Prospects for World Heritage in New Zealand and Polynesia.

In discussing the development of a tentative World Heritage List for New Zealand, it is appropriate to begin with some contextual observations, to note the World Heritage sites New Zealand currently has, and the thinking behind the development of a Tentative List.

Some of the distinctive characteristics that have determined New Zealand's cultural context are as follows:

- It is geographically isolated
- It was the last major habitable land area on earth to be settled by human beings
- It is the only large land mass settled by Polynesians who in the course of 800 years of development became the Maori people of today
- Subsequent settlers and immigrants in the last 200 years have created a heritage in the same geographic space, which has not displaced Maori heritage
- There is an extensive post-contact Colonial heritage
- Aspects of British political, legal and cultural lifestyle have been adapted for use, but to this have been added aspects of Maori social and cultural practice, and social and cultural factors from other settler communities, most notably island-Polynesian and Asian.

All of these characteristics combine to form the natural and cultural environment that is New Zealand. Natural images tend to play a big part in our sense of national identity and New Zealand heavily markets the 'clean green' outdoor image - the silver fern, snow-capped mountains, green fields, sheep, and outdoor adventures such as hiking, jet-boating and tramping.

Some cultural elements of New Zealand have long been 'appropriated' as part of the tourist experience and national identity. Maori kapa haka (concert) parties and Maori villages by geysers have been key drawcards for the spa town of Rotorua for more than a century. Nevertheless, wider cultural experiences are becoming an attraction for visitors to New Zealand. The clean green image is being joined by historic buildings, and Te Papa, our national museum and flagship. These cultural images are not well reflected in our current World Heritage sites.

These World Heritage sites are:

- Te Wahipounamu, south-west New Zealand, inscribed in 1990/91 for its natural values. The area features landscape shaped by successive glaciations into fjords, rocky coasts, towering cliffs, lakes and waterfalls. It is the home of the kea, the only alpine parrot in the world. It includes four national parks. Outstanding natural features are Milford Sound and New Zealand's highest mountain Mount Cook (Aorangi). Aorangi refers back to ancestral peaks in Hawaiiki, the traditional homeland.
The Sub-Antarctic Islands in the Southern Ocean, south-east of New Zealand, inscribed in 1998 for their natural values. The site consists of five island groups (the Snares, Bounty Islands, Antipodes Islands, Auckland Islands and Campbell Island). They are particularly notable for the large number and diversity of seabirds and penguins that breed there. There are 126 bird species in all including 40 seabirds of which 5 breed nowhere else.

Tongariro National Park, in the centre of the volcanic plateau in the North Island. It was inscribed for its natural values in 1990, and then further inscribed for its cultural values in 1993. Tongariro was the first natural property on the World Heritage List to be re-inscribed as a joint natural and cultural property under the revised Cultural Criterion 6 for its associations with the living traditions of Ngati Tuwharetoa. This is an area of great cultural significance to the Tuwharetoa people, who gifted it to the Crown in 1887 as a national park, so that its other association is with the early world-wide spread of the national park philosophy, first expressed at Yellowstone in the nineteenth century. The mountains at the heart of the park have cultural and religious significance for the Maori people and symbolize the spiritual links between this community and its environment. The park contains active and extinct volcanoes, a diverse range of ecosystems and scenic landscapes.

There are currently no solely cultural World Heritage sites in New Zealand. There are a few significant historic features, but only a few, included in the current world heritage sites.

One reason for this might be the priorities of our state party, which is the central government agency, the Department of Conservation (DOC). The DOC does internationally-recognized work in the natural sciences, recovering bird and plant species from the brink of extinction. However, the DOC has a less admirable record in the field of historic heritage. Despite having statutory responsibility for historic heritage on Crown land, its work in this field absorbs less than 5% of its annual budget.

There are other reasons for the disparity of cultural and natural World Heritage sites in New Zealand. The country’s heritage industry is fragmented, with a number of agencies having a statutory protection, statutory advocacy or management role and no national leadership or unified vision for the sector.

