Goulding & Schell, 2006). Billimina Shelter has exceptionally high significance, with the single largest assemblage of Aboriginal art motifs in Victoria, and a total of some 2 000 definable motifs on a single panel.

The dramatic scenic landforms and the Aboriginal art features within the Grampians National Park are of outstanding value to the Australian community.

Historic Themes:

Nominator's Summary of Significance:
Is botanically rich, outstandingly so for south eastern Australia, containing 1100 species (975 of them vascular plants), one third of the number that occur in Victoria, and 18 endemic species. The distinctive flora includes many fire-adapted heathland plants.
Is also rich in avifauna providing habitat for 230 bird species, 40% of the total recorded in Victoria.
Is scientifically important for the geology and geomorphology. It provides fine examples of cuestra landforms (filtered layers with abrupt escarpment on one side).
Has spectacular mountain scenery, cliffs, waterfalls plus a diversity and abundance of spring wildflowers that attract many visitors from interstate and overseas.
Provides diverse evidence of intensive Aboriginal occupation over many thousands of years and is rich in Dreamtime stories. The greatest concentration of rock art in South Eastern Australia is in the Grampians (more than 100 sites).

Description:
The Grampians National Park (the Grampians, also known as Gariwerd by local indigenous people) is located in central-western Victoria, between Stawell and Horsham, 260km north-west of Melbourne. Rising abruptly from the surrounding plains, the Grampians is a series of north-south oriented ranges, visible at a distance from many different directions.

The ranges have high rocky plateaus and sheltered gullies, and contrast with the flat and open farmland around. There are numerous rock formations, waterfalls and clear

streams. Panoramic views over the park and surrounding country are experienced from numerous lookout points. Diverse vegetation of forests, woodlands, wetlands, fern gullies and spectacular spring flowers contribute to the aesthetic characteristics (Crocker and Davis 2005a&b).

The highest elevation reaches 1168 metres, and the park covers an area of 167,219 ha. The distinctive cuesta landform of the Grampians consists of abrupt escarpments and generally west-dipping slopes. They offer an outstanding geological spectacle. The sediments which make up the Grampians were deposited about 400 million years ago and are approximately 3700 m deep. They are composed of layers of massive sandstones, siltstones and mudstones which were folded and tilted during the Middle Devonian period, with later smaller earth movements causing further warping. Granitic magma intruded into the Grampians sediments around 395 million years ago, resulting in deeply weathered batholiths, dykes and sills. Several distinct ranges are identifiable – the Mount William, Mount Difficult, Wonderland, Serra and Victoria Ranges. Differential erosion of the tilted and folded strata is notable, forming a spectacular topography of broad and rising dip slopes ending in sharp ridges which give way to escarpments and steep gorges with waterfalls (Joyce and King 1980, Yeates 2001, Costermans 1981, Cayley and Taylor 1997, in Parks Victoria 2003).

An island of bushland in a largely cleared agricultural landscape, the Grampians National Park supports over 975 native vascular plant species, representing over one third of the total Victorian flora. Many of these flora species are found nowhere else. A large number of liverworts and mosses have also been recorded. The park is notable as a floral wonderland, exhibiting a rich and colourful wildflower display in spring, with multitudes of herbs and shrubs flowering, such as Grampians boronia, blue pin-cushion lily, Grampians parrot-pea, and Grampians thryptomene. Of particular note is the species richness of wildflowers in the bacon and eggs or *Pultenaea* genus (17 species). The park is also rich in orchid species, with more than 75 terrestrial orchid species recorded. The biodiversity of the area is due to the wide variety of rock and soil types and environmental niches. There are seven broad vegetation types in the Park, including inland slopes woodland; sedge-rich woodland; herb-rich woodland; dry foothill forest; plains grassy woodland; valley grassy forest; and grassland. The most species-rich vegetation type found in the park, lateritic heathy woodland, is one of the richest vegetation communities in the world, with an average of 82 vascular species per 30m2 quadrat (Paton & Paton 2004, Parks Victoria 2003, Parks Victoria 2005).

