

“Role of Geotourism in Australia’s Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2025” - GlobalEco 2016



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Today's Agenda

- Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2025
 - Natural & Cultural Heritage, Ecotourism and Geotourism
 - Australian National Landscapes
 - Australian Geotrail and Aspiring Geopark Development in Australia
 - Take Aways
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Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2025

- Ecotourism Australia has been working with key industry stakeholders to prepare **Australia's Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2025** and **Action Plan**.
- There is currently **no collaborative, nation-wide strategy** to maximise and realise the potential for nature-based tourism.
- **Geotourism offers strong experiential characteristics**, embracing all elements of natural and cultural heritage, inclusive of ecotourism and indigenous tourism values.

Understanding Natural Heritage

Natural heritage is the legacy of natural objects and intangible attributes encompassing the **countryside** and **natural environment**, including flora and fauna, scientifically known as **BIODIVERSITY**, and geology, landforms and soil landscapes, i.e. **GEODIVERSITY**.

Key Concepts - Ecotourism

“Ecotourism is **ecologically sustainable tourism** with a primary focus on **experiencing natural areas** that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation”

But **ecotourism** per se is too narrowly defined and is increasingly seen as a **niche market**.

Geotourism Definition

‘Geotourism is tourism which focuses on an area's **geology and landscape** as the basis for providing visitor engagement, learning and enjoyment’.



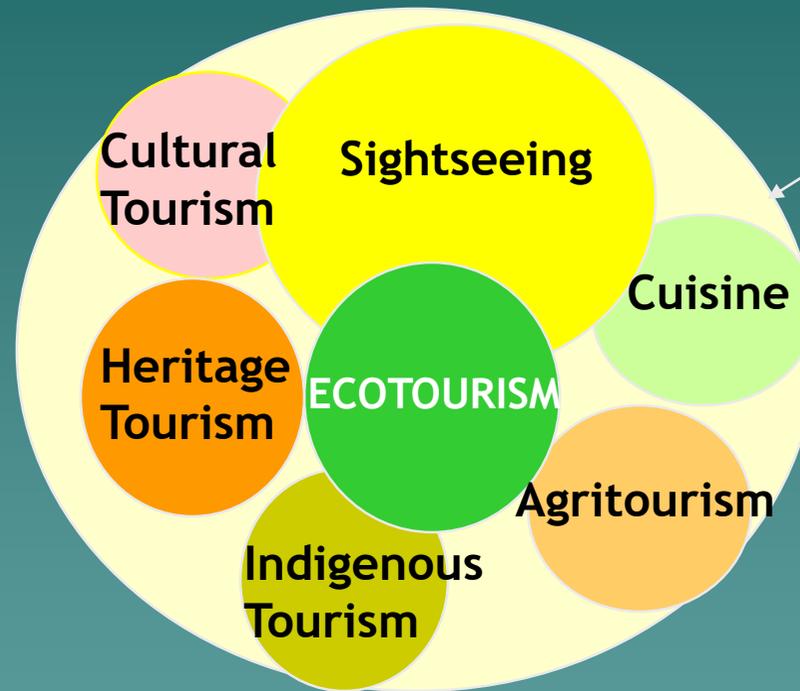
Environment, Natural & Cultural Heritage

comprises the following:

1. **Abiotic** - non-living aspects such as the climate & geology e.g. landscape and landforms: **GEODIVERSITY**
2. **Biotic** - the living parts eg. fauna (animals) and flora (plants): **BIODIVERSITY**
3. **Cultural** - past & present, non-living & built

Parts **B+C** are well interpreted within tourism, especially through ecotourism and cultural tourism, **but A has typically not been well addressed in Australia.**

