

# ISRG Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (ISRGJAHSS)



**ISRG PUBLISHERS**

Abbreviated Key Title: ISRG J Arts Humanit Soc Sci

**ISSN: 2583-7672 (Online)**

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/isrgjahss>

Volume – III Issue -II (March – April) 2025

Frequency: Bimonthly



## Legislative Frameworks, Cross-Cultural Insights, and the Future of Indigenous Australian Heritage Protection

Allison Bell<sup>1\*</sup>, James Hutson<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Murdoch University, Perth, AUS

<sup>2</sup> Lindenwood University, USA <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0578-6052>

| Received: 24.03.2025 | Accepted: 29.03.2025 | Published: 03.04.2025

**\*Corresponding author:** Allison Bell

Murdoch University, Perth, AUS

### Abstract

*Indigenous Australian artworks and heritage sites represent some of the oldest continuous artistic and cultural traditions in human history. Yet, these invaluable cultural assets face persistent threats due to inadequate and inconsistent legislative protections. Recent events, particularly the destruction of the Juukan Gorge rock shelters, underscore the critical need for a comprehensive review of Australia's heritage protection frameworks. This article addresses the research question: How do legislative frameworks, governmental management strategies, and cross-cultural approaches to heritage preservation impact the protection, research, and global recognition of ancient Indigenous Australian artworks? A systematic examination of historical and contemporary federal and state legislation, coupled with comparative international analysis focusing notably on Greece's centralized heritage preservation strategies, provides the methodological foundation for this study. Key findings indicate significant disparities and enforcement gaps within Australia's legislative landscape, highlighting both the limitations of existing laws and successful practices such as Indigenous-led co-management exemplified at sites like Budj Bim and Murujuga. Furthermore, cross-cultural comparative analyses underscore essential lessons for strengthening legislative protections, community involvement, and sustainable funding models. The results signify that robust, Indigenous-informed legislative frameworks, supported by consistent implementation and global collaborative strategies, substantially enhance heritage outcomes and community empowerment.*

**Keywords:** Indigenous Australian heritage, legislative frameworks, Juukan Gorge, international heritage management, cultural policy reform

## Introduction

The protection of Indigenous Australian art and cultural heritage sites is an ongoing challenge deeply rooted in Australia's legislative and socio-political history. Currently, primary responsibility for safeguarding Aboriginal cultural heritage resides with state and territory governments, each operating under separate legislative frameworks that vary significantly in scope, strength, and effectiveness (Act, E.P.B.C., 1999). Complementing state legislation, federal laws like the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) establish a National Heritage List, enforcing stringent penalties for substantial damage to significant heritage sites. Furthermore, the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* (ATSHP Act) provides a federal safeguard, allowing emergency interventions by the federal minister to protect Indigenous areas or artifacts, but notably only as a “last resort” measure when state protections fail. Despite this federal oversight, practical enforcement remains rare, with only twelve protective declarations issued from 573 applications since the Act's inception (Pearson, 2018). Additionally, the *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986* regulates the export of significant Indigenous objects, classifying artifacts such as rock art and sacred objects as Class A items that cannot legally leave Australia (Leiboff, 1999). Intersecting these heritage-specific protections, native title and land rights legislation provides Traditional Owners with limited rights to be notified and to negotiate impacts on culturally significant sites.

Despite these frameworks, recent high-profile events and reviews illustrate significant systemic weaknesses within the legislative landscape, highlighting urgent issues that need addressing. Reports like the Dhawura Ngilan (2020) and the federal inquiry into the devastating destruction of the Juukan Gorge rock shelters in 2020 exposed substantial inadequacies in Australia's heritage protection regime. These reviews criticized the fragmented nature of heritage legislation and underscored an urgent need for national standards and comprehensive legislative reform to enforce consistent protection measures across jurisdictions (LAN, 2020). Central to these critiques is the principle derived from the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), emphasizing that actions affecting Indigenous heritage must be guided by the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous custodians (Hohmann & Weller, 2018). The destruction of Juukan Gorge—a legally sanctioned action under Western Australia's permissive *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*—highlighted how weak legislative frameworks can paradoxically facilitate rather than prevent heritage destruction, intensifying calls for reform (Brennan, 2021; Burton, 2023). In response, Western Australia introduced the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021*, but implementation resistance from industry and landowners exposed the inherent tensions between development interests and heritage protection. At the federal level, despite widespread acknowledgment of these shortcomings, substantial legislative reforms, including an overdue replacement of the *ATSHP Act*, remain incomplete as of 2024, demonstrating a significant delay between identified issues and legislative responses (Burton, 2024). Current challenges include establishing uniform high protection standards nationwide, adequate resourcing for enforcement, and balancing economic interests—such as mining and infrastructure—with the necessity of preserving irreplaceable cultural heritage (McConnell & Dortch, 2022).

The varying degrees of Indigenous involvement across state-level legislation further complicate effective heritage management. Some jurisdictions, like Victoria through the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, have embraced models empowering Registered Aboriginal Parties with authority to assess and approve heritage management plans, thus actively involving Traditional Owners in critical decision-making processes. Other states, such as Queensland, are currently reviewing their Cultural Heritage Acts to introduce enhanced requirements for consultation and consent. Yet, despite these advancements, many Indigenous heritage sites remain unregistered and therefore vulnerable, placing the responsibility upon developers to proactively consult local Indigenous knowledge holders to avoid inadvertent damage (Logan, 2013; Brockett, 2013). Historical legacies stemming from the doctrine of terra nullius continue to shape contemporary legislation, with past laws often framing Aboriginal heritage narrowly within archaeological paradigms under state control. Presently, there is an emerging recognition of Indigenous custodianship, illustrated by the Australian Capital Territory's law which mandates consultation with Representative Aboriginal Organisations regarding Indigenous artifacts and sites, acknowledging the nuanced complexities of ownership. However, while these legislative protections are increasingly comprehensive on paper, their actual effectiveness remains dependent on political commitment, robust enforcement mechanisms, and authentic collaboration with Indigenous communities—areas marked by both encouraging progress and significant setbacks.

