

# Our World Heritage

Discussion Document:

Towards a New Zealand Tentative List

Wellington, New Zealand

December 2004

Cover photos: clockwise, from top left:  
Fluted marble, Garibaldi Ridge, Kahurangi National Park. *Craig Potton*  
Papamoa Pa complex from the air. *Kevin Jones*  
Red coral and blue maomao, Kermadec Islands Marine Reserve. *Roger Grace*  
Napier art deco streetscape. *Art Deco Trust*

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New Zealand

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# Foreword



Conservation Minister Chris Carter holds a *Powellipbanta superba prousoorum* in Kahurangi National Park. *Trish Grant, DOC*

As New Zealanders, we recognise and celebrate our unique natural, historic and cultural heritage. However, this heritage also has significance at the global level that should not be underestimated. The World Heritage Convention, to which New Zealand is a signatory, provides for the protection of properties or places of outstanding universal value.


The Convention requires each member country to prepare a “Tentative List” of sites that it believes could meet the criteria for nomination as World Heritage sites. This provides a tool for planning and advocacy of a nation’s outstanding natural and cultural heritage and assists the World Heritage Committee to assess the context from which a country’s particular nominations are made.

New Zealand is currently compiling a tentative list of sites that meet the criteria for World Heritage status. The World Heritage listing of a site or place provides a commitment from the government and the international community to assure its long term protection and recognition of its importance from the global level.

The tentative list will be forwarded to the World Heritage Committee and 1 – 2 sites from that list can be nominated for World Heritage listing each year. Officials have identified some sites as illustrative of the type of site that could be considered for the tentative list, and the elements necessary to build a robust case for later site nomination.

To this end, I would like to invite you to comment on the illustrative list put forward in the attached document, and also to suggest any other sites that you feel would be suitable for World Heritage status nomination and that would meet the World Heritage criteria outlined in the back of this document.

I see this process as an exciting opportunity to gain international recognition for our unique natural and cultural heritage, and to provide additional commitment to their protection. The release of this discussion document marks the beginning of the consultation period for the compilation of the tentative list that will be put forward for consideration by the World Heritage Committee.



Hon Chris Carter  
MINISTER OF CONSERVATION

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# The World Heritage Convention

This document seeks public comment on proposals for sites which could be considered for inclusion in New Zealand's tentative list of potential sites for World Heritage nomination.

**The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage** (commonly known as the 'World Heritage Convention') was adopted by the General Assembly of UNESCO in 1972. The Convention seeks to ensure the protection and conservation of cultural and natural heritage by establishing a list of World Heritage properties and places deemed to be of 'outstanding universal value'. It is not intended to provide for the protection of all properties of great interest, importance or value, but only for a select list of the most outstanding of these from an international viewpoint. In the past 32 years, the number of countries ('state parties') to have ratified the convention has grown to 178, making it the most widely-supported of the United Nations' conventions.

The 'World Heritage List', established in accordance with the Convention, consists of those cultural and natural heritage properties considered by the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO to be of outstanding universal value. There are now 788 listed sites (611 cultural, 154 natural, and 23 mixed natural/cultural).

**Natural Heritage** refers to outstanding physical, biological and geological formations, habitats of threatened species of animals and plants, and areas with outstanding scientific, conservation or aesthetic value. Natural heritage can be either terrestrial or marine; well known listed sites include: Yellowstone National Park (USA), Sagamatha National Park (Nepal), the Great Barrier Reef (Australia), and the Three Parallel Rivers of Yunnan (China).

**Cultural Heritage** refers to monuments, groups of buildings and sites with historical, aesthetic, archaeological, scientific, ethnological or anthropological value. Well known listed cultural properties include: the Acropolis (Greece), the Great Wall of China, the Historic Centre of Florence (Italy), the Taj Mahal (India) and Angkor Wat (Cambodia).

