


# “Geotourism - a Tourism Growth Opportunity for Australia”

Geotourism Forum, Global Eco Asia Pacific Conference, Noosa Qld, 20th November 2013



Angus M Robinson and Ross K Dowling

# Today's Agenda

- Landscapes, natural heritage & the environment
  - What do we mean by geotourism?
  - Geotourism, geotourists and geotours
  - Iconic Geotourism Experiences
  - Australia's National Landscapes
  - Geoparks
  - Take Aways
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- A stylized, dark teal silhouette of a mountain range is positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, partially overlapping the bottom edge of the text area.



# Scenery and Geology - a 1938 Musing

- Scenery depends on **land structure** - in other words, its **geology**.
- Everyone interested in the **countryside**, how it has taken shape, why it presents us with the varied beauties of mountain and woodland, river valleys and fertile meadows, is, if often unconsciously, appreciating its **geology**.


A.E. Trueman

Professor of Geology, Glasgow University



# Understanding Natural Heritage

Natural heritage is the legacy of natural objects and intangible attributes encompassing the countryside and natural environment, including flora and fauna, scientifically known as BIODIVERSITY, and geology, landforms and soil landscapes, i.e. GEODIVERSITY.

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# Environment?

The environment comprises the following:

1. **Abiotic** - non-living aspects such as the climate & geology  
e.g. landscape and landforms
2. **Biotic** - the living parts eg. fauna (animals) and flora  
(plants)
3. **Cultural** - past & present, non-living & built

Parts **B+C** are well interpreted within tourism, especially through ecotourism and cultural tourism, **but A has typically not been addressed**



## Key Concepts - Ecotourism

- According to Ecotourism Australia, ecotourism is **ecologically sustainable tourism** with a primary focus on **experiencing natural areas** that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation.
  - Ecotourism Australia believes that the ultimate definition of ecotourism is **compliance with the core criteria stated within the Eco Certification Program.**
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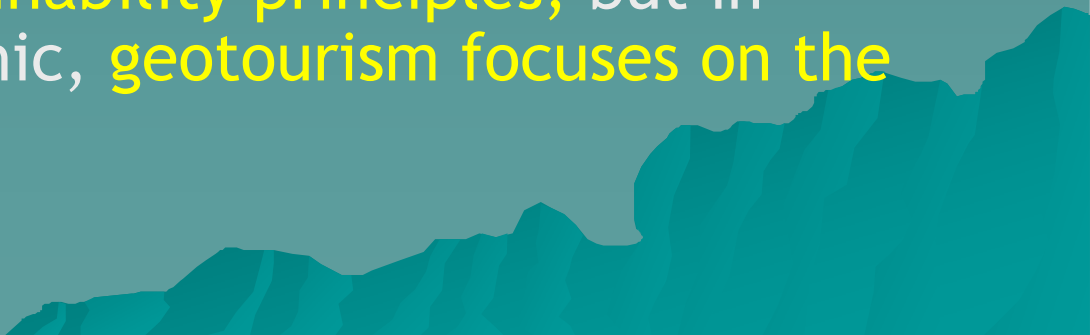
# Understanding Geological Heritage (Geoheritage)

Geological heritage sites (**geosites**) are places which enable us to understand the composition of the earth, the internal and external processes that have shaped it and the evolving flora and fauna that occupied it.

Source: Adapted from Dr Susan White, AESC 2010

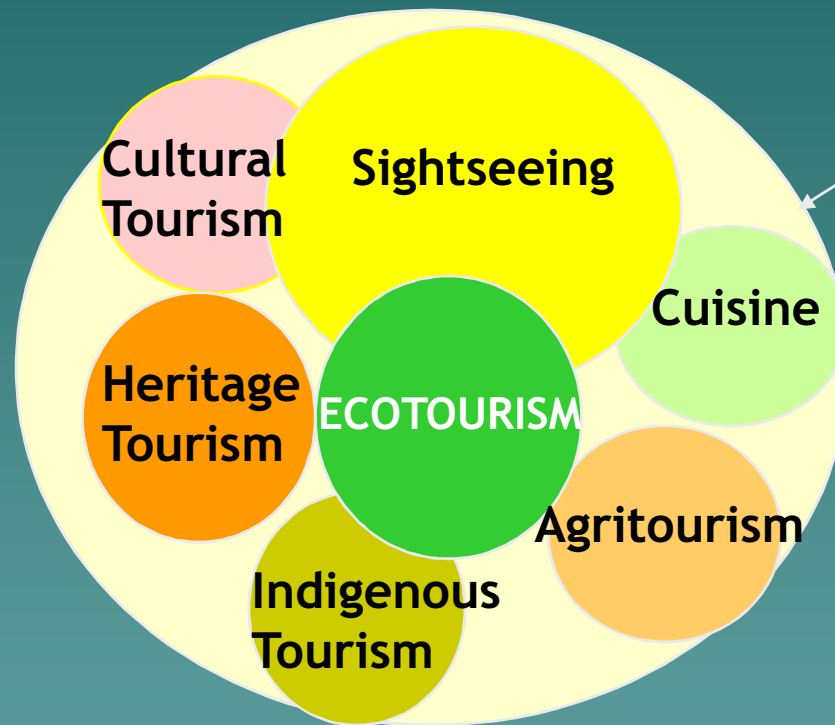
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# Geotourism - National Geographic Society & the Travel Industry Association of America (1997)