This review aims to critically examine these legislative protections, comparing Australian approaches with international models—particularly Greece's centralized heritage management system—to highlight strengths and shortcomings within Australia's heritage regime. By exploring successful case studies and identifying key barriers to effective implementation, this analysis seeks to offer practical recommendations for legislative and policy reform. Therefore, this research underscores the importance of embedding Indigenous perspectives and authority in heritage management frameworks, proposing pathways towards more equitable, culturally sensitive, and globally informed protections for Australia's invaluable Indigenous heritage.

### Enforcement: Successes and Failures in Heritage Protection

The destruction of the Juukan Gorge rock shelters in May 2020 stands as a stark failure of heritage protection. Rio Tinto's blasting of this site – which harbored 46,000 years of cultural deposits and had deep spiritual significance to the Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura (PKKP) people – was technically legal under WA's heritage consent system (Dickson, 2022). It revealed how inadequate laws, weak oversight, and imbalances of power allowed a mining company to obliterate a priceless site despite Traditional Owners' objections (Oliveri et al., 2024). A subsequent parliamentary inquiry concluded such a disaster “could happen again” because the laws themselves had “directly contributed to damage and destruction” of Aboriginal heritage by prioritizing development approvals over protection (Brennan, 2021; Burton, 2023). The inquiry's final report called Rio Tinto's actions “inexcusable and an affront, not only to the PKKP but to all Australians” and noted that PKKP efforts to use federal law to block the destruction had failed due to legal hurdles (Preston & Craig, 2022).

For the PKKP and many Indigenous Australians, the loss of Juukan Gorge caused profound grief – “the great sense of sorrow and loss



remains for our people,” the PKKP said 18 months later, emphasizing that no compensation could restore what was destroyed (Wensing, 2020; Martin, 2024). This case exposed systemic issues: Indigenous people often lacked veto power, penalties for breaches were negligible, and heritage assessments were too often treated as a tick-box exercise (Storey, 2023; Preston & Craig, 2022). It also showed poor corporate behavior; even after Juukan, there have been further mishaps – for example, another Pilbara rock shelter was inadvertently damaged by Rio Tinto in 2023 – suggesting that lessons were slow to be learned (Kaur, Lodhia, & Lesue, 2025). Nonetheless, Juukan Gorge did trigger some positive action – the public outcry forced accountability (several Rio Tinto executives resigned) (Whitbread-Abrutat, 2024) and accelerated calls for legal reform at all levels, encapsulated by the inquiry’s title “*Never Again*” (Nagar, 2021).

There have been notable success stories in protecting and managing Indigenous heritage. One example is the recent use of federal powers to halt a mining project that threatened Wiradjuri sacred sites in New South Wales. In 2023, Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek took the rare step of issuing an emergency declaration (under the *ATSIHP Act*) to stop a gold mine waste dam that would have desecrated the sacred Bilabula River valley. This was only the second such intervention in decades, and while controversial with industry, it demonstrated the law’s potential to uphold Indigenous cultural rights when state processes fall short. Another area of success is the growth of joint management arrangements for heritage-rich landscapes. Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (Figure 1), for instance, has been jointly managed by its Anangu Traditional Owners and Parks Australia since 1985, following the handback of title. The park’s Board of Management (with a majority of Anangu members) ensures that decisions – from tourism policy to site conservation – align with cultural protocols. This co-management model was instrumental in the historic 2019 decision to permanently close the climb on Uluru, a change that respected Anangu wishes and reinforced the sacred nature of the site.

**Figure 1. Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (CC 2.0)**



Similarly, Budj Bim Cultural Landscape in Victoria (Figure 2), which contains 6,000-year-old Aboriginal aquaculture infrastructure (stone eel traps), has been successfully managed by the Gunditjmara people in partnership with government agencies. In 2019, Budj Bim was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List for its outstanding Aboriginal cultural value. Management plans, like the *Ngootyoong Gunditj, Ngootyoong Mara Plan* (2015), and programs such as the Budj Bim Rangers (mentored by

Elders), ensure that Gunditjmara knowledge guides conservation. All Gunditjmara heritage at Budj Bim is protected under state law, and sustainable tourism initiatives are in place to both educate visitors and benefit the community. The site’s successful stewardship even earned the community a UNESCO international prize for landscape management in 2023 (Slack et al., 2024). These positive case studies show that when Indigenous people are empowered to lead and when legal frameworks support their authority, heritage protection can be effective and culturally appropriate. They also illustrate how international recognition (e.g. World Heritage status) can bolster local efforts by attracting funding and attention.

**Figure 2. Budj Bim - Mt Eccles National Park, Victoria, Australia (CC O)**



There are other encouraging developments. On Western Australia’s Burrup Peninsula (Murujuga), home to over a million ancient petroglyphs, Aboriginal custodians have campaigned for years against industrial damage to their rock art. In response, the WA government and the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation have established a Rock Art Strategy that includes rigorous monitoring of the petroglyphs’ condition and a nomination for World Heritage listing (Bennion & Kelly-Mundine, 2021). Notably, industry players with operations on Burrup have joined as partners, funding research and monitoring as part of a memorandum of understanding (Harvey & Nish, 2005). While Burrup’s rock art still faces threats from emissions and development, this collaborative model shows promise in balancing cultural preservation with economic interests. In Queensland, recent enforcement action demonstrated that desecration of sites will not be taken lightly: a company and its director were fined in 2022 for damaging sacred rock art in Cape York, marking one of the few times substantial penalties have been applied under state law. On the whole, however, enforcement is inconsistent. Indigenous communities and advocates continue to push for stronger compliance – including prosecuting illegal looters of artifacts and developers who flout permit conditions – to turn the legislative intent into on-ground reality.

### **The Management of Greek Ancient Artworks and Heritage**

Greece’s approach to protecting ancient artworks and heritage sites is widely considered a gold standard of cultural heritage management. Central to this system is a robust national legal framework rooted in the Greek Constitution and formalized in Law 3028/2002, which declares all antiquities discovered in Greece—generally those predating 1453 AD—as property of the state

(Voudouri, 2010). This law covers both movable artifacts, such as sculptures and vases, and immovable heritage, such as archaeological sites and monuments, while also recognizing the significance of intangible cultural expressions. Law 3028/2002 is notably stringent: it prohibits unlicensed excavation, export, or commercial transaction of antiquities, with severe penalties for violations (Dragasi, 2014). Any development or land use that might affect known or suspected heritage sites is subject to strict archaeological oversight. Developers are often required to halt or redesign plans if they interfere with heritage zones—such as Zone A, which entirely forbids construction near sensitive sites (Papageorgiou, 2015). The Greek Ministry of Culture enforces these regulations through a dedicated Archaeological Service, including regional Ephorates of Antiquities and national advisory councils. This centralized control reflects a deeply ingrained societal consensus that ancient heritage is a non-negotiable cornerstone of Greek identity (Voudouri, 2010). This is exemplified by Greece's commitment to salvage archaeology during infrastructure projects like the Athens Metro, where station construction was delayed to preserve—and ultimately display—thousands of unearthed artifacts.

