

First National Park
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**Australian Plants Society, Sutherland Group support
for World Heritage Listing of Royal National Park**

I am writing on behalf of the Sutherland Group of the Australian Plants Society to pledge support for the granting of World Heritage Listing for the Royal National Park, Sydney, New South Wales.

The Australian Plants Society is an active community organisation which aims to foster support for and promote the preservation and conservation of Australian native plants. Sutherland Group is a long-established, active community group with members committed to conserving Australian native plants in the Sutherland Shire.

Members of Sutherland Group have a very strong attachment and commitment to the Royal National Park:

- Sutherland Group volunteers produced an interactive plant identification CD-Rom titled *Coastal Plants of the Royal National Park* in 2006, to assist non-botanists to identify over 300 plants.
- The Park is a regular location for bushwalking activities for the Sutherland Group.
- Our members are active members of the Friends of the Royal National Park.

Sutherland Group has recently celebrated its 50th anniversary, reflecting a long-term relationship with the Royal National Park, exploring and appreciating the flora.

The Sutherland Group supports the World Heritage Listing of the Royal National Park on the following grounds:

1. The Park was established in 1879 as a "National Park", making it one of the first of its kind in the world. This gives the Park significant local, national and global heritage status in terms of the pioneering of nature conservation.
2. The Park supports important vegetation assemblages of high conservation significance in New South Wales, including patches of Warm Temperate and Sub-Tropical Rainforest, as well as Freshwater Wetlands, all of which are in highly intact and non-degraded condition.
3. The Park supports habitat for several threatened flora and fauna species.
4. The Park is an important recreational area for Sydney residents, other visitors and holiday makers, with over 3 million visitors reported annually. The Park caters for a range of activities including bushwalking, beach swimming, picnics, kayaking and cycling.
5. The substantially large size of the Park (16,000 hectares) comprises one of the largest patches of non-fragmented native vegetation in the outer suburban Sydney area.

Celebrating 50 years of Sutherland Group 1963-2013

6. The Park is an important resource for the education of students (school, TAFE and University) and is also a long-used location for biological scientific research.
7. The Park serves as an important example in the developed world for biological conservation co-existing with and adjoining a major city.

Sutherland Group strongly believes that World Heritage Listing is a very important and exciting prospect for the future protection and maintenance of the Royal National Park. The Listing will likely result in enhanced planning, management and financial resources for the area combined with an increase in tourism and educational value.

We implore UNESCO to grant the World Heritage Listing for the Royal National Park for the benefit of natural conservation and for current and future generations.

Yours sincerely,

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