To be listed, a nominated site has to be proposed by the government of the nation (the 'states party') and accepted on at least one of **10 criteria** assessing the site's "outstanding universal value". These 10 criteria are outlined in Appendix 1; there are six criteria for cultural, and four for natural properties. In essence, the nominated site has to be accepted by the World Heritage Committee as being the **most outstanding from an international viewpoint**. In its assessment of each site, the World Heritage Committee relies on a technical report by either (or both) of two international non-governmental scientific unions:

- The World Conservation Union (IUCN) for natural sites, and
- The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) for cultural sites.

In addition, nominated sites must fulfil strict conditions on site authenticity (for cultural sites) and integrity. A key determinant for site authenticity is that the significance of the property should be credibly expressed through a variety of attributes, for example, in relation to the site's original characteristics and the extent to which these may have been modified over time. Integrity is a measure of the wholeness of the natural and/or cultural heritage. Examining the conditions of integrity, therefore, requires assessing whether or not the property:

- includes all elements necessary to express its outstanding universal value;
- is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property's significance;
- is free from the adverse effects of development and/or neglect.

For all properties nominated for their natural values, landform features and bio-physical processes should be relatively intact. However, it is recognized that virtually no part of the world remains totally pristine and that all natural areas are in a dynamic state, and to some extent involve contact with people. Human activities, including those of traditional societies and local communities, often occur in natural areas. These activities may be consistent with the outstanding universal value of the area where/when they are ecologically sustainable.

To be inscribed on the list, sites must also have adequate long-term legislative, institutional, management and/or traditional protection to ensure that their condition at the time of assessment and inscription will be maintained or even enhanced in the future.

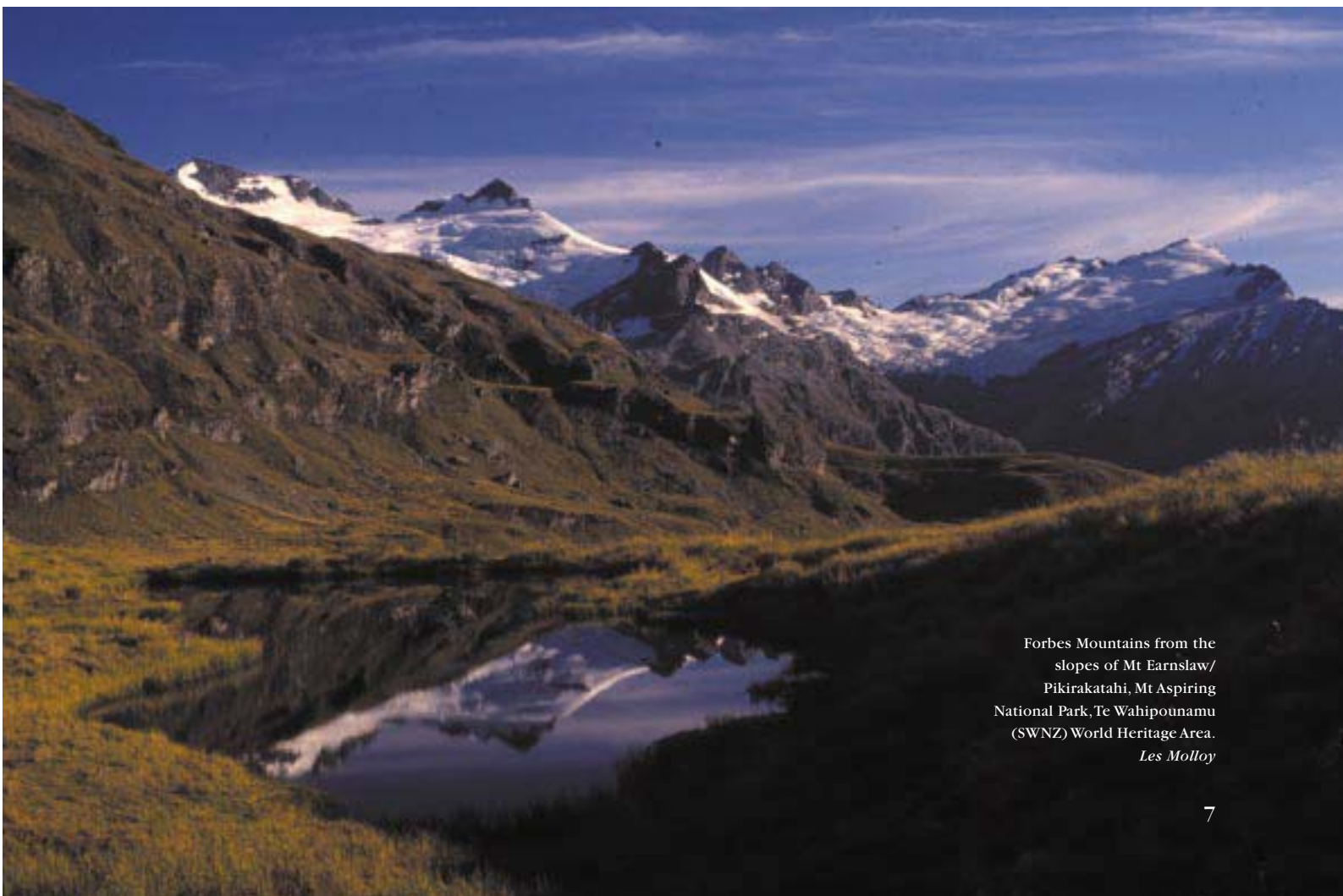
# New Zealand and the World Heritage Convention