Managing Greece's extensive network of heritage sites and museums is a national priority, even during times of economic crisis. Government funding forms the financial backbone of heritage operations, supported by European Union structural funds, cultural tourism revenue, and occasional private sponsorships (Sarapani, 2021). In 2018, public backlash forced the government to reverse plans to use archaeological sites as collateral for debt, reaffirming the sacrosanct status of these sites in national consciousness. Public-private partnerships are carefully curated; foundations such as the Onassis and Niarchos Foundations have funded major museum renovations, but ultimate control remains with the Ministry of Culture to ensure alignment with conservation principles (Dragasi, 2014). Greece also collaborates with UNESCO and other international bodies for technical assistance and emergency interventions. The Acropolis Restoration Project, ongoing since the 1970s, illustrates Greece's long-term, multi-stakeholder commitment to heritage conservation—sustained through a combination of state funding, EU support, and expert-led oversight. The cultural and economic significance of heritage tourism cannot be overstated: in 2022, Greece experienced record tourism revenues, driven in large part by its archaeological and historical sites. This national commitment extends to site accessibility and safety—popular destinations such as the Acropolis have been temporarily closed during heatwaves to protect both visitors and the heritage itself (Papageorgiou, 2015).

Greece has also become a global leader in the repatriation of cultural artifacts, advocating persistently for the return of heritage items removed during colonial and early modern periods. The most prominent example is the campaign for the Parthenon Marbles—sculptures taken in the early 19th century by Lord Elgin and now housed in the British Museum. Greece argues not only for legal and moral restitution but also for the reunification of a fragmented monument that cannot be fully appreciated in diaspora (Shehade, 2017). Over the years, Greece has secured significant repatriation victories. For instance, the J. Paul Getty Museum returned a 4th-century BC gold funerary wreath and a marble kore statue in 2007 following negotiations and provenance scrutiny. Greece operates within frameworks such as the 1970 UNESCO Convention and bilateral agreements with countries like Switzerland and the United States to facilitate the return of illegally exported antiquities. These

efforts are bolstered by collaboration with entities such as the Manhattan DA's Antiquities Trafficking Unit, which has returned dozens of stolen items in recent years. Greek museums now feature prominent displays of repatriated works, reinforcing the legal and ethical rationale for return and strengthening public advocacy (Zagaris, 2024).

In comparison to Australia, Greece benefits from a unified national governance system—avoiding the jurisdictional fragmentation that plagues Australian heritage law. Moreover, Greek heritage enjoys near-universal cultural and political consensus as a core element of national identity, enabling stronger enforcement mechanisms and public support (Voudouri, 2010; Dragasi, 2014). Conversely, the management of Indigenous heritage in Australia is layered with the complexities of colonial legacy and contested sovereignty, where Traditional Owners often lack consistent legal authority. The model provided by Greece illustrates the efficacy of centralized control, consistent enforcement, and integrated planning, particularly in harmonizing development and conservation. Yet, Australia's context demands a different emphasis—on custodianship, cultural continuity, and Indigenous self-determination. While the Greek system excels in artifact stewardship and monument preservation, it does not address the living cultural connections that define Indigenous Australian heritage. Nevertheless, Grecian legal clarity, funding models, and international advocacy offer valuable lessons for the ongoing reform efforts under review here. Both contexts affirm that robust legal frameworks, public investment, and institutional resolve are indispensable to the preservation of cultural heritage.

### **Global Models and International Instruments for Heritage Protection**

The UNESCO World Heritage system offers a powerful international framework for the protection of both cultural and natural heritage deemed of “outstanding universal value.” In Australia, several Indigenous heritage sites—including Kakadu National Park, Uluru-Kata Tjuta, and Budj Bim Cultural Landscape—have attained World Heritage status, resulting in greater visibility and international accountability for their conservation. This status requires the Australian government to implement rigorous conservation policies and submit to periodic review by the World Heritage Committee. In practice, World Heritage designation has proven influential. For example, in the late 1990s, the proposed uranium mine at Jabiluka, within Kakadu, encountered global resistance, with UNESCO's intervention significantly bolstering the opposition led by the Mirarr people (Logan, 2013). At Budj Bim, UNESCO listing in 2019 was coupled with a detailed Indigenous-led management plan, setting a precedent for collaborative governance of cultural landscapes in Australia (Boer & Gruber, 2017). Similarly, the ongoing nomination of Murujuga in Western Australia—a site containing over a million petroglyphs—has catalyzed government and industry collaboration for preservation. While World Heritage status does not prevent all threats (as sovereignty over final decisions remains with the nation-state), it elevates international scrutiny and can pressure governments to act. Importantly, the World Heritage Committee has encouraged greater Indigenous involvement in heritage governance, especially for sites that are “living landscapes,” thereby acknowledging the essential role of traditional custodians in cultural and environmental stewardship (Disko & Dorough, 2022).

Australia's involvement in other international legal instruments also shapes its heritage policy. As a signatory to the 1970 *UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*, Australia has implemented legal protections for movable heritage, particularly through the Movable Cultural Heritage Act. This treaty facilitates the repatriation of stolen artifacts and imposes export controls on sacred Aboriginal objects. While Australia has not ratified the UNIDROIT Convention (1995)—which provides stronger mechanisms for recovering illicitly traded cultural items—it has adopted several of its core principles (Sarapani, 2021). Another important framework is the *UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003), which highlights oral traditions, language, and ceremonial practices. This framework broadens the definition of heritage beyond tangible artifacts to encompass songlines, ancestral narratives, and traditional ecological knowledge. In Australia, these principles are increasingly reflected in community-led cultural mapping projects, which integrate oral history, environmental monitoring, and Indigenous knowledge systems in heritage documentation (Douglas, 2013).