The Grampians receive a relatively high and reliable rainfall. The park contains the headwaters of several substantial streams: the Wannon River and Fyans Creek (Barriyaloog Creek), in the valley adjacent to the Mount William Range; the Glenelg River, in the Victoria Range (Billawin Range); and a small tributary of the Wannon River called Dwyers Creek. Almost three quarters of the park is used as water supply catchment areas, producing high-quality water to supply western Victoria (Parks Victoria 2003).

The variety of vegetation, topography and habitats provide shelter and food sources for at least 230 bird species, including thornbills, fairy-wrens, honeyeaters, whistlers, robins, wetland birds and parrots. The low open shrubby woodlands in the park

support many different nectar-feeding birds, and the tall open forests are important for hollow-dependent species such as the powerful owl (*Ninox strenua)*. The Grampians wetlands, particularly those in the south of the park, support a diverse community of waterbirds, including the great egret (*Ardea alba*). The numerous cliff faces provide nesting sites for the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), and large populations of emus (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) are found throughout the lowland areas. The diverse habitats throughout the park also support a large range of animals. It is home to around 40 species of mammals, 30 of reptiles, 11 of amphibians, six types of native fish and a number of significant butterfly species (Parks Victoria 2003, Parks Victoria 2005, ANHAT 2006).

At least 98 species of plants and 50 species of animals that are listed as threatened under State or Commonwealth legislation are found in the Grampians National Park. Plants include the nationally endangered Grampians pincushion lily (*Borya mirabilis*), its distribution restricted to a single rock outcrop in the Grampians, and several other species that are critically endangered in Victoria such as the southern pipewort (*Eriocaulon australasicum*). Nationally threatened animals recorded in the Park include the endangered red-tailed black cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus banksii graptogyne*), and smoky mouse (*Pseudomys fumeus*). There is also the vulnerable swift parrot (*Lathamus discolour*), warty bell frog (*Litoria raniformis*), brush-tailed rock wallaby (*Petrogale penicillata*), long-nosed potoroo (*Potorous tridactylus*), and heath rat (*Pseudomys shortridgei*).

The Grampians has a number of facilities, including more than 200 km of walking tracks, a good road network, carparks, camping and picnic areas, a visitor centre, and Brambuk - the National Park & Cultural Centre, which represents the five Koori communities with connections to Gariwerd (the Indigenous name for the Grampians), informing and entertaining visitors, and sustaining Indigenous traditions. The Park attracts more than 800 000 visitors each year (Wettenhall 1999; Parks Victoria 2005).

The majority of Aboriginal rock art sites known in Victoria are located in the Grampians Ranges. Sites in the Grampians National Park are mostly located in rock shelters associated with the dissected sandstone ridges, which characterise the northern and western parts of the National Park, or on isolated boulders. Two clusters of rock art sites occur in the Grampians National Park: the Victoria Range Group, and the Northern Group.

The Victoria Range Group contains the highest density of rock art sites, with a high proportion of human figures. Notable rock art sites are: Billimina (Glenisla shelter), Jananginj Njani (Camp of the Emu's Foot), Manja (Cave of Hands), Larngibunja (Cave of Fishes). Billimina is the most prolific single rock art site in Victoria, with more than 2000 motifs present on a single panel. The art panel has the highest representations of bar motifs in Victoria, and includes a depiction of birds – probably emus, one of only two known sites in the Grampians where birds are depicted.

The Northern Group rock art sites form a smaller assemblage, primarily located in rock shelters around the base of the Mt Stapylton Range in the north of the park. These sites have fewer human figures than the Victoria Range Group, and more geometric linear motifs and animal tracks. Notable rock arts sites are Ngamadjidj (Cave of Ghosts) and Gulgurn Manja (Flat Rock). Ngamadjidj contains 16 figures

painted in white pigment, the only site in Victoria in which white pigment was exclusively used (Flood 1990, 1983; Gunn 1981, 1983, 1987; Long 1999; all cited in Goulding & Schell, 2006).