There are further reasons, which are not unique to New Zealand:

- There is a lack of funding for heritage places or heritage education to raise the profile of historic heritage among the public.

- Historic and cultural activities run a distant second to nature conservation in our national consciousness. The year 2000 saw public outcry over an injection of funding into the arts and culture sector by the current pro-heritage Labour Government, whereas greater funding grants to sport (Rugby or the America’s Cup) are absorbed without a quibble.
Many New Zealanders of European descent do not relate to Maori heritage values as a crucial component of the country's heritage and archaeology.

There is currently only one site on New Zealand's tentative cultural list, the Cape Reinga / Three Kings Islands area, at the very north of the North Island, an area of immense spiritual significance to Maori. This was on a list with Tongariro, since inscribed, submitted to Paris in 1993 and created as a matter of expediency. Since 1993 the DOC, as the state party, has been developing procedures to allow an appropriate level of community consultation in the process. The Department considered that it risked causing damage to community relations on a local level if a process were run without appropriate community understanding of the objectives and implications of this task.

ICOMOS New Zealand's role in the Development of the Tentative List

ICOMOS New Zealand is dissatisfied with New Zealand's existing Tentative List, and the lack of progress in developing a rigorous and defensible List. Members have been considering ways in which we could constructively contribute to the development of a Tentative List in accordance with the operational guidelines. We have been concerned to see that New Zealand's Tentative List results from a comprehensive and robust process. The process as a whole has to be objective. In theory one party cannot play more than one role but, because the number of active players is limited, it is possible that ICOMOS New Zealand may eventually play several roles. For the time being, we consider that the role of ICOMOS New Zealand in relation to World Heritage is as a stakeholder with technical expertise and with a particular role as a technical evaluator. If we took the responsibility for the preparation of a draft Tentative List, we could hardly act as objective advisers on this matter.

Amongst the matters that we are promoting is appropriate thematic or contextualising work, so that the outstanding of universal aspects of a place can be plainly seen and compared with others.

New Zealand Thematic Development

This structure has been developed by ICOMOS New Zealand, based in part on US National Park Service (1996).

Structural framework:

- Themes
  - Sub-themes
    - Components
    - Elements
    - Sites/places
• Themes:

1. Peopling New Zealand
2. Providing and consuming health and social services and marking phases in the life cycle
3. Building New Zealand communities and settlements
4. Transforming the environment
5. Developing the New Zealand economy
6. Working in New Zealand
7. Governing New Zealand
8. Developing New Zealand cultural institutions and ways of life

An example of Sub-themes, Components and Elements:

1. Peopling the land
   Migrating to and from New Zealand
   Migrating within New Zealand
   Special settlements (eg, Wakefield settlements, company towns)
   Disputing settlement
   Fighting for the land
   Colonizing
   Resisting colonisation
   Battle sites
   Redoubts
   Pa
   Niu poles
   Centres for passive resistance

With this in mind we have encouraged the preparation of thematic frameworks by the heritage agencies in New Zealand, in the context of national level registration programs. We are impressed by the thematic development that has gone into the Australian Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs), natural and cultural, which follow the recommendations of specialist committees of the World Heritage Committee to ensure more balanced and representative world heritage. However, the New Zealand thematic framework follows, in part, the US National Park Service thematic framework. This has clear application to a former colonial society such as ours.

We have also prepared background documentation on some sites. This has posed some interesting intellectual challenges, not so much in developing the historical narrative of the places, but in:

• Choosing the exact area to be covered
• Whether selecting serial or single sites
• Conflicting views about the Operating Guidelines criteria and how they relate to the place, eg, whether to utilize settlement systems, historical landscapes or townscapes as concepts to organize data on Maori fortifications
International comparative data, e.g., on goldfields landscape, significance and priority of technical developments in goldmining. In addition, we have had to consider the difficulty which ICOMOS New Zealand would face in attempting to achieve an effective degree of consultation and buy-in from local interests, both for a process and for particular places on the Tentative List. We are aware of the difficulties that have arisen in the US and in Australia in urban areas and can see them looming for us. We are also mindful of duties to indigenous peoples. ICOMOS New Zealand therefore believes that the Department of Conservation, as the state party for the New Zealand Government, should take the lead in developing proposals for a Tentative List, including the necessary consultation. We welcome the indications that the department is preparing to do this. We have urged it to brief stakeholders and local communities at the outset about the values, processes, future implications for management and a realistic assessment of economic benefits.