Crucially, the *UNDRIP*, adopted in 2007 and later endorsed by Australia, affirms the right of Indigenous peoples to “maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage” (Assembly, 2007, Art. 31). While *UNDRIP* is not legally binding, it has become a normative guide in shaping domestic policies. The Juukan Gorge inquiry explicitly recommended that new heritage laws be aligned with *UNDRIP*'s standards, particularly the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) (Lingard et al., 2021). Other countries such as Canada and New Zealand are taking legislative steps to embed *UNDRIP* into national law, providing Australia with a comparative framework for policy development (Vrdoljak, 2018). Scholars argue that *UNDRIP* challenges the traditional state-centric view of heritage management by reinforcing Indigenous self-determination and rights-based approaches (Tranter et al., 2017). In practice, aligning heritage law with *UNDRIP* may require structural reforms—such as giving Indigenous bodies binding decision-making power and recognizing collective ownership of cultural knowledge.

Beyond UNESCO, global models offer practical insights. *The United States' Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act* (NAGPRA) (1990) stands out as a strong precedent for repatriation, requiring museums and federal agencies to return human remains and sacred items to Indigenous communities. NAGPRA also mandates tribal consultation before development can impact cultural sites on federal land, a provision that Australian Indigenous communities have advocated for in their own heritage regimes (Boer & Gruber, 2017). In Scandinavia, Sami co-management structures provide another model, where state institutions work with Indigenous communities on land and cultural governance. Meanwhile, Latin American countries such as Bolivia and Ecuador have embedded Indigenous rights to cultural patrimony into their constitutions, offering strong legal recognition of Indigenous cultural sovereignty (Vadi, 2012).

The global discourse on Indigenous heritage is increasingly grounded in human rights language. International legal bodies, such as the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, have ruled that state-sanctioned development infringing on sacred Indigenous sites constitutes a violation of cultural rights (Rode, 2017). The UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights has similarly emphasized

that the destruction of sacred sites undermines the cultural identity and dignity of Indigenous peoples (Vrdoljak, 2016). These developments reinforce the position that Indigenous heritage protection must not be treated as a peripheral environmental or archaeological issue, but as a core human rights obligation. Australia, as a signatory to these instruments, faces growing international pressure to elevate Indigenous heritage within its domestic policy framework. In sum, international models—from UNESCO conventions and *UNDRIP* to national laws like NAGPRA—provide a comprehensive toolkit of legal standards, policy instruments, and governance approaches. They collectively emphasize consent, community leadership, legal protection, and the integration of cultural and ecological knowledge. For Australia, these frameworks offer both a benchmark and a roadmap: one that promotes not only the protection of ancient artworks but also the revitalization of the living cultures that created them.

### **Funding Models for Protecting Indigenous Artworks and Heritage**

The Australian government has established multiple funding streams dedicated to the protection of Indigenous cultural heritage, supporting both conservation and community empowerment. One recent initiative is the First Nations Heritage Grants, launched in 2023, which provides \$25,000–\$250,000 to Indigenous organizations and communities for identifying, protecting, and interpreting heritage values or enhancing cultural significance at National and World Heritage sites. This aligns with Australia's broader policy goals of elevating Indigenous heritage to parity with colonial narratives in official recognition and resourcing (Currie, 2023). Additionally, the Indigenous Advancement Strategy supports cultural initiatives across education, employment, and land management. The Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) program, in particular, empowers Traditional Owners to manage their lands for conservation, embedding Indigenous knowledge systems into environmental stewardship. A prime example is the Budj Bim Rangers, employed through the IPA program under the Windamara Aboriginal Corporation. Their work combines cultural site protection, ecological monitoring, and community education, demonstrating a holistic model of land and heritage governance (Ward, 2011).

Complementing public funding, state and territory governments also operate heritage-specific grant schemes. For instance, Western Australia's Aboriginal Heritage Grants Program offers up to \$50,000 for site preservation, infrastructure development, and interpretive planning. National institutions such as the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) also play a pivotal role, funding rock art research and documentation initiatives since the 1980s. AIATSIS's Rock Art Protection Program (RAPP) pioneered funding structures for cultural site conservation, mandating Indigenous community participation and helping set national research standards (Ward, 2011). More broadly, the recognition of Indigenous heritage within environmental and cultural policy frameworks has increased, with growing efforts to consolidate such programs under cohesive, long-term funding strategies (Jones & Birdsall-Jones, 2012).

Given the vast number of heritage sites across Australia—and the limitations of public funding—private sector partnerships have become an increasingly essential part of the funding landscape. Resource corporations, especially those operating in heritage-rich areas like the Burrup Peninsula (Murujuga), have initiated collaborative conservation efforts. Following the Juukan Gorge



disaster, companies such as Woodside Energy, Rio Tinto, and Yara Pilbara partnered with the WA government and Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation to fund long-term monitoring and scientific research into the preservation of petroglyphs affected by industrial emissions (Currie, 2023). A notable outcome of this partnership is the planned Murujuga Living Knowledge Centre, to which Woodside contributed \$4 million. Such partnerships are not without criticism but offer a pragmatic route toward shared accountability and increased resources for protection. Outside the extractives industry, philanthropic organizations like Rock Art Australia (formerly the Kimberley Foundation) fund academic and community-led expeditions for documentation, pigment dating, and digital archiving of endangered sites—often covering research gaps not supported by government or industry (Taylor & Veth, 2008).

Internationally, Indigenous Australian heritage has garnered support through UNESCO and ICOMOS grants, particularly for World Heritage sites. Although Australia does not typically qualify for large-scale cultural aid, UNESCO's International Fund for Cultural Diversity and the Heritage Emergency Fund offer technical support and emergency funding during environmental crises such as bushfires. Furthermore, Indigenous communities and researchers have secured grants from institutions such as the National Geographic Society and the European Union, enabling cross-cultural research collaborations. For example, Australian rangers have engaged in exchange programs with Sámi communities in Scandinavia and First Nations groups in Canada, fostering mutual learning in land and cultural management (Haupt, 2016). Organizations such as the World Monuments Fund have also recognized vulnerable Indigenous sites, including the Liyan ambooriny sites of the Yawuru people, placing them on global watchlists to generate awareness and funding.