- Geotourism is "best practice" tourism that sustains, or even enhances, the **geographical character of a place**, such as its culture, environment, heritage, and the well-being of its residents.
  - Like ecotourism, **geotourism promotes a virtuous circle** whereby tourism revenues provide a local incentive to protect what tourists are coming to see, but extends the principle beyond nature and ecology to **incorporate all characteristics that contribute to sense of place**.
  - Geotourism incorporates **sustainability principles**, but in addition to the do-no-harm ethic, **geotourism focuses on the place as a whole**.
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# Geotourism incorporating all types of 'place-based' tourism National Geographic Perspective



Geotourism  
i.e. 'experiential  
tourism'

Boley, B.B. after Thompson, S. 2009

# Geotourism Characteristics

## Geological Definition

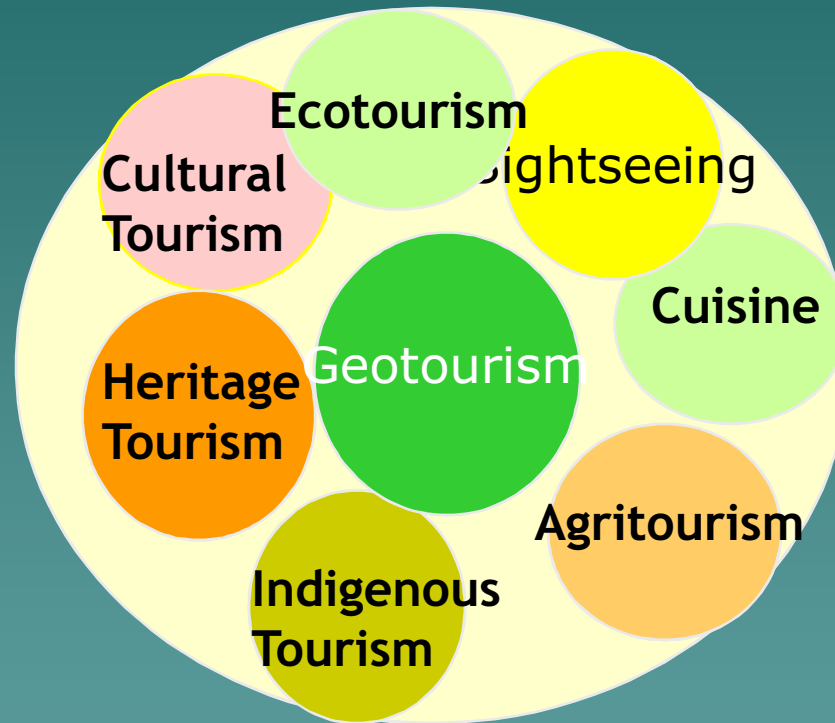
‘Geotourism is tourism which focuses on an area’s **geology and landscape** as the basis of fostering sustainable tourism development’.

Dowling, 2013

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# Geotourism - as one of the components of the many types of 'place-based' tourism

