

The Tasmanian Geoconservation Database Reference Group (TGDRG)

Terms of Reference

April 2018

Purpose

1. The purpose of the Tasmanian Geoconservation Database Reference Group (TGDRG) is to provide expert scientific review of the values and significance of sites listed or proposed for listing in the Tasmanian Geoconservation Database (TGD) and to provide advice regarding the development or refinement of the TGD itself.

Structure and Composition

2. The General Manager, Resource Management and Conservation (RMC) Division, Department of Primary Industries Parks Water and Environment (DPIPWE), has ultimate responsibility for the TGD, including the appointment of TGDRG members, listing and de-listing of sites and approval of any changes to these terms of reference.
3. The TGDRG will comprise at least twelve persons. Members will have demonstrable expertise in aspects of Tasmanian geodiversity. The disciplines of geology, geomorphology and soil science will be each represented by at least two persons.
4. A secretarial member shall be an employee of DPIPWE and responsible for (1) convening TGDRG meetings, (2) recording and circulating meeting minutes, (3) facilitation of other relevant TGDRG communications, and (4) maintaining a record of the disciplines represented on the TGDRG.
5. The TGDRG will elect a Chair from the group. The Chair will be responsible for (1) order at meetings, (2) representing the group and responding on its behalf, following consultation with the members. The Chair may hold this position for up to three consecutive years.
6. A TGDRG member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings will be considered to have resigned from the TGDRG.
7. The TGDRG is to provide advice to the RMC General Manager regarding appropriate membership of scientific peers.
8. Subcommittees of the TGDRG may be formed to address specific issues and may seek advice from non-member peers acknowledged by the TGDRG.

Meetings

9. The TGDRG will convene for a general meeting at least annually.
10. At annual general meetings or by otherwise agreed special arrangement the TGDRG will consider nominated geosites and proposed amendments, and will make scientifically-based recommendations to the RMC General Manager based on the TGD Listing Criteria (see Listing Criteria and Definitions below).
11. The TGDRG may make other recommendations concerning the listing status, significance and other information concerning geosites.
12. The TGDRG may request advice on site values and significance from external experts.

13. Decisions of the TGDRG will be based on majority vote. The Chair will not vote unless the number of votes for and against a motion is equal, in which case the Chair will exercise a deciding vote.
14. A quorum will comprise 50% of TGDRG members and no less than six persons. Suitably qualified proxies will be permitted.
15. A member of the TGDRG will not vote on a question concerning the listing status of a geosite nominated by that member.
16. Advice from at least two acknowledged experts (not necessarily TGDRG members) in the disciplines of geology, geomorphology or soil science as relevant will be required to carry a motion concerning listing of a new site or modification of an existing listing. Advice from persons not present must be in writing.

Listing Criteria

17. Consideration will only be given to listing sites that have developed as a result of natural processes. Natural features exposed artificially (eg road cuttings, quarries etc) will be considered.
18. When listing sites consideration will be given to the degree and clarity with which sites exhibit or exemplify the important characteristics and values of their type.
19. Priority will be given to the inclusion of representative exemplars of the different classes, themes and types of geodiversity according to the classification framework established for the TGD.
20. The assessment will take account of the integrity of natural features and processes that contribute to site significance. Degraded sites may be listed provided they maintain part or all of their relevant geoconservation values.
21. The listing status of a geosite degraded to the extent that it no longer retains significant geodiversity values will be recorded as destroyed.
22. Sites will be assessed according to their significance within a hierarchy of levels ranging from global to district. The assessment will consider the georegional context where appropriate.
23. In cases where other natural values contribute to the conservation significance of the site, sites may be included, conditional upon appropriate professional advice.
24. The listing status of interim sites will be recorded as lapsed if not recommended as *listed sites* by the TGDRG within five years of being nominated.

Definitions

25. *Geosite* is any site recorded in the TGD, irrespective of its listing status.
26. *Restricted sites* are geosites where the geoconservation values would be at risk if the location were publicised. The location of restricted geosites should not be published or distributed in publicly available versions of the Tasmanian Geoconservation Database.
27. *Geoconservation* is the identification and conservation of geodiversity.
28. *Geodiversity* is the natural range (diversity) of geological (bedrock), geomorphological (landform) and soil features, assemblages, systems and processes. Geodiversity includes evidence for the history of the earth (evidence of past life, ecosystems and environments) and a range of processes (biological, hydrological and atmospheric) currently acting on rocks, landforms and soils.

29. *Georegional context* is the geographical area within which elements of a particular theme in geodiversity have developed, through a similar combination of environmental system controls.
30. *Listed site* is a geosite that has been approved for listing in accordance with these Terms of Reference.
31. *Predictive region* is a geosite comprising an area within which significant examples of specific classes of geoconservation feature are known or considered likely to occur but may not all be mapped or mapped with sufficient precision to enable them to be identified individually. Predictive regions are typically large areas, some parts of which may lack features that contribute to the geoconservation values of the site.
32. *Nominated sites* are geosites submitted to DPIPWE via the Natural Values Atlas, prior to the site being formally considered by the TGDRG. Once checked by the Geoconservation Section of DPIPWE they are included in published versions of the database.
33. *Proposed amendment* is a submission to DPIPWE, regarding a proposed change or changes to the listing status, value(s), significance level, boundary or other significant aspect of a geosite.
34. *Significance* is the values context for comparing a geosite with similar or related sites. The following levels of significance are recognised: Global, National, State, District and pending assessment.
35. *Interim site* is a geosite tabled at the TGDRG, where the group recommends that the site potentially satisfies the criteria for listing but requires more information before accepting it for listing in full. Interim sites are included in published versions of the TGD.
36. *Parent site* refers to a set of related geosites, the collective significance of which is greater than the significance of the individual sites within the set. A parent site must capture aspects of geodiversity that are not adequately captured by an individual site within the set. The individual sites (child sites) will be listed in their own right.
37. *Tasmanian Geoconservation Database* is a database maintained by the DPIPWE. The database contains information on sites of geoconservation significance in the State of Tasmania. Sites are listed in the database on the advice of the TGDRG. The TGD is housed and available through the Natural Values Atlas (www.naturalvaluesatlas.tas.gov.au)