Analysis:
Claims

The nominator claimed that the Grampians National Park has natural heritage values at the national level under criteria (a), (d), (e) and (g). These claims are addressed below under the relevant criteria and considered in a national context using the Australian Natural Heritage Assessment Tool (ANHAT) analysis, expert opinion and available literature. Criteria (b), (c), (f), (h) and (i) were considered, but there was insufficient evidence for any value approaching threshold.

CRITERION (a) – *The place has outstanding heritage value because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern of Australia's natural or cultural history.*

The nominator claimed that the Grampians National Park is botanically rich, outstandingly so for south-eastern Australia, containing 1100 species (975 of them vascular plants), one third of the number that occur in Victoria, and 18 endemic species. The distinctive flora includes many fire-adapted heathland plants. The nominator also claimed that the place is rich in avifauna providing habitat for 230 bird species, 40% of the total recorded in Victoria.

An ANHAT analysis was run for the area of the Grampians National Park. Although ANHAT does not cover all vascular flora, it contains representative families across a range of plant orders. The Grampians were found to be the most important area in eastern inland Australia for floristic endemism and richness, with high levels of endemism in the Christmas bush family (Cunoniaceae), southern heaths (Epacridaceae), the pea family (Fabaceae), orchids (Orchidaceae) and the pimeleas (Thymelaeaceae). Endemism rates were also high for the ash group of eucalypts, the *Monocalyptus* and grevilleas. The ANHAT analysis also established that the Grampians was among the richest areas in Victoria, if not the richest, and was one of the most important areas for plant species richness in inland eastern Australia.

There is evidence of a high diversity of freshwater crayfish at the Grampians, however the current status of taxonomic studies of this group indicate that it would be difficult to validate this claim at a national scale (Horowitz 2006). The ANHAT analysis indicates that the Grampians are significant at a national scale for endemism and richness in water beetles (Dytiscidae, Gyrinidae, Hydrophilidae and Hygrobiidae). Water beetles are a key indicative group in ANHAT and are indicators of system health and of wider biodiversity. The Grampians was also found to rank highly for species richness in huntsmen spiders (Sparassidae) and butterflies (Lepidoptera), two of the major terrestrial invertebrate indicator groups in ANHAT. Concentrations of all three groups are uncommon in inland Australia and are considered to be indicative of the importance for the Grampians for a range of freshwater and terrestrial invertebrate species. This was considered to be of outstanding value to the nation in association with the high floristic diversity. For other fauna, the ANHAT analysis found that whilst the richness of birds is well above

average, it is not significant at a national or regional scale. The Grampians was not found to be more than of regional or state-level significance for other vertebrates.

A literature review was also undertaken in support of the ANHAT analysis. The Grampians is widely recognised for flora diversity, with approximately 975 native vascular plant species, representing one third of the State total. Also 137 species of mosses and 54 species of liverworts have been recorded in the park (Parks Victoria 2003). While the level of endemism and species richness exhibited in the Grampians is substantially below that exhibited by the floristically diverse regions of south-western Australia, the central east coast and the Wet Tropics, the Grampians are outstanding in the context of inland temperate Australia and represent a major centre of floristic endemism and richness (DEH ANHAT 2005, CALM 1999, NSW NPWS 1997, NSW NPWS 2001).

The nominator also claimed that the Grampians provides diverse evidence of intensive Aboriginal occupation over many thousands of years, including the greatest concentration of rock art in south-eastern Australia (over 100 sites).