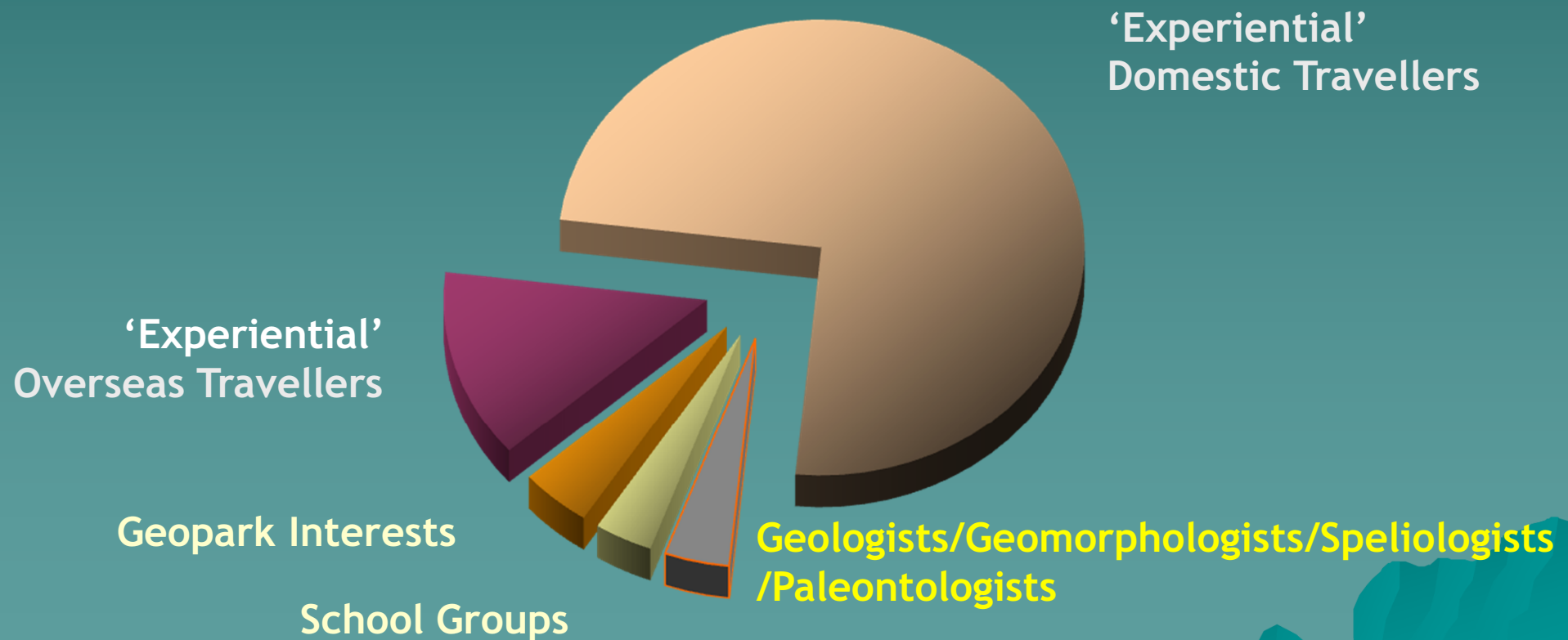
## 'Geological' Perspective





# Geotourism - Potential Markets

## Tourism Industry View

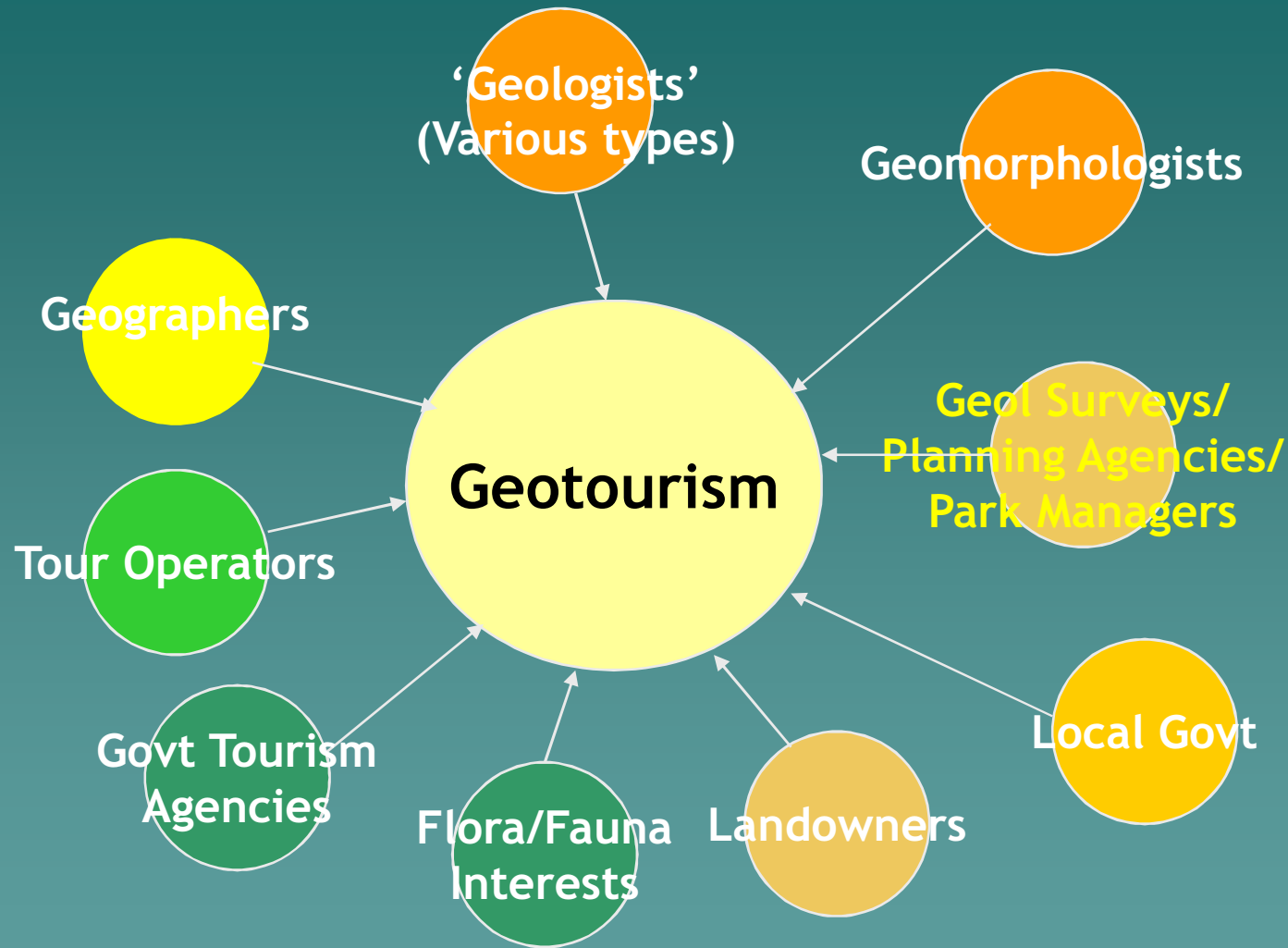


# GSA GEOtourists

## Five Most Important Travel Purposes

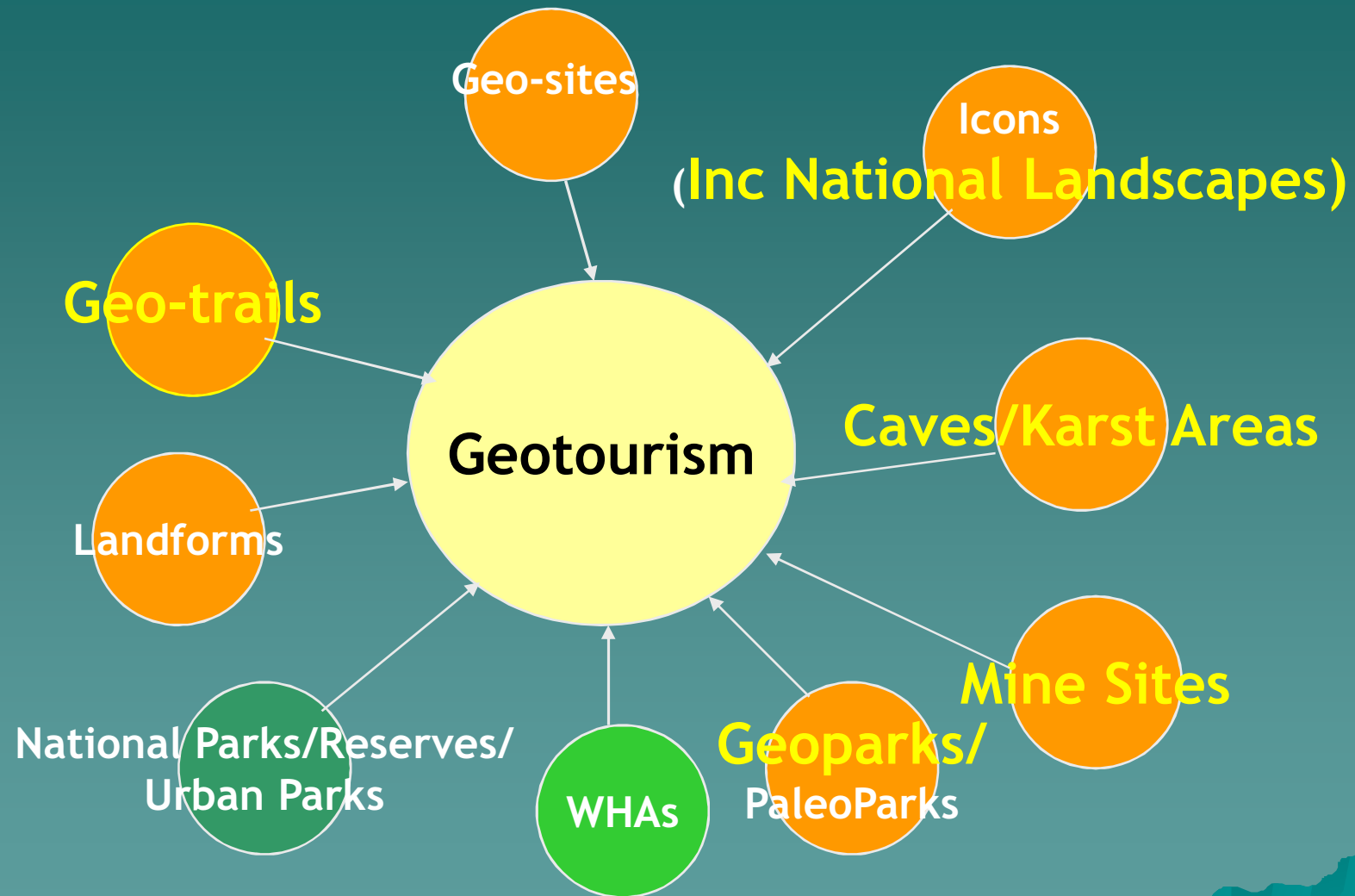
1. Increasing knowledge of geological sites and landforms.
2. To satisfy my curiosity.
3. To have a memorable experience.
4. To obtain intellectual stimulation.
5. Visiting destinations offering a unique bundle of features and attractions (i.e. ecology, geology, culture and history).

# Geotourism (Geological Tourism) - Stakeholders





# Geotourism - Diversity of Sites



# Iconic Sites for Geotourism

➤ Galapagos, Ecuador

➤ Grand Canyon, USA

➤ 16 National Landscapes, Australia

Red Centre 'Geotour'

[http://www.leisuresolutions.com.au/country\\_charm/central\\_australia.htm](http://www.leisuresolutions.com.au/country_charm/central_australia.htm)

➤ Chinese Global Geoparks

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# Galapagos, Ecuador