Rimu forest at Bruce Bay/  
Mahitahi, South Westland, Te  
Wahipounamu (SWNZ) World  
Heritage Area. *Les Molloy*

New Zealand signed the convention in November 1984 and its first two sites - **Fiordland National Park** and **Aoraki/Mt Cook & Westland/Tai Poutini National Parks** (as they are now known) - were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1986 for their outstanding natural values. In 1990, these three national parks, along with Mt Aspiring National Park and a large area of conservation land (including the lowland rainforests of South Westland) were re-nominated as one large consolidated site - **Te Wahipounamu (South West New Zealand)**. At 2.6 million hectares, this new site was twice the size of the initial three parks. Te Wahipounamu is a vast

wilderness, 10% of the area of New Zealand, listed under all four natural World Heritage criteria, and considered one of the world's outstanding natural areas for its Gondwana taxa, and diversity of glaciated landforms, flora and fauna.



Forbes Mountains from the  
slopes of Mt Earnslaw/  
Pikirakatahi, Mt Aspiring  
National Park, Te Wahipounamu  
(SWNZ) World Heritage Area.  
*Les Molloy*



Mt Ruapehu erupting in 1996, Tongariro National Park World Heritage Area. *Craig Potton*

**Tongariro National Park** was also listed as a World Heritage site in 1990, as a natural property in recognition of its outstanding volcanic phenomena and record of volcanic eruptions at the southern end of the Taupo Volcanic Zone. After UNESCO reviewed its cultural site criteria to allow for the listing of an ‘associative cultural landscape’, Tongariro was listed again, in 1993, as a cultural property. The category of **associative cultural landscape** recognises powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural features rather than material cultural evidence (which may be insignificant or even absent).

The listing of Tongariro as cultural World Heritage was a landmark decision in the history of the convention, recognising the unbroken association of the Ngati Tuwharetoa with the Tongariro mountains since the landing of the Arawa canoe, the linkage of their cultural identity with the mountains, and the cultural significance of the gifting by Te Heuheu Tukino IV (Horonuku) of the volcanic summits to the nation as New Zealand’s first national park in 1887. This act was of enormous significance in the evolution of New Zealand’s (and the world’s) national park system – the fourth national park in the world and the first freely gifted by an indigenous people.