There is archaeological evidence that the Grampians is important in the pattern of human occupation in south-eastern Australia and consequently for the pattern of human occupation in Australia. Prior to the reanalysis of occupation deposits in the Victoria Range, the Grampians Ranges was considered a marginal area, only occupied by Indigenous people within the last 4,000-5,000 years, possibly in association with ceremonial activities (Coutts & Lorblanchett 1982; Lourandos 1983; Ross 1981) or as a result of more general population increase in the late Holocene in south west Victoria (Ross 1981). The occupation dates now available for rock shelter deposits show that this is not the case, with both Billimina and Drual occupied much earlier. Bird et al. (1998) argue that the south-west was consistently inhabited for at least the last 20,000 years. During the late Pleistocene period the Grampians Ranges would have been on the fringe of an arid or semi arid zone, with Indigenous occupation of the ranges serving as a focal point from which to exploit plains to the north and west. During the early Holocene, climatic conditions became more temperate resulting in changing patterns of land-use, which likely were refined during the late Holocene (Bird et al. 1998).

On the basis of the outstanding level of floristic and invertebrate diversity as represented by endemism and species richness, and of the archaeological evidence from Grampian sites of ancient human occupation in south-eastern Australia, it is concluded that the Grampians National Park has outstanding heritage value under criterion (a).

CRITERION (d) - *The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: (i) a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or (ii) a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments.*
The nominator claimed that the Grampians National Park is scientifically important for its geology and geomorphology, and that it provides fine examples of cuesta landforms (tilted layers with abrupt escarpment on one side).

There are a great number of cuesta landforms in Australia. The Grampians are

considered to be a classic example (Parks Victoria 2006). Many of the other major ranges in arid and semi-arid Australia also display cuesta landforms, prominent examples being the West Macdonnell Ranges (NT) and the Flinders Ranges (SA) (Dayton, 2005), however there is no clear evidence that the Grampians can be considered to be a more outstanding example than these other places in a national context. It is concluded that the Grampians do not meet threshold for Criterion (d) as an outstanding example of cuesta landforms.

The geology and geomorphology of the Grampians is of considerable scientific significance. In his comparative analysis of geological sites around Australia, Yeates (2001) found that the Grampians is a cluster of spectacular, Late Silurian to Early Devonian quartzose sandstone-dominated strike ranges. They display many well-preserved sedimentary structures, such as cross bedding of all scales, ripple marks and desiccation cracks. Structural landforms are well expressed. Early Devonian alkaline granites and a swarm of dykes and sills intrude the strata. Magmas reaching the surface were extruded as ignimbrites and rhyolites. They unconformably overlie the sedimentary layers. Together these features display an outstanding succession of strata, sedimentary structures, igneous intrusions and faulting ((Chappell et al., 1991; Cayley and Taylor, 1997; Simpson and Woodfull, 1994, VandenBerg et al., 2000) in Yeates 2001, Cochran & Joyce 1986).

A number of other major geomorphological features illustrate sedimentary landscapes and contain a range of features. Examples include the Stirling Ranges in Western Australia, the West Macdonnell Ranges in Northern Territory and Jamison Valley in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales. However, the Stirling Range and the West Macdonnell Ranges lack the volcanic elements evident in the Grampians. The Jamison Valley in particular has many geomorphological features which are spectacularly exposed and their origins can be clearly seen. The site attracts numerous visitors, as well as scientists from many disciplines, and it is used for geological education (Yeates 2001). While Jamison Valley appears to be an important site for educative purposes and has a range of sedimentary features, its primary values do relate to education. There is no clear evidence of the significance of other landscapes such as Stirling Ranges and West Macdonnell Ranges for their sedimentary features. The Grampians however has been assigned clear outstanding scientific significance in the two major national reviews of geoheritage (Yeates 2001, Cochrane & Joyce, 1986) for the outstanding range of sedimentary and igneous features clearly displayed.

On the basis of the outstanding demonstration of geological and geomorphological processes, it was concluded that the Grampians National Park has outstanding heritage value to the nation under criterion (d).

CRITERION (e) - *The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group.*

The nominator claimed that the place has spectacular mountain scenery, cliffs and waterfalls as well as an abundance of spring wildflowers that attract many visitors.