Looking forward, the challenge lies in building sustainable funding models that go beyond reactive or short-term project grants. Several scholars and heritage experts advocate for endowment funds that generate perpetual income for high-value sites, especially those with significant spiritual or ecological function (Currie, 2023). Others suggest expanding models like tourism revenue-sharing, which already functions at Uluru, where a portion of entrance fees is returned to Traditional Owners through the Anangu land trust. This model could be replicated across other national parks, providing reliable funding tied to visitor engagement. More innovatively, some ranger programs integrate carbon credit schemes, wherein traditional burning practices that reduce bushfire risk also preserve heritage landscapes—and companies can purchase these credits as part of their environmental offsets. As climate threats increase, these bundled ecological-cultural protection schemes may offer a viable path forward (Cole & Wallis, 2019). Ultimately, a mixed funding ecosystem—balancing public investment, corporate accountability, philanthropy, and community enterprise—will be necessary to meet the scale and complexity of safeguarding Australia's vast Indigenous cultural heritage.

### **Socio-Cultural Impacts on Indigenous Communities**

The way heritage is legislated and managed has profound impacts on Indigenous communities' sense of ownership and cultural identity. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, ancestral artworks, sacred places, and songlines are not merely historical artifacts but living cultural expressions that connect communities to Country and to ancestors. When protected and respected by law, these sites affirm Indigenous custodianship and

the integrity of Australia's oldest continuous culture. Conversely, their destruction—or the disempowerment of communities in managing them—results in trauma, loss, and social fragmentation. The Juukan Gorge incident was widely described by Traditional Owners as akin to losing a treasured family member. It reverberated through Indigenous Australia, crystallizing a collective sense of erasure and betrayal. As Senator Pat Dodson noted during the parliamentary inquiry, communities have long experienced “a lack of power... to protect themselves” (Brennan, 2021). This reflects the structural disenfranchisement produced by fragmented and inadequate heritage laws (Storey, 2023). Repatriation efforts—whether of ancestral remains, bark paintings, or sacred tjurunga—are therefore not just legal victories but cultural acts of restoration. As Martin (2024) notes, such returns “translate the spiritual hurt from the compensable acts into compensation,” reviving cultural dignity and fulfilling obligations to ancestors.

Evolving heritage regimes that include Indigenous peoples in decision-making have ushered in important socio-cultural benefits. Greater representation—through Indigenous Heritage Councils, federal advisory committees, and co-managed parks—marks a shift away from paternalistic models. When Traditional Owners can “speak for Country,” it affirms the authority of Indigenous knowledge systems and re-centers their values within legal and planning frameworks (Nagar, 2021). However, representation alone is not always sufficient. There is a growing demand for substantive power, including the right to grant or withhold consent. Tensions can arise within communities themselves, as seen in the Wiradjuri dispute over a proposed gold mine, where different Indigenous stakeholders held opposing views—highlighting the need for culturally sensitive, consensus-based structures (Oliveri et al., 2024). Nonetheless, legislative innovations that empower Indigenous actors tend to yield stronger cultural and environmental outcomes. Examples include ranger programs such as the Budj Bim Rangers, which not only protect heritage sites but also transmit cultural knowledge and provide employment pathways for Indigenous youth (du Cros, 2022).

Heritage stewardship has become a platform for cultural revival. When Indigenous communities manage sites and narrate their significance, it catalyzes intergenerational education and cultural pride. As Bennion and Kelly-Mundine (2021) explain, conservation can be a conduit for reconciling the relationships between Western and First Nations cultural heritage values and practices. Community-led tourism, art interpretation, and school programs tied to heritage protection offer mechanisms for reinforcing identity and sovereignty. Many communities—such as the Gunditjmara, Ngarrindjeri, and Bininj—report increased social cohesion and well-being when heritage management aligns with cultural protocols and local priorities. Yet these engagements must also navigate the complexities of secrecy and restricted knowledge. Heritage legislation often requires documentation, but some sacred knowledge must remain confidential. Mismanagement of this balance has caused distress, especially when sensitive information is inadvertently published in public archives (Storey, 2023). To address this, modern frameworks increasingly allow for confidential registers and restrictions on data access. Similarly, ownership questions remain contested. Legal doctrines that vest excavated artifacts in the Crown conflict with Indigenous beliefs about cultural property belonging to the land and its custodians. Gradual reforms—such as land returns, community-controlled

cultural centers, and voluntary repatriations—are helping to align Western property laws with Indigenous values.

Strong heritage protection also supports broader goals of self-determination and reconciliation. When legislation mandates consultation and enables Indigenous cultural programming, it helps reframe heritage from a narrative of dispossession to one of agency. Youth engagement is key. As McIntyre-Tamwoy and Buhrich (2012) argue, the loss of sacred sites—especially in the context of climate change—can erode cultural identity. Conversely, teaching young people to care for those places reinforces resilience and adaptability. Initiatives like Digital Songlines and cultural archives provide additional tools for preserving language, stories, and ritual knowledge (Leavy et al., 2006). But trust in the system is fragile. Where legislation fails to prevent destruction or hold violators accountable—as with Juukan Gorge—cynicism and anger intensify. Without credible enforcement, the message received is that Indigenous heritage is expendable. This undermines reconciliation efforts and risks further alienation. As the State of the Environment 2021 report underscores, “protecting Indigenous heritage, and enabling Indigenous Australians to access and speak for Country... is imperative for Indigenous people’s wellbeing” (Bennion & Kelly-Mundine, 2021).

In sum, the socio-cultural impacts of heritage protection are far-reaching. They touch on identity, spirituality, education, economic participation, and historical justice. As Storey (2023) and Preston and Craig (2022) emphasize, aligning Australian law with international human rights norms—especially those in UNDRIP—requires embedding Indigenous control, respecting spiritual relationships to land, and guaranteeing participation in all decisions affecting culture. The future of heritage protection must not only conserve ancient artworks and sites but also empower the living cultures that sustain them.

