

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment portfolio

Question No: 10
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Programme: Wildlife Heritage and Marine Division (WHM)
Topic: Australian Heritage system process for site recognition
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Question Type: Spoken

Senator McKenzie asked:

Senator McKENZIE: Thank you very much Chair and thank you for your indulgence. I was just wondering what the process would be to recognise the high country cattlemen's way of life as a living culture?

Dr de Brouwer: I might ask Mr Johnston.

Mr Johnston: The Australian heritage system is a place-based system, so you would have to find values linked to a place, and then it would be the place and the boundary that would reflect those values. My understanding is that there has been assessments of some parts for those activities, but the inscription of the Australian Alps National Park does not include cattle grazing as one of the values that was found by the Australian Heritage Council a few years ago.

Senator McKENZIE: We recognise as a place of heritage the actual droving tracks of this living culture, this community, but we do not recognise the actual practice, which created the tracks we have now actually encompassed in heritage.

Mr Johnston: I have to talk from recollection of having looked at the work that was done. It was done some years ago. My recollection is that when the Heritage Council assessed it—we can come back and clarify if this is not the correct characterisation of it—it found the action significant as an historic action and some of the sites and some of the huts and stuff as historical sites rather than as contemporary sites. But we can come back and clarify that with some more details if that is not the exact process.

Answer:

Alpine grazing was considered by the Australian Heritage Council during its assessment of the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves, which was included in the National Heritage List in 2008. The Australian Heritage Council's assessment report noted that grazing activity had ceased in the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves. A number of historic heritage values associated with the Australian Alps were identified including historic transhumant grazing, both as a past activity and for its relic physical evidence such as huts and stockyards.

The assessment also identified the pioneering history of the place as an important part of the construction of the Australian identity which features in myths, legends and literature. Further information is available at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national/australia-alps>