Recognition of landscape values workshop: a summary

Warming up

The group discussion started with a desire to discuss the management of cultural landscapes. Individuals in the group brought out their special concerns about the management of:

• agricultural landscapes
• Aboriginal landscapes
• walking tracks, roads, and routes

Deciding on terms

The discussion then focussed on whether we should be considering cases or processes. This brought the discussion to definitions. It was agreed that the definition of cultural landscape is so broad that it is better to consider cultural landscape units.

Discussion about the importance of looking at landscape values in a cross-cultural context led to the following principle related to heritage study briefs:

Principle 1: Heritage studies should look at all the interpretations possible for a particular area. This involves integrating ethnohistorical work with natural landscape studies.

Because of the concern about limited funding for studies, the ‘ideal’ brief was discussed.

Suggestion 1: That studies be integrated with studies done for other bodies so that the funding becomes augmented from other sources.

Methodology issues

What are the methodologies for identifying values, particularly in cross-cultural terms?

Discussion addressed the difference between cultural landscapes which are coherent for many groups. For example, the Southern Highlands and cultural landscapes where there are multiple values for the same place (eg. urban cultural landscapes).

This raised community participation issues and the expertise within the community which is an untapped resource.

Community processes

The group discussed ways to approach communities. The limitations of public meetings, issues of representativeness, skewing of questionnaires and the difficulty of attendances at workshops.

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Suggestion 2: There should be time for reflection by the community and a sequence of workshops was better than a one-off workshop.

Issues of community processes also revealed that different forms of communication were needed. Heritage reports tend to be written for heritage practitioners.

Suggestion 3: Thematic histories should be developed later in the study to allow for more flexibility in interpretations.

**Memories and associative values**

Communities want to know more about their community memories. Can we include other methods such as the ‘common ground’ processes? The suggested advantages:

- Allows for understanding Aboriginal place naming.
- Shifts ownership into the community.
- Diversifies funding to include arts funding and community services funding.

Suggestion 4: Include other community values methods such as community arts and common ground activities.

**Expert/community relationship**

The need for heritage professionals to develop expertise in initiating ways to elicit community knowledge was discussed.

*Principle 2: We need to be innovative as professionals in order to deepen our understanding of cultural landscapes.*