Geotourism incorporating all types of 'nature-based' tourism

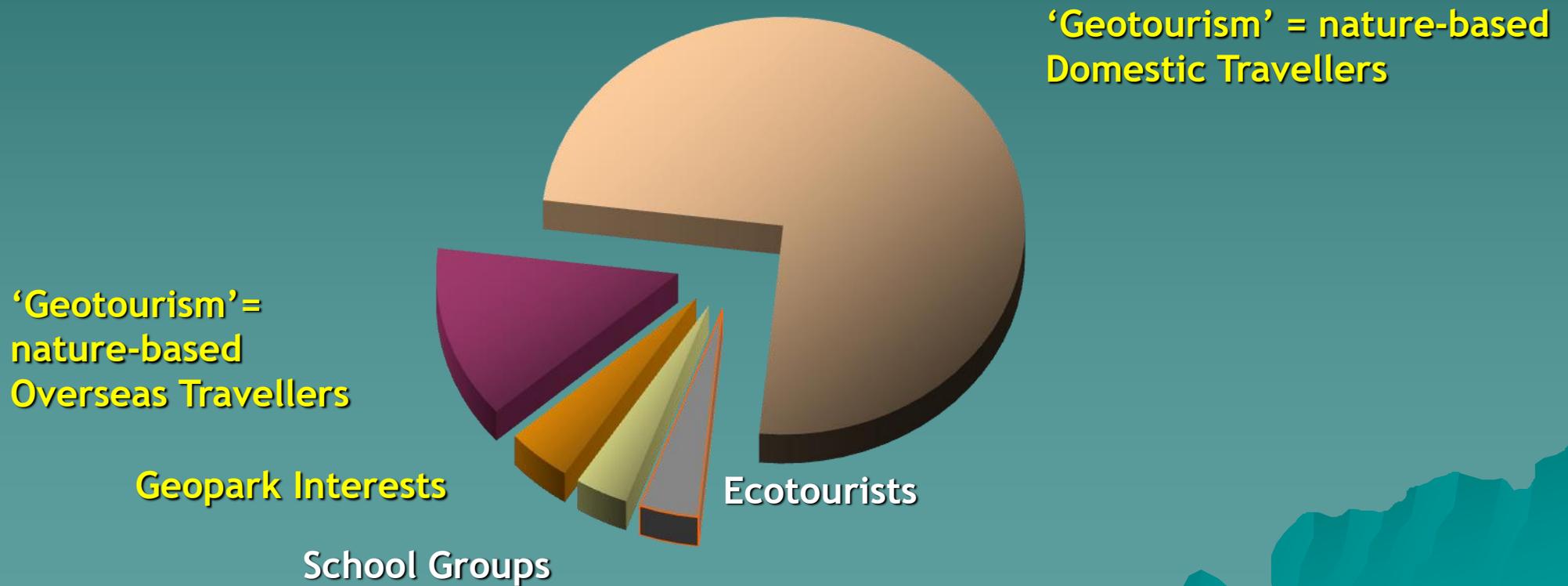


Geotourism
i.e. 'experiential
tourism'

Geotourism - Diversity of Places

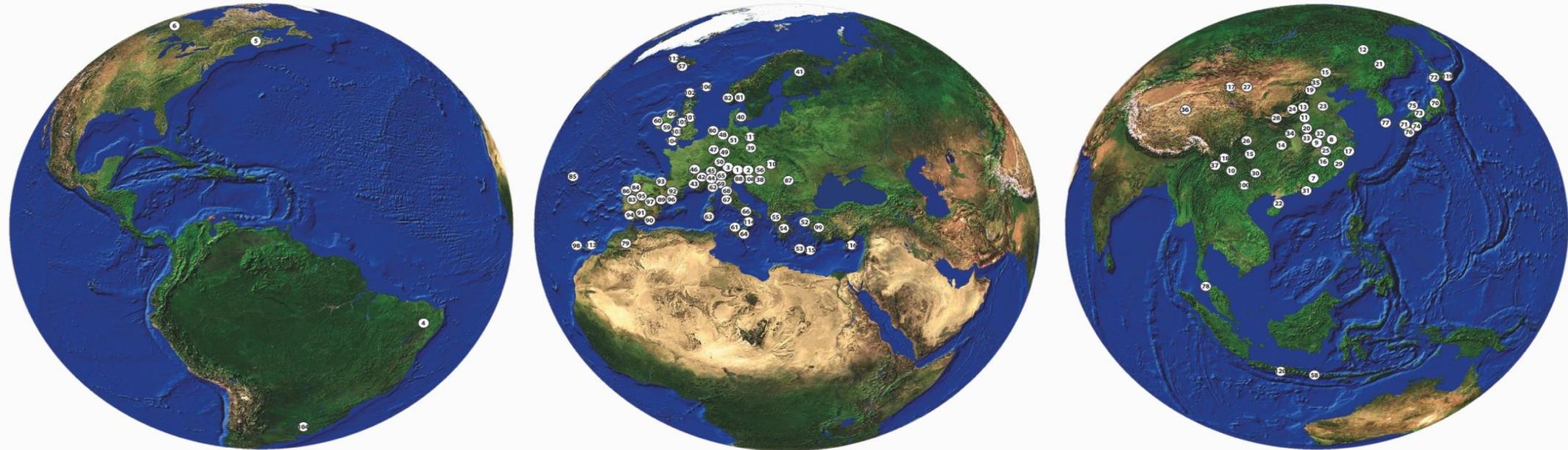


Nature Based Tourism - Potential Markets



UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS

Where are the geoparks?