# The Trail of Time – Grand Canyon

- The Trail of Time is the world's largest geoscience exhibition at the world's grandest geologic landscape
- It is a 4.56 km long trail marked at every meter with 1 m = 1 million years of earth's 4.56 billion year long geologic history
- It is also supported by an electronic 'Virtual Trail of Time'



## Trail of Time Walking Guide

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Grand Canyon National Park  
Arizona

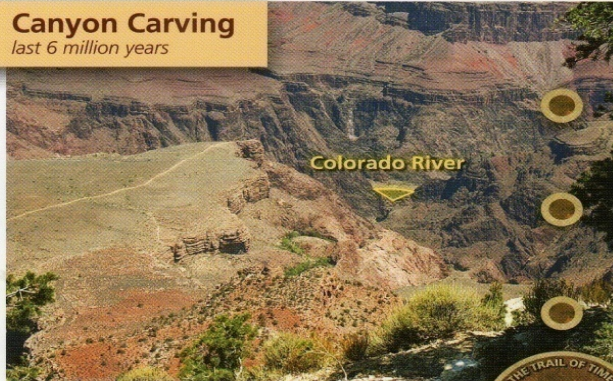


Find these markers and enjoy these views along the 1.2 mile (2 km) timeline trail. Each one represents a key time in this region's geologic history.

*Yavapai Observation Station and the park geology brochure have additional information about all the Grand Canyon rock layers.*

### Canyon Carving

last 6 million years

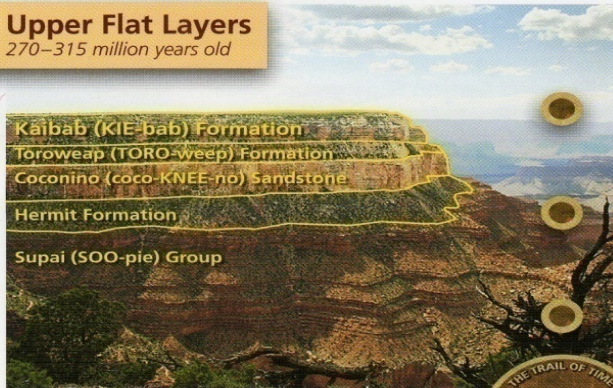


Glimpse the **Colorado River** deep in the canyon. This mighty river has carved the Grand Canyon in "only" the last six million years.