Warriors laying commemorative stone during 1998 celebrations at Whakapapa, Tongariro National Park World Heritage Area. *Shaun Barnett*



New Zealand's third site, the **New Zealand Subantarctic Islands**, was listed in 1998. This remote site consists of five island groups – Auckland, Campbell, Snares, Antipodes and Bounties Islands – and their surrounding territorial sea in the Southern Ocean. The site contains some of the last truly pristine islands on earth, supporting a flora with a very high degree of endemism, and providing habitats for an outstanding diversity of seabirds as well as sea lions and whales.



Flowering herbfield, mostly *Anisotome latifolia* and *Bulbinella rossii*, Campbell Island, NZ Subantarctic Islands World Heritage Area.  
*Greg Sberley, DOC*

(Right) Southern royal albatross 'gam', Campbell Island, NZ Subantarctic Islands World Heritage Area.  
*Peter Moore, DOC*

New Zealand has taken a very professional and measured approach to nominating natural sites of outstanding universal value for World Heritage over the 20 years it has been a State Party to the convention. With the exception of the deferral of the Tongariro cultural nomination while the criteria were revised, all New Zealand's three natural property nominations to date, on land protected for conservation purposes, have been non-controversial and widely-acclaimed as heritage of global importance.

To a large extent, New Zealand's past conservative approach to World Heritage designation is a reflection of the high degree of legal and management protection already conferred on New Zealand's comprehensive network of protected areas. In the past there has been a lack of emphasis on cultural heritage in nominations, probably due to a lack of appreciation of the value of cultural heritage and concerns over the robustness of any nominations.

## PUBLIC INTEREST IN FURTHER WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN NEW ZEALAND

There is now considerable public interest in nominating further New Zealand properties for World Heritage listing. Some sites have been suggested over the past 15 years, by local authorities, conservation boards and conservation NGOs; these proposals have been as various as Stewart Island/Rakiura, Otago Peninsula, Kahurangi National Park (while it was still 'North-West Nelson Forest Park'), the Taupo Volcanic Zone, and the Rotorua geothermal areas. Within the cultural heritage community there have been proposals for places such as Art Deco Napier, Oamaru Colonial Port and Central Business District, and, Kerikeri Basin/Kororipo Basin.

Some natural features have long been mooted as extensions to existing sites. For instance, when Fiordland National Park was listed in 1986, the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO noted "the importance of including the waters of the fiords as part of this national park".

## TOWARDS A TENTATIVE LIST OF POTENTIAL WORLD HERITAGE IN NEW ZEALAND

Because of the rapidly-increasing workload of the World Heritage Committee (and IUCN and ICOMOS) in evaluating new nominations and monitoring the protection of existing sites, the Committee decided in 2000 to enforce the requirement for each State Party to submit a Tentative List of its potential World Heritage sites. That is, the World Heritage Committee will not consider any future site nominations unless the site is on that country's tentative list. To further restrict its burgeoning workload, the Committee has decided that only one cultural property (but a total of two nominations if one is a natural property) can be nominated by each state party per annum.

So, a tentative list is a schedule of sites which the country considers to be of such outstanding universal value that they may warrant future World Heritage status. World Heritage site nominations have to be from sites included on this list. New Zealand's tentative list was drawn up some years ago. It contains only one site, Cape Reinga and the Three Kings Islands/Manawatawhi - which has not yet been nominated.

In August 2002, the Department of Conservation convened a meeting of agencies with an interest in promoting World Heritage. The outcome was the establishment of a World Heritage Liaison Group, convened by the Department of Conservation and including: the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Te Puni Kokiri, NZ Historic Places Trust, NZ ICOMOS, NZ IUCN, the NZ National Commission for UNESCO, and the NZ Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society. During 2003-04, the liaison group carried out preliminary work on drawing up a more representative tentative list of potential world heritage. The election of New Zealand to the 21-country World Heritage Committee in October 2003 was a very important step in achieving greater public understanding of the Convention throughout New Zealand and the South Pacific. Accordingly, the submission of a comprehensive tentative list of potential World Heritage sites in New Zealand became an even greater priority.