There are **120 UNESCO Global Geoparks** spread across 33 countries and 5 continents. This includes 69 in Europe as part of the European Geoparks Network (founded in 2000) and 46 in the Asia-Pacific region as part of the Asia-Pacific Geoparks Network (founded in 2009).



Australia's National Landscapes Programme

Partnership between tourism and conservation that aims to:

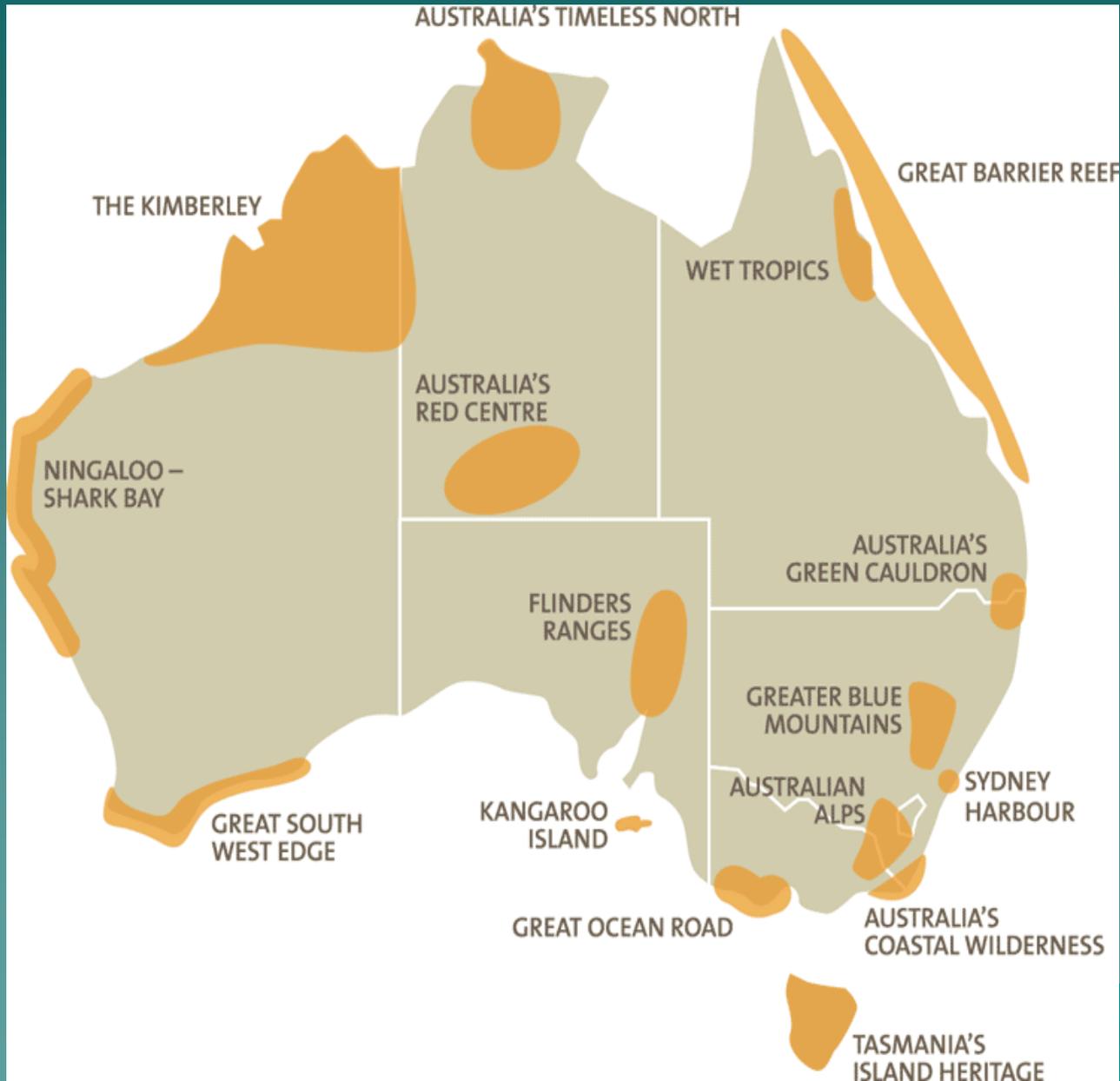
- Promote world class, high quality visitor experiences
- Increase the value of tourism to regional economies
- Enhance the role of protected areas in those economies
- Build support for protecting our natural and cultural assets
- Engage local communities