### Upper Flat Layers

270–315 million years old



You are standing on the top rock layer—the **Kaibab Formation**. It was deposited 270 million years ago beneath a shallow sea. From this point you can see lower (older) layers, too.



*The Trail of Time is a joint project of the National Park Service, the University of New Mexico, and the National Science Foundation.*

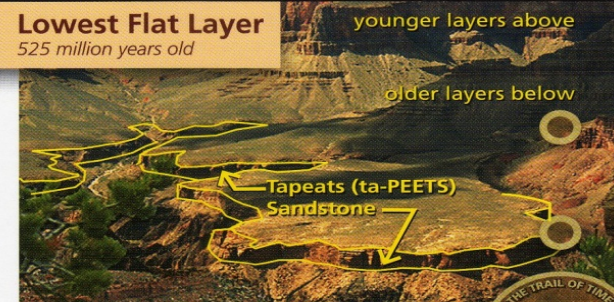
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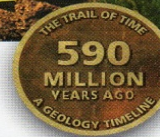


### Lowest Flat Layer

525 million years old



Your best view of the 525 million year old **Tapeats Sandstone** is from marker 590. It is the oldest of the *horizontal* rock layers, but not the oldest rock in the canyon.

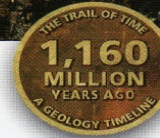


### Supergroup

742–1,255 million years old

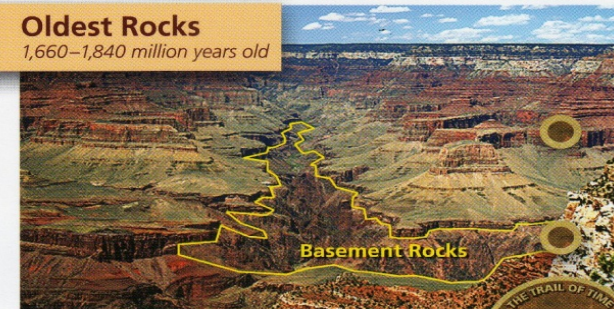


Notice the bright orange **Hakatai Shale**. It belongs to the **Grand Canyon Supergroup**. These layers were tilted and partly eroded before the flat layers were deposited on top.

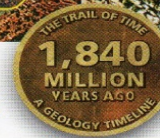


### Oldest Rocks

1,660–1,840 million years old



The dark **Basement Rocks**, deep in the canyon, are among the oldest rocks in the Southwest—1,660 to 1,840 million (1.66 to 1.84 billion) years old.





# Branding 'Iconic' Geotourism - Ensuring a Memorable Experience!





 **Tertiary basalt cap**

**Triassic**

**Permian**

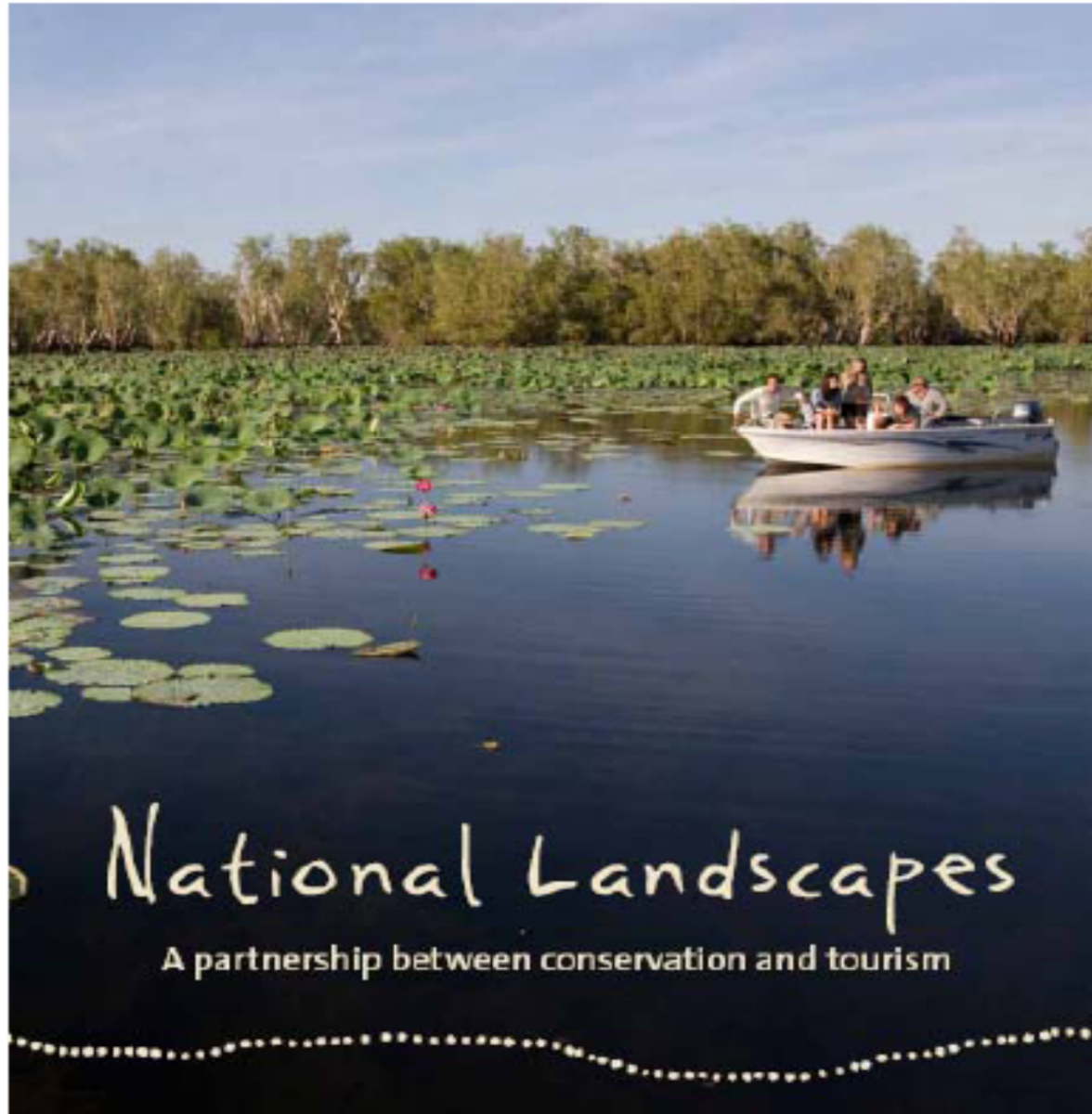
**10 million barren years  
extinction event**