### **Future Directions and Best Practices**

In the wake of the destruction of Juukan Gorge and the ensuing national inquiry, there is a clear impetus for comprehensive reform of Australia’s Indigenous heritage laws. The federal government has committed to a co-design process with Indigenous stakeholders to restructure the ATSIHP, which is widely acknowledged as inadequate and outdated (Storey, 2023). The reform agenda is expected to establish uniform national standards, addressing the fragmented patchwork of state-based protections that has contributed to inconsistent and sometimes harmful outcomes (du Cros, 2022). A critical element under consideration is shifting heritage responsibilities from the Environment Minister to the Minister for Indigenous Australians, a move that would embed cultural knowledge and Indigenous perspectives more deeply into decision-making structures. There are also calls to establish a National First Nations Heritage Council with statutory authority—potentially including veto powers—over decisions concerning sites of high cultural significance (Nagar, 2021). Central to these reforms is the principle of FPIC, a foundational right under the UNDRIP. Implementing FPIC would require legislative changes not only to heritage law but also to the Native Title Act, converting the current “right to negotiate” into a right to refuse in cases involving irreplaceable cultural heritage (Penna & English, 2022). Such reforms would represent a shift from consultation-as-procedure to consent-as-substance, aligning with international human rights standards and enabling Traditional Owners to

exercise genuine control over their heritage (Bennion & Kelly-Mundine, 2021).

A further best practice in heritage protection involves co-management arrangements between governments and Indigenous communities. These agreements are becoming more prevalent not only in national parks but in culturally significant landscapes beyond conservation estates. In these models, Traditional Owners develop formal cultural heritage management plans—such as those seen in Victoria’s Registered Aboriginal Party system—which can then be embedded into planning schemes, environmental approval processes, and mining negotiations. Scholars emphasize the need to mandate Cultural Heritage Impact Assessments, led by Indigenous experts, as part of standard development procedures (Oliveri et al., 2022). Technological tools such as 3D laser scanning, GIS mapping, and digital modeling offer new avenues for documenting sites and facilitating access, but these tools must be governed by Indigenous data sovereignty frameworks to prevent misuse or the unauthorized circulation of culturally restricted information (Macdonald et al., 2023).

Australia can draw insights from Greece’s proactive heritage integration in urban and infrastructure planning. As in the Greek model, Australia could introduce earlier “heritage impact triggers” in its planning processes, requiring site surveys at the feasibility stage rather than just prior to construction. If destruction of a site is considered unavoidable, it should follow transparent, high-threshold approval mechanisms and include robust offset strategies—such as documentation, reburial, or the creation of community-controlled cultural repositories. Voluntary heritage conservation covenants with private landholders (e.g., farmers with rock art sites) could be incentivized with grants or tax benefits, ensuring long-term protection beyond public lands (Storey, 2023).

Empowering Indigenous communities in heritage economies is another key direction. Cultural tourism ventures—like those at Gabarnmang in Arnhem Land—demonstrate how Traditional Owners can manage site access, interpret their heritage, and generate income through Indigenous-owned tourism enterprises. These initiatives require support through micro-grants, low-interest loans, and investment in cultural infrastructure, ensuring community leadership remains at the heart of any commercialization efforts (Giorgi & Taçon, 2019). Cultural entrepreneurship can reinforce pride, continuity, and transmission of knowledge—especially for youth engaged as rangers, guides, and educators.

Public education remains an indispensable part of best practice. Heritage law reform alone cannot ensure lasting change without cultural literacy among the broader Australian population. Integrating Indigenous heritage into school curricula, producing documentaries and exhibitions in partnership with communities, and commemorating national heritage awareness days all help shift public consciousness. As Bennion and Kelly-Mundine (2021) emphasize, “truth-telling about past destruction and widespread awareness are needed to prevent future harm.” Industry players, too, are responding—incorporating cultural heritage training into staff induction and compliance protocols to meet rising expectations of social license and ethical practice.

On the international stage, Australia has an opportunity to lead by example in global heritage cooperation. Following successful campaigns to repatriate ancestral remains, efforts are now focusing on cultural objects taken during colonization—such as the Gweagal

shield in the British Museum. Australia could adopt a formal policy of advocating for repatriation, akin to Greece’s approach with the Parthenon Marbles. Furthermore, Australia can support global Indigenous heritage initiatives by funding UNESCO programs or twinning with Indigenous communities abroad for joint conservation projects (du Cros, 2022). These efforts would reinforce Australia’s commitments under the World Heritage Convention and UNDRIP while bolstering its reputation as a champion of Indigenous cultural rights.

Conclusion

Indigenous Australian heritage management today stands at a critical juncture—where the lessons of past harm converge with the promise of future reform. The long trajectory of dispossession, from the expropriation of sacred objects during colonization to the administrative failures that enabled events like the Juukan Gorge destruction, has profoundly damaged Indigenous cultural sovereignty and public trust. Yet these tragedies have not been futile. They have ignited national reckoning and catalyzed an unprecedented opportunity to reimagine heritage protection—one that centers Indigenous voices, knowledge systems, and rights. Australia now has both the historical impetus and the international frameworks to implement legislative and structural changes that shift heritage protection from symbolic recognition to substantive empowerment.

This review has shown that meaningful progress will depend on integrating several key elements (Table 1). Legal reform must establish uniform national standards and embed Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as a non-negotiable foundation. Best

practices in co-management and community-driven conservation should be expanded beyond parks into all heritage-rich landscapes. Sustainable funding models—public, private, and hybrid—must support Indigenous enterprises and long-term site stewardship. Technological innovations must respect Indigenous data sovereignty while enhancing preservation and access. Just as crucial is the role of education, which fosters public appreciation of Indigenous heritage as an active, living legacy rather than a museumized past. When properly resourced and respected, heritage management becomes a vehicle for cultural revitalization, economic opportunity, and intergenerational knowledge transmission—reinforcing identity and dignity in both symbolic and material ways.

Australia’s commitment to honoring Indigenous heritage must now move from policy rhetoric to pragmatic implementation. By drawing from global examples, embracing Indigenous leadership, and embedding human rights principles into domestic law, the nation can become a global leader in cultural heritage protection. The socio-cultural dividends of such a shift are vast—not only for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who feel a profound sense of justice and healing when their heritage is protected, but for all Australians, who are enriched by a fuller, more inclusive narrative of national identity. As an Indigenous vision statement so poignantly affirms: “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage... tells a story which is relevant to all of humanity.” Ensuring that this story continues—told by those to whom it belongs, and preserved in the places where it was first spoken—is not only a matter of cultural policy, but a moral imperative for the generations ahead.