A long term strategic approach

*'To differentiate **Australia's iconic natural and cultural destinations** from anything else available in the world'*

Australia's 16 National Landscapes



National Landscapes & UNESCO Global Geoparks

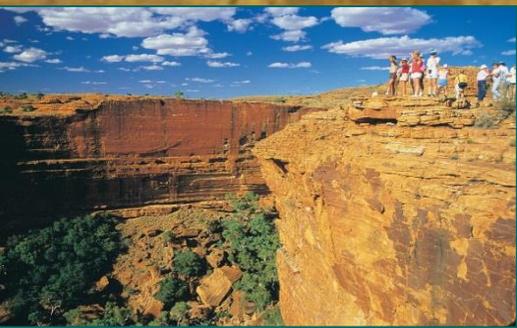
- Have **similar goals** relating to local development and **community engagement** as well as education and experiential tourism ('**geotourism**').
- Both **require government approval** but with **different government stakeholders**.
- However, the Australian **National Landscape Programme** has been formerly disbandoned by its government sponsors, but the **iconic landscapes and their communities are still very much in place!**

Australia's Red Centre National Landscape Northern Territory

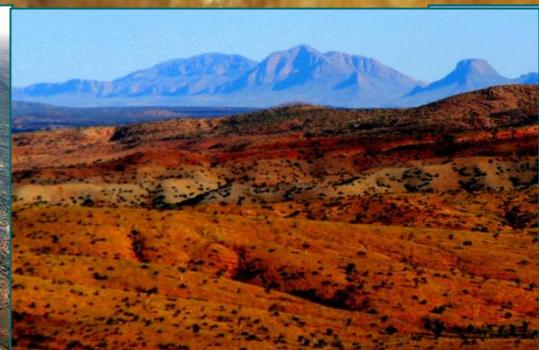
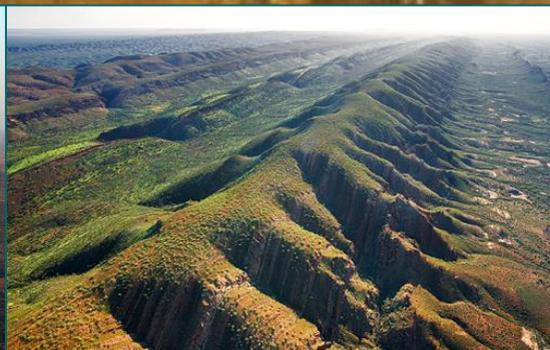
Alice Springs



‘features an ancient landscape with erosional remnants (geosites) linked to a common geological heritage’



★ **Uluru**



Australia's Red Centre National Landscape



Red Centre Way



Iconic Geotourism Themes of Australia's Red Centre National Landscape

- **A:** Landforms and common geological heritage
 - **B:** Red Kangaroo species, and other type flora/fauna
 - **C:** Indigenous (and European) culture
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- A stylized, dark teal silhouette of a mountain range is positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, extending from the right edge towards the center.

Why Geotrails?

1. Relates directly to the tourism experience of a **journey linking destinations**.
 2. In Australia, unlike geoparks, **geotrails have widespread appeal**, and do not compete with or impact on land management/access issues.
 3. Geotrails are relatively easy to establish and represent a **very cost effective means of enhancing regional development**.
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- A stylized silhouette of a mountain range in shades of teal, located at the bottom right of the slide.