# **Blue Mountains**

**Thick beds of shale and  
coal**







*a partnership  
between conservation  
and tourism  
to identify and  
promote up to 15 of  
Australia's exceptional  
natural and cultural  
experiences  
to the international  
market*



**Australian Government**  
**Director of National Parks**

# Partnership Between Conservation & Tourism

International and national branding and marketing of the selected exceptional national icons

Enhance the role of national parks in regional economies and foster a multi-tenure coordinated approach to regional tourism development



Australian Government  
Director of National Parks

National Landscapes

A catalyst for regional tourism planning:

- destination branding
- infrastructure
- visitor information
- enterprise development

# Need for quality visitor information



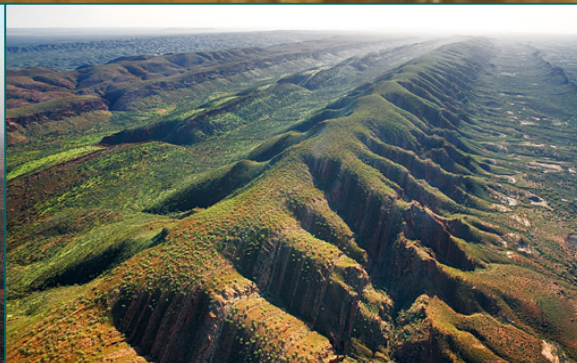


# Red Centre

Alice Springs



★ Uluru





# Ningaloo - Shark Bay

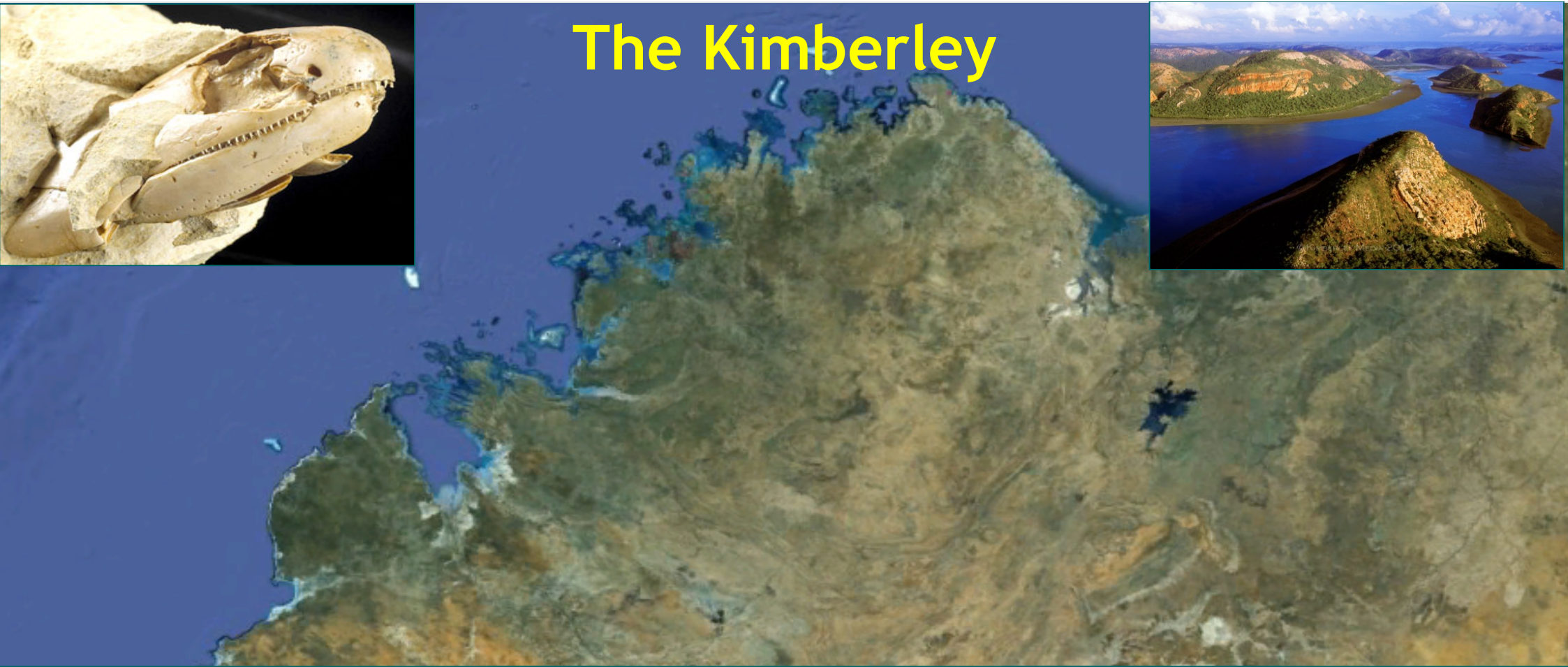
Ningaloo



Shark Bay



# The Kimberley





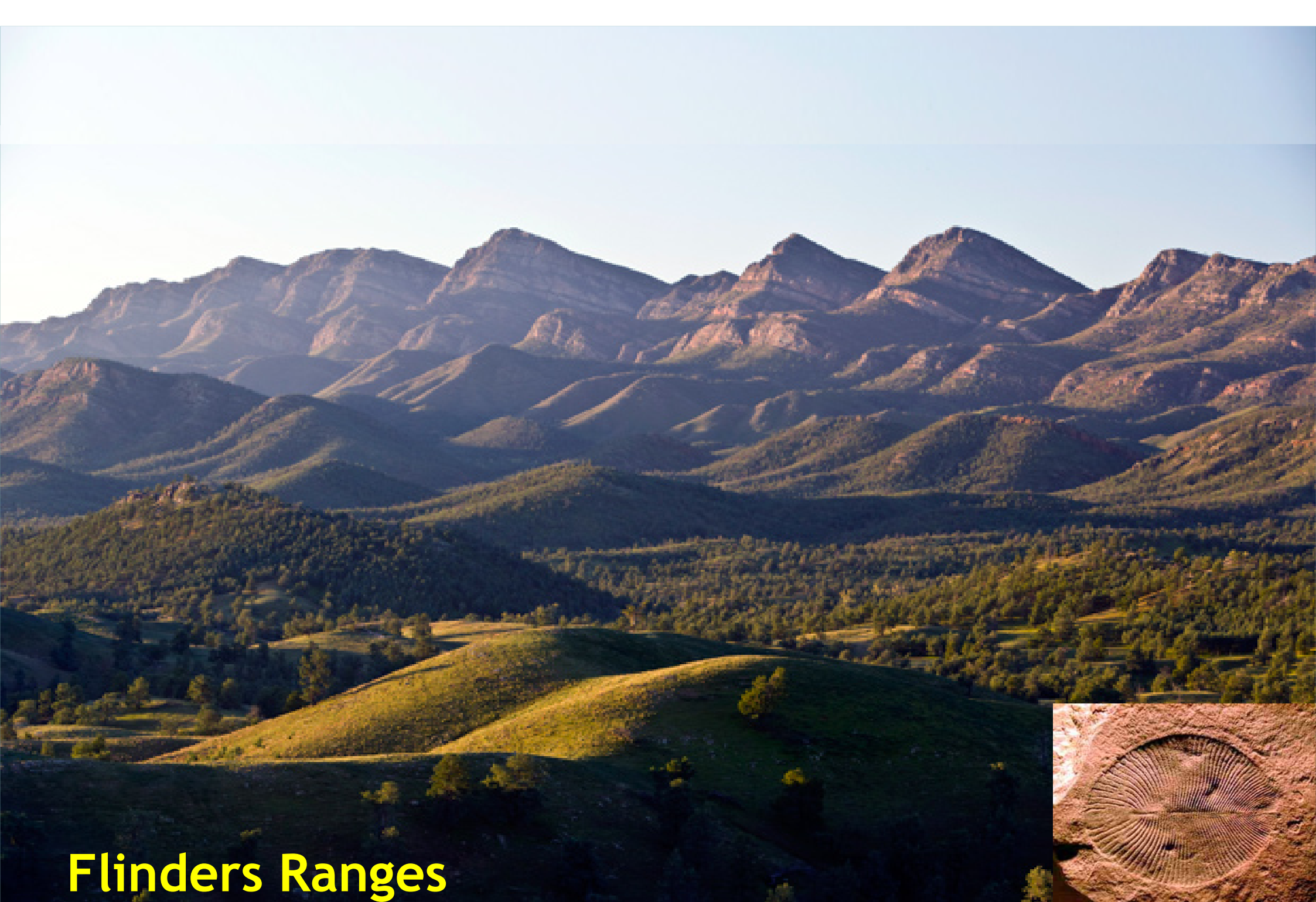
# Great Southwest Edge



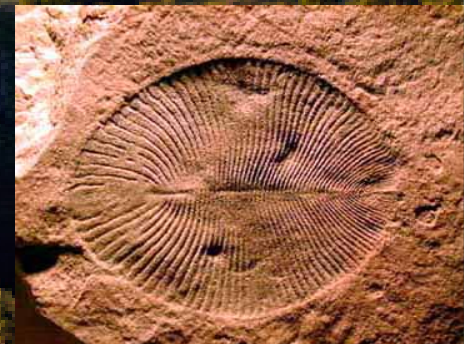


# Australia's Timeless North





**Flinders Ranges**







**Kangaroo Island**

# Island of Tasmania





# Great Ocean Road





# Australian Alps







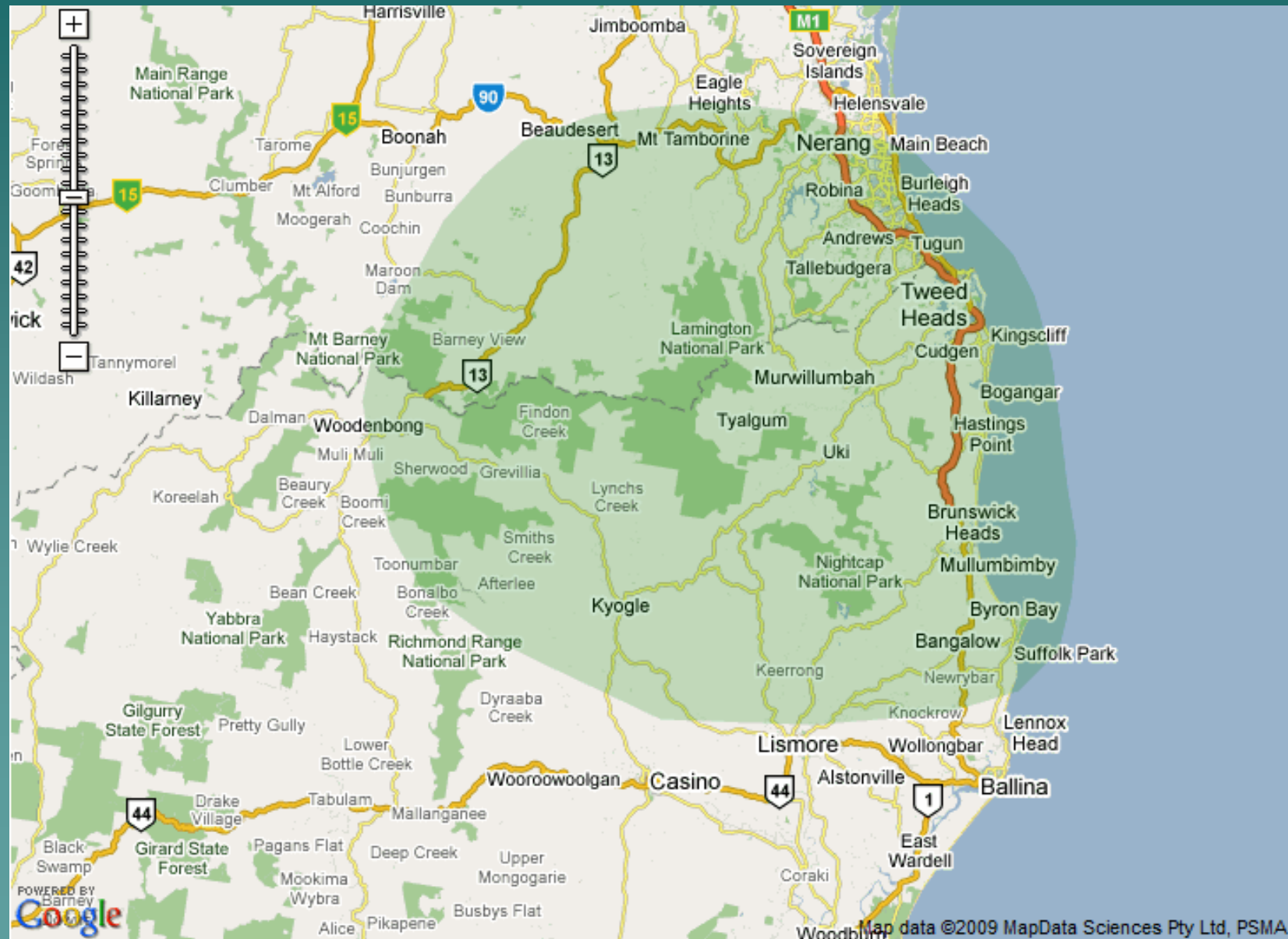