The Grampians is a distinctive and highly visible landmark, easy to recognise and

well-known. The Grampians National Park is a dominant feature in the landscape of western Victoria, renowned for its spectacular natural scenery and stunning wildflower displays. The Grampians has particular aesthetic characteristics that evoke strong emotional responses: a dramatic landform with sweeping western slopes, craggy eastern peaks and massive sandstone cliffs that contrast with surrounding plains; extensive forests interrupted by water bodies; and rock outcrops, deeply fissured cliffs and weather-sculpted rocks that give character to the exposed sandstone. Outstanding ephemeral effects are produced seasonally by the abundant wildflowers. Aesthetic responses are experienced from the scenic drives and dramatic lookout points that give access to panoramic views across the park and surrounding countryside (Robin Crocker and Associates 1997, Crocker & Davies 2005, National Trust 1995).

The Grampians are important as a defining image in Australia and has been ranked as nationally significant (Crocker & Davies 2005). It has inspired numerous works by significant Australian artists in a range of media including painting, poetry, literature, photography and film. Artists include Arthur Streeton, Arthur Boyd, Eugene von Guerard, Nicholas Chevalier, and Louis Buvelot; photographers Charles Nettleton, Frank Hurley, Peter Walton, David Tatnell, Harry Nankin and Steve Parish; writers Arthur Upfield and Donald Charlwood; poets Phillip Mead and J K McDougall; and film-maker Arch Nicholson. The landscape is frequently depicted in a range of articles, books, guidebooks, souvenir books, posters, websites and park and tourism publications. The Grampians are one of the most photographed places in Victoria (Crocker & Davies 2005a&b).

An inspirational landscapes study commissioned by the Department of Environment & Heritage (Crocker & Davies 2005a&b), lists the Grampians as one of 18 short-listed landscapes in Australia that have been proposed as being potentially significant as an inspirational landscape at a national scale. In this study, the Grampians was found to meet the threshold of outstanding national value under the indicator of powerful landscapes, the authors noting that 'inspiration derived from the exceptional physical features of this landscape is evidenced in art, visits and publications, including books and magazines with national circulation, and photographs on permanent public display in Victoria.' The study found that most of the evidence suggested a high level of recognition and inspirational value to local, interstate and international tourists.

The Grampians is a classic landscape dominated by uplifted and folded sedimentary features, made particularly spectacular by their prominence in a largely flat landscape dominated by farmland and low woodland (Joyce and King 1980, Yeates 2001, and Paton & Paton 2004). In this, the Grampians are potentially comparable to other major ranges such as the Flinders Ranges National Park in South Australia, West Macdonnell Ranges National Park in Northern Territory, Blue Mountains in New South Wales, Mutawintji National Park in New South Wales, Stirling Ranges National Park in Western Australia, and Kakadu (Arnhemland Escarpment) in Northern Territory. The Grampians are far better known than other spectacular, but less visited landscapes such as Stirling Ranges, Mutawintji and West MacDonnell Ranges. When compared with other landscapes which exhibit distinctive features and contrasting landform with the surrounding landscape, the Grampians rate as nationally significant, behind the Flinders Ranges, Alpine National Park and World Heritage

areas including Kakadu, as a powerful landscape (Crocker and Davies 2005).

The Grampians is considered to be a *powerful landscape*, having exceptional features that create a strong emotional response; an *uncommon landscape*, having unusual qualities in the Australian context, and a *defining image*, being a landscape that has inspired art or other creative expressions, giving the landscape an iconic identity (Context 2003, Crocker & Davies 2005).

The majority of Aboriginal rock art sites known in Victoria, approximately 80%, are located in the Grampians Ranges. The Grampians National Park contains the densest concentration of rock art paintings in Victoria and constitutes one of the major rock art regions of south-eastern Australia (Goulding & Schell, 2006). Billimina Shelter, within the Grampians National Park, has exceptionally high significance, with the single largest assemblage of Aboriginal art motifs in Victoria, and a total of some 2 000 definable motifs on a single panel. The evidence from the Pleistocene and Holocene has established the antiquity of human occupation in the Grampians and has led to a revision of prehistoric patterns in south-eastern Australia.

