Assessment and management of pre-1958 historic remains at Camp Lake, Vestfold Hills, East Antarctica

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**Working Paper submitted by Australia**

Summary

Australia has assessed the heritage value of pre-1958 historic remains in the vicinity of Camp Lake, Vestfold Hills, East Antarctica, in accordance with the *Guidelines for the assessment and management of Heritage in Antarctica* (Resolution 2 (2018)). Nomination for HSM listing is not proposed, and the local value of the site for interpreting early landings in the Vestfold Hills will be protected through management arrangements put in place within the Australian Antarctic Program. Accordingly, Australia recommends that the Committee agrees that interim protection of the remains under the *Guidelines for handling pre-1958 historic remains whose existence or present location is not known* (Resolution 5 (2001)) is no longer required.

Background

At CEP XXII (2019) Australia presented ATCM XLII/WP31 *Notification of the discovery of pre-1958 historic remains at Camp Lake, Vestfold Hills, East Antarctica*. In accordance with the *Guidelines for handling pre-1958 historic remains whose existence or present location is not known* (Resolution 5 (2001)), the paper reported on the discovery of pre-1958 historic remains associated with early Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions activities in the vicinity of Camp Lake, Vestfold Hills, East Antarctica. It also noted that, consistent with the *Guidelines for the assessment and management of Heritage in Antarctica* (Resolution 2 (2018)), Australia was undertaking an assessment of the heritage value of the historic remains, which would inform management options. The Committee noted the information, acknowledged that the remains would be subject to interim protection in accordance with Resolution 5 (2001), and advised the ATCM accordingly[[1]](#footnote-1).

Assessment of heritage value of the historic remains at Camp Lake

Australia engaged a heritage professional with Antarctic expertise to assess the heritage significance of the Camp Lake site and associated objects consistent with the *Guidelines for the assessment and management of Heritage in Antarctica*. As noted in ATCM XLII/WP32, the historic remains stem from the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition’s early exploration of the Vestfold Hills in 1955 and include: a rock cairn; two rock outlines of cleared tent sites; remnants of wooden crates; wire; a bar of soap; amphibious vehicle tracks; and a possible flag pole foundation.

The assessment noted that the objects do not appear to be at risk if left untouched and, of themselves, do not appear to present an environmental hazard or risk to each other. It concluded that the site and objects are of negligible heritage significance in terms of the criteria presented in the *Guidelines for the assessment and management of Heritage in Antarctica*, but have local value for interpreting early landings in the Vestfold Hills, which is best protected by recording them and leaving them undisturbed.

Accordingly, Australia has decided to:

* not nominate the site for listing as a Historic Site or Monument (HSM); and
* put in place arrangements within the Australian Antarctic Program to protect the site and remains, including:
* recording and monitoring the site and registering the artefacts on Australia’s Antarctic heritage register;
* developing management arrangements for visits to the site by Australian Antarctic Program personnel;
* providing information about the site to station leaders and on new maps of the area, and making information available to expeditioners and to the public; and
* ensuring that the potential impacts of proposed activities on the heritage values of the site are assessed through formal environmental impact assessment processes consistent with the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty.

Recommendations

Australia recommends that the Committee:

* notes that Australia has assessed the heritage value of the pre-1958 historic remains at Camp Lake, Vestfold Hills, East Antarctica in accordance with the *Guidelines for the assessment and management of Heritage in Antarctica* (Resolution 2 (2018));
* notes that nomination of the site for HSM listing is not proposed, and the local value of the site for interpreting early landings in the Vestfold Hills will be protected through management arrangements put in place within the Australian Antarctic Program; and
* agrees that interim protection of the remains in accordance with the *Guidelines for handling pre-1958 historic remains whose existence or present location is not known* (Resolution 5 (2001)) is no longer required.

1. CEP XXII Final Report, paras. 120 & 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)