Best Practice Geotrails

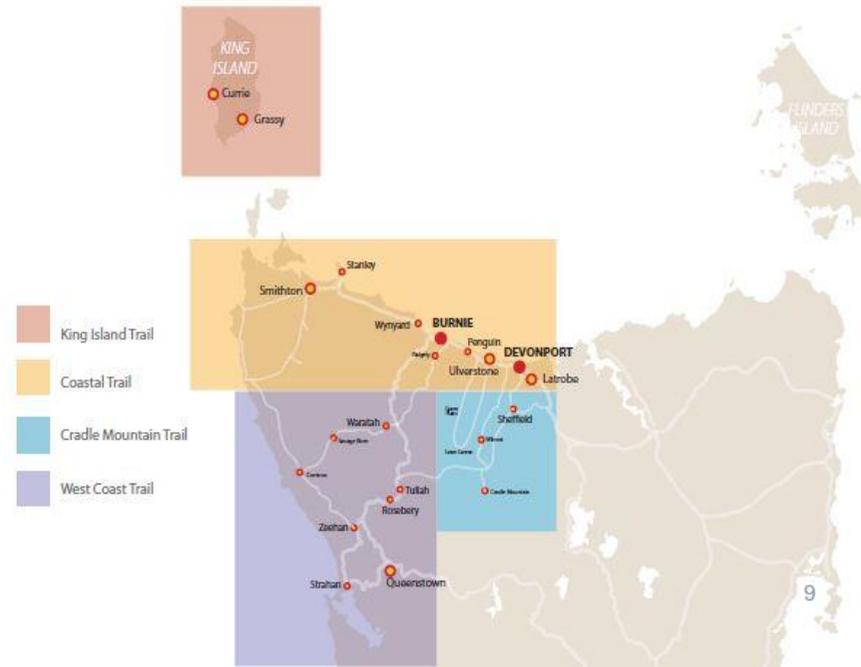
1. Should be constructed around **routes currently used by tourists**; geotrails should form logical journeys linking accommodation destinations.
 2. Should **meld the geological heritage features of a region with a cohesive STORY**.
 3. Should **incorporate and package in the biodiversity and cultural components (including mining heritage)** of the region through which the geotrail traverses.
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- A stylized silhouette of a mountain range in shades of teal, located at the bottom right of the slide.

'The Living Earth' - Cradle Coast Geotrail

The proposed experience

The experience is a self-guided geological and social tour brought together by the theme 'The Living Earth'. It involves 70 sites within four main trails: the Coastal Trail from Devonport to the Edge of the World; the West Coast Trail, Cradle Mountain and King Island. Visitors can come into and out of the Trail at any point along it.

- Information is accessed via a smartphone App, sign markers, interpretation panels, guided experiences, as part of other guided experiences and through engagement with EarthCaching.
- It is also recommended that the Aboriginal people, ideally through guided experiences, offer their own experience of *The Living Earth*.
- There are two proposed 'anchor' interpretation presentations, one on the breaking up of Gondwana and the other on the rise of geology as a science.
- The values of GeoConservation are also stressed so it is clear that these amazing geological places and features need to be protected. Interpretation plays a key role in public education.
- It is suggested that implementation takes place over a two-year period with the Coastal Trail being the first priority.





Other Australian Geotourism Initiatives

- **State of New South Wales:** GeoTreat supported ‘GeoJourney’ in the Australian Coastal Wilderness National Landscape.
- **State of Victoria:** Volcano Discovery Trail (Kanawinka related).
- **State of Western Australia:** Various geotrail project proposals (e.g. Murchison, Coolgardie) and potential ‘geopark concept’ opportunities
- **State of South Australia:** is not actively progressing any geopark potential projects, but is very keen to support the development of geotrails and geotourism through exceptional geological heritage, especially through Kangaroo Island and the Flinders Ranges National Landscapes.
- **State of Tasmania:** West Coast ‘Living Earth’ - CradleCoast GeoTrail.
- **Northern Territory:** Potential Geotrails (Red Centre, Savannah Way).

Pre-Aspiring Warrumbungles UNESCO Global Geopark New South Wales



Currently comprising the Shires
of Warrumbungle, Gilgandra
and Coonamble, 27,000 sq km
in area

The Proposed Savannah Way Geotrail linked to the Pre-Aspiring Etheridge UNESCO Global Geopark in the state of Queensland



SAVANNAH WAY

Australia's Adventure Drive

Take-Aways

- **Regional development imperatives** (growth and jobs) are now driving geotourism initiatives in Australia.
- The incorporation of the geotourism experience (with **traditional nature- based tourism and elements of other ‘place based’ tourism**) creates a more holistic experience, and is a move towards the **experiential tourism model**.
- Australia has a **big future for geotourism** particularly given the emerging demand from **overseas markets**.
- **State and Local Government inspired and backed geopark/geotrail initiatives** are now emerging.



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<http://www.leisuresolutions.com.au/index.php/geotourism-industry-groups/>

<http://www.geoexpo.com/articles/2016/04/australia-s-big-red-centre>