

Jenolan Caves - some issues

PROBLEMS AT JENOLAN

- Ad hoc decision making.
- Scientific and Environmental Advisory Council appears to have failed.
- Karst Management Advisory Committee doesn't have a method of having matters referred to them by other stakeholders; also NPWS do not appear to refer all matters to KMAC that they should be considering. (eg buffer zone & reserve extension).
- KMAC has not been asked to advise on reviewing the Draft Plan of Management in recent times.
- The decline in the endangered Wallaby is still a serious problem.
- Damage to historical signatures in Arch/Plughole cave, possibly by adventure tours. It appears to be impossible to monitor adventure cavers.
- Illegal caving in Wiburds Lake Cave as a result of adventure caving.
- Lack of facilitation for scientists wishing to work in the caves.
- Lack of visitor interpretation centre – one of the poorest in the world.
- Lack of integration between ticket sales, visitor interpretation and shop.
- Shop selling tourist “junk”.
- No central library of research papers etc at Jenolan.
- Loss of heritage items. (Ladder in Nettle/Arch Cave)
- Loss of speleological records (particularly cave numbering record book).
- Lack of proper walking trail maps (and poorly designed existing map).
- Poor separation of pedestrians and vehicles.
- Poor distribution of reports/studies carried out by NPWS and Trust (cf vertebrate fauna).
- Studies carried out without proper reference to all stakeholders (eg vertebrate fauna).
- Extensive modification of the natural environment, particularly creeks.
- Removal of historic Maiden gardens.
- Possible breaches of the NSW Heritage Act 1977
- Development Approvals for major works at Jenolan may be suspect/illegal.
- Jenolan not listed on world heritage for its caves and cultural significance.
- Loss of access to funding by reason of above.
- “Historic heritage infrastructure” (Caves House etc) “is in need of refurbishment and/or repair” – no one will take on a lease or licence on this basis.
- All previous attempts to run Caves House by private enterprise have failed.
- Access to Jenolan is limited and needs to be solved long-term.

Management Issues

- Revolving door of senior management
- Confusion in government regarding areas or responsibility between NPWS and the Trust
- Senior managers' refusal to communicate adequately with the public.
- Low staff morale at Jenolan.

Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve – Draft Plan of Management

There is no plan of management at the moment.

A meeting of stakeholders should be convened to discuss the Draft Plan of Management.

The 1988 POM has failed (as an example, witness the inappropriate concrete pathways in the Devils Coach House and the wall-to-wall concrete in the plaza area).

Required Modifications to the Draft Plan of Management

- The document should show the correct Reserve area – update to reflect actual boundary

- Exclude Wiburds Lake Cave, Hennings Cave, Bushrangers Cave and Frenchmans Cave and all area north of Mammoth Cave from “Visitor Use & Service Zone”
- Cease all adventure caving to Wiburds Lake Cave, Hennings Cave, Bushrangers Cave and Frenchmans Cave.
- Include mandatory provision for a general advisory body for the whole of the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve. This would include the tourist caves and the Caves House operations as well as the general reserve. Such body to include Jenolan Caves Historical & Preservation Society, the Jenolan Environment Protection Committee, NSW Speleological Council (of ASF), Oberon Plateau Tourist Association etc.

Other enhancements needed

- Increase Reserve to include all of the Jenolan River catchment (ie Terrace Creek).
- Require buffer zones between the surrounding pine plantations and the Reserve.
- Plan for the removal of inappropriate surface works (buildings, pavings, creek coverings, artificial waterfall, etc).
- Remove the splitting of Jenolan into a “commercial” zone and the “park” zone. The two-zone model would allow conflict between the two zones with the commercial

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