

RESPECTING COUNTRY – FROM BLUE MOUNTAINS TO OPERA HOUSE

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Abstract

The paper argues that, as monuments and sites evolve in response to specifics of place and time, it is essential, in caring for them, to respect the natural and cultural values of their settings. To pursue that argument, the paper identifies three distinct, significant places, which share a single setting. It describes recent innovative programs to consolidate both their individual outstanding qualities and their links to setting, in a context of dynamic change.

Definition

The sites encompass an urban island, a monumental building and a vast wild landscape - all lying within the Sydney Sandstone Basin on the south-eastern coast of Australia :

- the nineteenth century colonial/industrial Cockatoo Island
- the twentieth century Sydney Opera House and
- the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area..

The paper defines their contrasting tangible and intangible qualities - and their common eco-historic context, linked by paths and stories.

Some tools

The Sydney Sandstone Basin is an area of dynamic socio-environmental change and the agencies managing these sites have responded in different and exciting ways.

The paper outlines:

- recent public events on *Cockatoo Island*,
- opening the *Opera House* more directly to the inner harbour and
- mapping country' in the *Blue Mountains*, to link science and traditional knowledge.