The concentration of Aboriginal rock art in the Grampians and the ancient archaeology contribute to the strong emotional response elicited by the Grampians and the power of the Grampians landscape. There are other comparable landscapes in Australia, such as in Kakadu National Park, the Burrup, and the Kimberley, in which rock art and evidence of ancient occupation contribute to the human response to the landscape. The Grampians is an outstanding example in south-eastern Australia.

The Grampians is widely valued by the Australian community as evidenced by its popularity as a holiday destination, attracting more than 800,000 visitors each year. (Parks Victoria 2003, Parks Victoria 2005). This is also evidenced by the number of tourism publications, guidebooks and large format books; the number of references on the internet; the number of artistic and other creative references; and the number of historic studies associated with the place. The Grampians National Park features very strongly at a national scale and is one of the top ranking sites when compared with other non World Heritage mountainous sites in Australia for these indicators (Crocker and Davies 2005a & b). The Crocker and Davies study (2005a & b) found that this evidence suggested a high level of recognition and inspirational value to local, interstate and international tourists. The Grampians have been recognised by experts (naturalists, explorers) as an unusual, dramatic and beautiful landscape feature since the early days of European colonisation of Victoria (LCC 1982, Robin Crocker and Associates 1997a and Context 1999, Commonwealth and Victorian RFA, 2000). The Land Conservation Council (LCC 1982) noted ‘The combination of spectacular scenery, diverse and significant flora and fauna, and unique archaeological sites included in this park have long caused the Grampians to be regarded throughout Australia, as an area of the highest conservation significance’. The Grampians is commonly used as the signature for the locality and the region.

There is excellent documentation that the Grampians is valued by the Australian community as a whole.

The Grampians National Park has strong evidence relating to its aesthetic characteristics, particularly due to its distinction as a powerful and uncommon

landscape, as a defining image, and to its highly significant rock art. On the basis of the evidence, it is concluded that the Grampians National Park is of outstanding value to the nation for criterion (e).

CRITERION (g)- *The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons*

The nominator makes no specific claims against this criterion. The Grampians National Park is widely known and highly valued by local, regional and statewide communities (Context 1999). However this association is predominantly associated with the aesthetic values which are documented above.

There have been no strong nationally recognised campaigns to protect or conserve the Grampians although it is recognised that the Victorian National Parks Association campaigned for it to be recognised as a National Park.

Research has shown that the park is the State's third most visited National Park after Mornington Peninsula National Park and Port Campbell National Park and attracts more than 800,000 visitors each year. Over 90% of visitors are currently from Victoria and South Australia, with a high repeat visitation, particularly from Melbourne (Parks Victoria 2003). The recent studies by Roy Morgan Research, between 2001 and 2003, noted how the Grampians jumped from seventh to the fourth most prominent destination in Victoria and that Grampians awareness in 2003 was far higher than Phillip Island, Lakes Entrance and Bendigo which previously led the region in 2001 (Grampians Marketing Inc.). However this information is based on visitation and does not demonstrate strength of community attachment or any particular associational recognition beyond the region or State.

There was insufficient information available to demonstrate that Indigenous peoples' use of the Grampians area, evidenced through physical material, historical accounts and oral history, was substantially different to their use of other similar areas in south eastern Australia.

Consequently on the basis of the available evidence it is considered that the Grampians National Park does not reach threshold for criterion (g).

History:
Recent dating of sites in Victoria Range has revealed human occupation of the Grampians during the Pleistocene, as early as 22 000BP. During the late Pleistocene period the Grampians Ranges would have been on the fringe of an arid or semi arid zone, with Indigenous occupation of the ranges serving as a focal point from which to exploit plains to the north and west. During the early Holocene, climatic conditions became more temperate resulting in changing patterns of land-use, which likely were refined during the late Holocene (Bird 1997, Bird et al 1998, Bird & Frankel 2005, cited in Goulding & Schell 2006). Aboriginal groups believed to have occupied the Grampians in the early historical period include the Jardwadjali, the Wotjobaluk, the Djab wurrung and the Buandig.

