



Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

INCLUSION OF A PLACE IN THE NATIONAL HERITAGE LIST

KOONALDA CAVE

I, Greg Hunt, Minister for the Environment, having considered in relation to the place described in the Schedule of this instrument:

- (a) the Australian Heritage Council's assessment whether the place meets any of the National Heritage criteria; and
- (b) the comments given to the Council under sections 324JG and 324JH of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*; and

being satisfied that the place described in the Schedule has the National Heritage values specified in the Schedule, pursuant to section 324JJ of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, include the place and its National Heritage values in the National Heritage List.

Dated 9 July 2014

[signed by]

Greg Hunt
Minister for the Environment

SCHEDULE

STATE / TERRITORY: **SOUTH AUSTRALIA**
Local Governments: **Unincorporated**
Name: **Koonalda Cave**

Location / Boundary:

Approximately 5 ha (surface area), Old Eyre Highway, 95 km north east of Eucla, being the area enclosed by a line connecting the following MGA points consecutively: Zone 52, 579394mE 6525573mN, 579468mE 6525637mN, 579797mE 6525262mN, 579723mE 6525198mN, and comprising the tunnel system to a depth of 100 metres below the surface of this area.

Criteria / Values:

Criterion	Values
(a) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history.	<p>Koonalda Cave is of outstanding national heritage significance for the role it has played in the evolution of our contemporary understanding of the Pleistocene date of Aboriginal art, archaeology and occupation in Australia.</p> <p>The discovery of the significance of Koonalda Cave in 1956 placed the site at the forefront of enquiry into the art and archaeology of Aboriginal culture in Australia as this was the first site of its kind to be reliably dated to the mid Pleistocene (circa 22 000 BP). The evidence of human activity in Koonalda Cave indicates that it was only used during the Last Glacial Maximum (between 14 000 – 30 000 BP), thereby associating the age of the markings and flint mining activity to this time. Dating human activity in Koonalda Cave to the Pleistocene transformed the way Aboriginal rock art and human occupation sites throughout Australia were interpreted by archaeologists, which in turn was key to changing the widely held preconception that Aboriginal people had only lived on the Australian continent for a relatively short time (circa 7000 years). In addition, the location of the site proved that Aboriginal people survived in the arid region during the Last Glacial Maximum, which was previously thought to be impossible due to the harsh environmental conditions at this time.</p> <p>Koonalda Cave is of outstanding national significance as the finger flutings and incisions in the soft limestone cave were the first to be reliably dated to the Pleistocene and so played a particular role in the development of our modern understanding of the chronology and typology of Aboriginal art in Australia. Koonalda Cave remains among the best examples of finger flutings in Australia in terms of their quality, preservation and complexity.</p>

For more information on the place search the Australian Heritage Database at <http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl> using the name of the place.