Table 1. Legislative Frameworks, Cross-Cultural Insights, and the Future of Indigenous Australian Heritage Protection

Category	Recommendation	Implementation Actions
Legislative Reform	Establish uniform national standards for Indigenous heritage protection.	Enact new federal legislation with binding minimum standards across all states and territories, replacing the ATSIHP Act.
	Embed Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) into heritage law and the Native Title Act.	Amend the Native Title Act to strengthen negotiation rights into explicit veto powers for culturally significant sites.
	Transfer federal heritage responsibilities to the Minister for Indigenous Australians.	Reallocate oversight responsibilities to a culturally informed ministerial department.
Co-Management & Governance	Create a statutory National First Nations Heritage Council with decision-making authority.	Form a statutory body empowered to advise or veto development decisions impacting critical heritage sites.
	Expand co-management agreements beyond national parks into culturally significant landscapes.	Develop Indigenous-led Cultural Heritage Management Plans integrated into local planning schemes and development approvals.
	Mandate Indigenous-led Cultural Heritage Impact Assessments in planning processes.	Integrate Cultural Heritage Impact Assessments into mandatory environmental and development assessment frameworks.
Funding & Sustainability	Establish sustainable, long-term funding mechanisms for heritage protection.	Develop endowment funds, tourism revenue-sharing schemes, and carbon-credit linked heritage conservation programs.
	Increase targeted support for Indigenous heritage economies and cultural tourism.	Provide micro-grants, training, and loans for Indigenous-led cultural tourism enterprises and heritage ranger programs.
	Enhance public-private partnerships to fund heritage conservation.	Incentivize and formalize resource-sector contributions and private philanthropic investment through structured



		partnerships.
Technological Innovation	Employ digital documentation technologies (3D scanning, GIS, virtual reality) sensitively.	Establish guidelines that ensure Indigenous data sovereignty and community control over sensitive digital archives.
	Promote technological tools for community-managed virtual access to restricted sites.	Support Indigenous communities in developing and managing digital portals for culturally appropriate remote heritage access.
Education & Awareness	Integrate Indigenous heritage into school curricula and public education initiatives.	Develop and fund national curricula units, heritage days, and educational outreach programs in partnership with communities.
	Provide cultural heritage training within corporate and industrial sectors.	Implement mandatory Indigenous heritage awareness training for all industry personnel involved in land management projects.
International Collaboration	Advocate formally for the repatriation of culturally significant items from overseas collections.	Adopt an explicit national policy, similar to Greece's, supporting repatriation campaigns for Indigenous cultural property.
	Strengthen global partnerships on Indigenous heritage conservation.	Support UNESCO programs, engage in international twinning arrangements, and promote knowledge exchange among Indigenous groups.

#### Data Availability

Data available upon request.

#### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

#### Funding Statement

NA

## References

- Act, E.P.B.C. (1999). Environment protection and biodiversity conservation act 1999. *Canberra: comlaw.gov. Au.*
- Assembly, U. G. (2007). United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. *UN Wash, 12*, 1-18.
- Bennion, L., & Kelly-Mundine, J. (2021). Clashes in conservation: First Nations sites, communities and culture in Australian cultural heritage management. *Journal of the Institute of Conservation, 44*(3), 170-182.
- Boer, B., & Gruber, S. (2017). Legal frameworks for World Heritage and human rights in Australia. In *World Heritage and Human Rights* (pp. 217-237). Routledge.
- Brennan, B. (2021). Juukan Gorge inquiry says new laws needed to stop destruction of cultural heritage sites. *Inkl.* October 17, 2021: <https://www.inkl.com/news/juukan-gorge-inquiry-says-new-laws-needed-to-stop-destruction-of-cultural-heritage-sites#:~:text=The%20inquiry%20found%20the%20Juukan,contributed%20to%20damage%20and%20destruction>
- Brockett, R. (2013). Protected or Imperiled? Indigenous Cultural Heritage in Queensland. *Art Antiquity & L., 18*, 149.
- Burton, M. (2023). Rio's latest rock shelter damage highlights need for Aboriginal Voice, advocates say. *Reuters.* October 2, 2023: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/rios-latest-rock-shelter-damage-highlights-need-aboriginal-voice-advocates-say-2023-10-03/#:~:text=Rio%27s%20destruction%20of%20rock%20shelters,Australia%27s%20Aboriginal%20heritage%20protection%20laws>
- Burton, M. (2024). Australian mine fight reignites Aboriginal heritage tensions. *Reuters.* September 30, 2024: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australian-mine-fight-reignites-aboriginal-heritage-tensions-2024-10-01/#:~:text=,tougher%20regulation%2C%20law%20firm%20warns>
- Chaloner, T. (2004). The Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972: a clash of two cultures; a conflict between two laws. *A parliamentary internship, a co-operative arrangement between The Hon. Robin Chapple MLC of the WA State Parliament and Murdoch University.*
- Cole, N. A., & Wallis, L. A. (2019, December). Indigenous rock art tourism in Australia: Contexts, trajectories, and multifaceted realities. In *Arts* (Vol. 8, No. 4, p. 162). MDPI.
- Currie, C. V. (2023). A Model for Management and Funding of World Heritage Parklands Chosen on Cultural and Biodiversity Criteria. *Global Business & Economics Anthology.*
- Dickson, C. I. (2022). Lithium Mining: Unearthing Old Mining Practices in a New Age of Extraction.
- Disko, S., & Dorough, D. S. (2022). "We are not in Geneva on the Human Rights Council": Indigenous peoples' experiences with the World Heritage Convention. *International Journal of Cultural Property, 29*(4), 487-530.
- Douglas, T. (2013). But that's our traditional knowledge!-Australia's cultural heritage laws and ICIP. *Art+ Law, (1)*, 5-11.
- Dragasi, E. (2014). *The Legislative Process in Developing Cultural Heritage Protection Policy in Greece with Particular Reference to the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Law 3028/2002* (Doctoral dissertation, UCL (University College London)).