Major Thomas Mitchell scaled the summit of the Grampians- highest peak, Mt Duwil (Mt William), on July 14, 1836, with a small group. Exploring and searching for new grazing land in the area, Mitchell gave favourable reports, and European settlers arrived in growing numbers. By 1840 much of the surrounding land had been taken up for sheep grazing (Paton & Paton 2004) with consequent frontier conflict between Aboriginal people and settlers.

The Grampians soon became a centre for farming, mining and timber production, and a source of water for surrounding farmland. The idea of creating a Grampians National Park dates from the nineteenth century; it was designated as State Forest in 1872. The Field Naturalist Club of Victoria publicised the beauty and interest of the Grampians through talks illustrated with lantern slides. Post cards of the Grampians were available. The mountains were promoted as a nature-lovers' holiday destination, and in the early 1900s, cottages and guesthouses were opening in the mountains and bus tours were being organised from Melbourne. After World War II, roads in the area were improved dramatically, bringing a growing number of visitors to the Grampians. In 1981 the Land Conservation Council (LCC) released its draft recommendation for designation as a National Park. Soon after, the National Trust recognised the landscape significance of the Grampians in 1983, and finally the LCC recommendation was accepted by the Victorian Government and Grampians National Park was declared in 1984 (Calder 1987, in Context 2006).

There is strong evidence that the Grampians has been the subject of artistic endeavours over a long period of time. It has inspired works by significant Australian artists including painters Eugene von Guerard, Nicholas Chevalier, Louis Buvelot, Arthur Streeton, and Arthur Boyd; photographers Charles Nettleton, Frank Hurley, Peter Walton, David Tatnell, Harry Nankin and Steve Parish; writers Arthur Upfield and Donald Charlwood; poets Phillip Mead and JK McDougall; and film-maker Arch Nicholson.

Condition:
Parts of the park have vegetation in remarkably good condition – weed-free, structurally diverse, species rich and with ecological processes largely intact (NRE 1997).

Fire is an important cultural characteristic of the Grampians, with traditional firestick burning being periodically carried out by local Indigenous people. Fire event records since 1939 indicate that much of the park has been subjected to both wildfire and prescribed burning over the last 60 years. Large areas of the park were burnt in 1985, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1999 and 2006. A major bushfire ignited by lightning in January 2006 burnt both private and public land. Approximately 47% of the National Park was affected, spanning the middle section of the park. Many plant species in the area respond well to fire or remain dormant until fire occurs. Early Autumn rains following the 2006 fire has seen regeneration occur. After the 2006 fire there have been more opportunities for Indigenous cultural site identification and investigation, with evidence being more visible without vegetation cover. Most roads and walking tracks have been reopened since the fire.

Over 200 introduced vascular plants, both exotic and native, have been recorded in the park. These are generally confined to the boundary areas and some exotic plants are associated with historic sites within the park. Introduced animals recorded include foxes, rabbits, deer, feral cats, goats and feral bees.

The invasive pathogen *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, a soil borne fungus, has been recorded from many sites within the park. Although it spreads naturally, the rate of spread is accelerated by the transport of infected soil and gravel by road-making machinery and other vehicles. Gravel for maintaining the park's road and track network was previously sourced from 29 gravel pits in the park, of which 14 are known to be infected with *Phytophthora.* Future closure and rehabilitation of gravel pits will reduce the number of currently active gravel pits from 18 to 11.

The Park has a number of facilities, including tracks and roads, carparks, camping and picnic areas, a visitor centre, and Brambuk - the National Park & Cultural Centre.

Condition Statement taken primarily from the Grampians National Park Management Plan (Parks Victoria 2003). Information on January/February 2006 bushfires taken from Parks Victoria website (Parks Victoria 2006).

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