## AN INVITATION TO COMMENT ON POTENTIAL WORLD HERITAGE SITES

The Department of Conservation and other members of the World Heritage Liaison Group have considered a range of sites which might meet the strict World Heritage criteria but have reached no conclusions on sites that could be placed on the tentative list. As a basis for discussion by other interested parties and the wider public, six sites are identified in this document. They are not nominated sites but, rather, are illustrative of those which, on closer scrutiny, may meet the criteria for listing:

- Kermadec Islands and Marine Reserve (natural)
- Kahurangi National Park and Farewell Spit (natural)
- Papamoia Pa complex (cultural)
- Oamaru Port and Central Business District (cultural)
- Napier Art Deco Historic Precinct (cultural)
- Waitangi Treaty House and Grounds (cultural).

Comment is called for on the suitability of these six sites for inclusion in New Zealand's tentative list of candidates for future World Heritage status. Each site is described in the following pages, along with a summary of the values which could justify its inclusion on the list. In addition, some relevant authenticity, integrity, ownership and management issues are raised for comment.

However, comment does not have to be restricted to just these six suggested sites. We would like to receive suggestions on any other places that should be considered, together with any supporting information that would assist in an evaluation of the suitability of such sites. Submissions can be for individual properties or for what are called serial sites, which are groupings of properties that represent a common theme, whether located in close proximity or geographically separate. The NZ Subantarctic Islands World Heritage Site is such a serial site (see Appendix 2 for more detail on serial sites).

It is important to note that World Heritage listing does not change ownership of land, buildings, or other natural or historic resources in the site. Responsibilities for planning and management remain with the same agencies or people as at present. However, they are then accountable for their management decisions, through the government, to the international community. The government is required to monitor and periodically report on how New Zealand's World Heritage properties are being managed and whether their World Heritage values have changed over time.

Should a site be included on the World Heritage List, it is expected that owners and/or managers will seek to ensure that the values for which the property is inscribed are maintained or possibly even enhanced. Thus, close scrutiny would be given to any proposals to modify the site in order to ensure that the original values are maintained. This would also include managing the impact of any increase in visitor numbers which may occur as a result of listing and its attendant publicity.

To be a useful planning tool, the New Zealand World Heritage tentative list should contain only sites with natural and/or cultural values *that are of outstanding universal value*. This means that their natural and/or cultural significance is so exceptional that it transcends national boundaries and is of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. While there is no prescribed limit on the number of sites on the tentative list, the credibility of our assessment becomes stretched as the size of the list is increased.

### **Submissions on properties for inclusion on New Zealand's World Heritage Indicative List**

Submissions should be sent to Nicola Scott at:

The Department of Conservation, Head Office, PO Box 10-420, Wellington;

or by fax: 04 471 1082, or e-mail: [nscott@doc.govt.nz](mailto:nscott@doc.govt.nz)

Submissions should be received by 31 March 2005.

Submissions should include:

- 1) Name and contact details of the submitter.
- 2) Name of property.
- 3) Geographic location (description, or a map showing the location and extent of the property).
- 4) Description of the property.
- 5) Justification for its outstanding universal value(s).
- 6) Criteria met and how the property meets those criteria.
- 7) Assurances of authenticity or integrity.
- 8) Comparison with other similar properties.
- 9) What legal protection exists for the property.
- 10) What is known of future threats to the nominated World Heritage values.
- 11) Property owner's name and address.

Further details on the World Heritage Convention can be found at the Department of Conservation website: <http://www.doc.govt.nz/Conservation/World-Heritage/index.asp> and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre website: <http://whc.unesco.org/>

As further evaluation of properties for inclusion on New Zealand's tentative list occurs, it is possible the Department could approach you for a discussion or clarification of your comments or suggestions.