ICOMOS New Zealand wishes to contribute to a process managed by the Department of Conservation to develop the New Zealand Tentative List. If called upon, and on the condition that it is understood that the state party is responsible for consultation, we would be prepared to forward the work that we have done.

Possible World Heritage Polynesian serial geographic Sites:

A further factor in our thinking has been the outcomes of the 1999 Port Vila (Vanuatu) meeting on Pacific World Heritage. It is worth stressing that New Zealand considers itself not only a part of the Pacific, but more specifically both culturally and geographically as part of Polynesia. (We welcome any initiatives to consider Antarctica and to bring it within the scope of World Heritage, although we note that it is the subject of its own international treaty guaranteeing its conservation.)

Thematic Development

It is our view that serial geographical sites linking the island states in relation to particular themes are an avenue that should be given consideration. It is an approach that needs communication between the state parties to the convention. A Polynesia- or Pacific-wide serial site approach would beneficially change the number and nature of sites in New Zealand.

Priorities should be based on well-founded themes and suggestions for particular places that might meet the criteria of the operational guidelines. There needs to be a consistent framework, system or understanding about how critical comparison and evaluation of places is to be carried out, to be agreed with Pacific communities and acceptable to World Heritage Committee.
Here follows a sketch of themes relevant to Polynesian or Pacific Island World Heritage:

**Origins of Polynesia and human expansion into the centre of the Pacific:**

- Lapita
- Voyaging and seascapes
- Early sites
- Early sites linking islands (e.g., Maupiti, Fr. Polynesia; Wairau Bay, New Zealand).

**The Idea of Polynesia:**

- Noble Savage theories
- 19th Century Christian missionary views
- Marae (including Rapa Nui)
- Late prehistoric social organisation.

**Voyages of the Dead:**

- Sites relating to the souls of the dead, eg, Cape Reinga (current New Zealand Tentative List)
- Hawaiiki landscape: references in Cook’s writings, Central Polynesia, Hawaii.

**Voyages of the Living:**

- Trade networks
- Pacific Discovery: Polynesian, British (Captain Cook), other European
- Could include Fatal Shore accounts.

For example, under the theme Polynesian Discovery we would seek to include Wairau Bay, for long the key site establishing the link between New Zealand and Central Polynesia c.800 years ago. Under the theme Voyages of the Dead, our existing Tentative List area (Cape Reinga) is strengthened.

Finally, a number of avenues could be followed to give effect to these ideas. These include both political and professional or academic approaches to the issue:

**Political**

Small island states need to sign up to the convention (Port Vila recommendation September 1999), and should be encouraged to do so.

There need to be greater involvement by the central and eastern Pacific signatories, eg, the USA, Chile, France. A well-resourced, good diplomatic player in the Pacific (Australia, NZ, France, Japan, Canada or the USA.) interested and committed to
negotiations with the island states. International agencies should support in every way possible initiatives that may come from existing signatory states.

There needs to be a clear understanding that at an early stage initiatives have to involve local communities with customary understanding, and control of land and sea (Suva recommendation). With this in mind, Pacific Island regional institutions such as the South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP), the Pacific Islands Museums Association and the Apia UNESCO office need as much assistance as possible from ICCROM, Australia ICOMOS and ICOMOS NZ.

Academic and professional

There needs to be a preliminary desk-based effort on thematic development, e.g., a thesis on World Heritage in the Pacific (Port Vila recommendation), with a view to setting priorities for consultation or for initiatives by Pacific Island communities. It should be possible to explore links for the use of Cultural Criterion 6 (Associative) with natural nominations (through SPREP, IUCN). There should be briefings for these communities on the results of the desk-based survey.