16. du Cros, H. (2024). Past, present and future challenges for Australia's indigenous heritage management national policy. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*, 14(2), 137-159.
17. Giorgi, M., & Taçon, P. S. (2019). Carnarvon Gorge: safekeeping a place and Indigenous agency within rock art research and management. *Australian Archaeology*, 85(2), 184-195.
18. Harvey, B., & Nish, S. (2005). Rio Tinto and indigenous community agreement making in Australia. *Journal of Energy & Natural Resources Law*, 23(4), 499-510.
19. Haubt, R. (2016). A radical collaborative approach: developing a model for learning theory, human-based computation and participant motivation in a rock-art heritage application. *ISPRS Annals of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences*, 3, 65-72.
20. Hohmann, J., & Weller, M. (Eds.). (2018). *The UN declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples: A commentary*. Oxford University Press.
21. Jones, T., & Birdsall-Jones, C. (2012). The second wave: Aboriginal cultural centres in sustainable development. In *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Heritage and Sustainable Development* (pp. 1227-1237). Green Lines Institute.
22. Kaur, A., Lodhia, S., & Lesue, A. (2025). Being left behind: disclosure strategies to manage the Juukan Gorge cave blast. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 38(2), 700-729.
23. LAN, G. (2020). AWU R A.
24. Leiboff, M. (1999). The embodiment of culture: the Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986 (CTH). *Australian Feminist Law Journal*, 12(1), 3-19.
25. Lingard, K., Stoianoff, N. P., Wright, E., & Wright, S. (2021). Are we there yet? A review of proposed Aboriginal cultural heritage laws in New South Wales, Australia. *International Journal of Cultural Property*, 28(1), 107-135.
26. Logan, W. (2013). Australia, indigenous peoples and World Heritage from Kakadu to Cape York: state party behaviour under the World Heritage Convention. *Journal of Social Archaeology*, 13(2), 153-176.
27. Macdonald, M., Gringart, E., Garvey, D., & Hayward, K. (2023). Broadening academia: an epistemic shift towards relationality. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 42(3), 649-663.
28. Martin, R. J. (2024). Compensation for cultural loss in Indigenous Australia. *Anthropology Today*, 40(3), 3-6.
29. McConnell, A., & Dortch, J. (2022). A national perspective on Indigenous heritage legislation: A snapshot of the status of national level Indigenous heritage legislation, and a comparative review of state and national legislation in the light of best heritage practice. *Historic Environment*, 34(1/2/3), 116-130.
30. McIntyre-Tamwoy, S., & Buhrich, A. (2012). Lost in the wash: predicting the impact of losing Aboriginal Coastal Sites in Australia. *The International Journal of Climate Change: Impacts and Responses*, 3(1), 53.
31. Nagar, A. (2021). The Juukan Gorge incident: Key lessons on free, prior and informed consent. *Business and Human Rights Journal*, 6(2), 377-383.
32. Oliveri, V. A., Porter, G., Davies, C., & James, P. (2024). The Juukan Gorge destruction: a case study in stakeholder-driven and shared values approach to cultural heritage protection. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*, 14(6), 919-933.
33. Papageorgiou, M. (2015). Planning practices for the protection of cultural heritage: Lessons learnt from the Greek UNESCO sites. *European Spatial Research and Policy*, 22(2), 111-125.
34. Pearson, E. (2018). Colonial Statutes and Statues: Rethinking the Law on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in New South Wales. *Art Antiquity & L.*, 23, 197.
35. Penna, K. N., & English, J. P. (2022). The power of indigenous peoples in decision-making processes of mining projects: The Pilbara region. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 16(12), 782-789.
36. Preston, J., & Craig, D. (2022). In plain sight—from Juukan caves destruction to just development. *Journal of Energy & Natural Resources Law*, 40(3), 361-381.
37. Rode, R. (2017). The Past and Future of Indigenous Peoples' Heritage: Transforming the Legacies of Non-sustainability of Protected Areas. *Going Beyond: Perceptions of Sustainability in Heritage Studies No. 2*, 247-261.
38. Sarapani, S. (2021). The Import of Cultural Goods under EU and Greek Law—A Critical Outlook. *Santander Art and Culture Law Review*, 7(2), 203-228.
39. Shehade, M. (2017). *Negotiating cultural property disputes: Bridging the gap between theory and practice, a way forward* (Doctoral dissertation, UCL (University College London)).
40. Slack, M. J., Law, W. B., Coster, A. C., Ditchfield, K., Field, J., Garvey, J., ... & Kurrama, P. K. (2024). A 47,000 year archaeological and palaeoenvironmental record from Juukan 2 rockshelter on the western Hamersley Plateau of the Pilbara region, Western Australia. *Quaternary Science Reviews*, 338, 108823.
41. Storey, M. (2023). The Right to Enjoy Cultural Heritage and Australian Indigenous Cultural Heritage Legislation. *Nordic Journal of Human Rights*, 41(1), 49-69.
42. Taylor, L., & Veth, P. (2008). Aboriginal art and identity. *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, (1), 1-3.
43. Tranter, B., Lester, E., McGaurr, L., Tranter, B., Lester, L., & McGaurr, L. (2017). Indigenous Engagement: Three Case Studies. *Leadership and the Construction of Environmental Concern*, 117-150.
44. Vadi, V. S. (2012). The protection of cultural landscapes and indigenous heritage in international investment law: Valentina S. Vadi. In *Human Health and Ecological Integrity* (pp. 279-290). Routledge.
45. Vrdoljak, A. F. (2018). Indigenous peoples, world heritage, and human rights. *International Journal of Cultural Property*, 25(3), 245-281.
46. Voudouri, D. (2010). Law and the politics of the past: legal protection of cultural heritage in Greece. *International Journal of Cultural Property*, 17(3), 547-568.
47. Ward, G. K. (2011). The role of AIATSIS in research and protection of Australian rock art. *Rock Art Research*:

*The Journal of the Australian Rock Art Research Association (AURA)*, 28(1), 7-16.

48. Wensing, E. (2020). The destruction of Juukan Gorge: lessons for planners and local governments. *Australian Planner*, 56(4), 241-248.
49. Whitbread-Abrutat, P. (2024, November). A mine ends. Then what? Some reflections on best practice. In *Mine Closure 2024: Proceedings of the 17th International Conference on Mine Closure* (pp. 3-16). Australian Centre for Geomechanics.
50. Zagaris, B. (2024). Recovery and Return of Stolen Cultural Property. *IELR*, 40, 5.