# Australia's Green Cauldron

Caldera

Plug



# Scenic Rim within *Australia's Green Cauldron* National Landscape



# *'Australia's Green Cauldron'* National Landscape

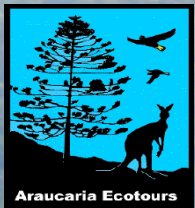
## The 'Scenic Rim' Region





# Discover

## THE COUNTRY CHARM OF THE SCENIC RIM

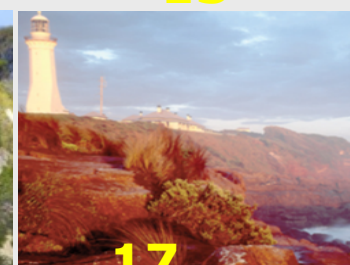
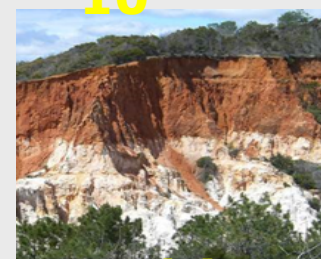
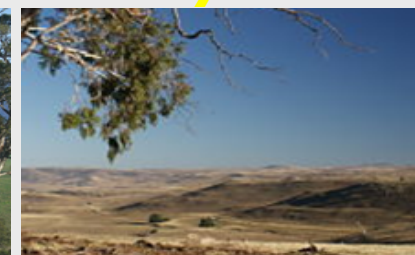
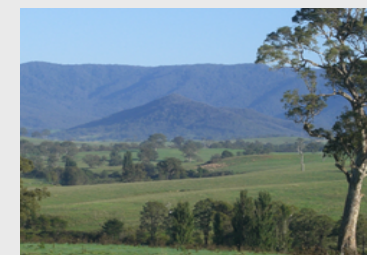
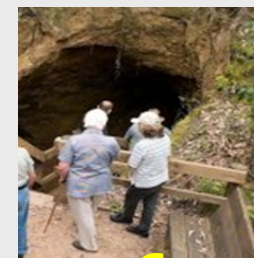
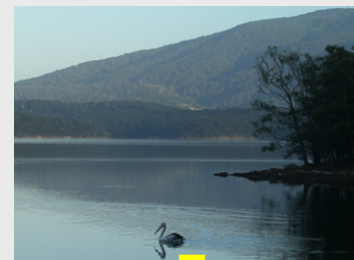
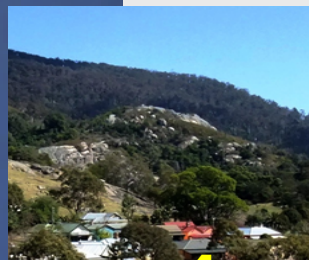




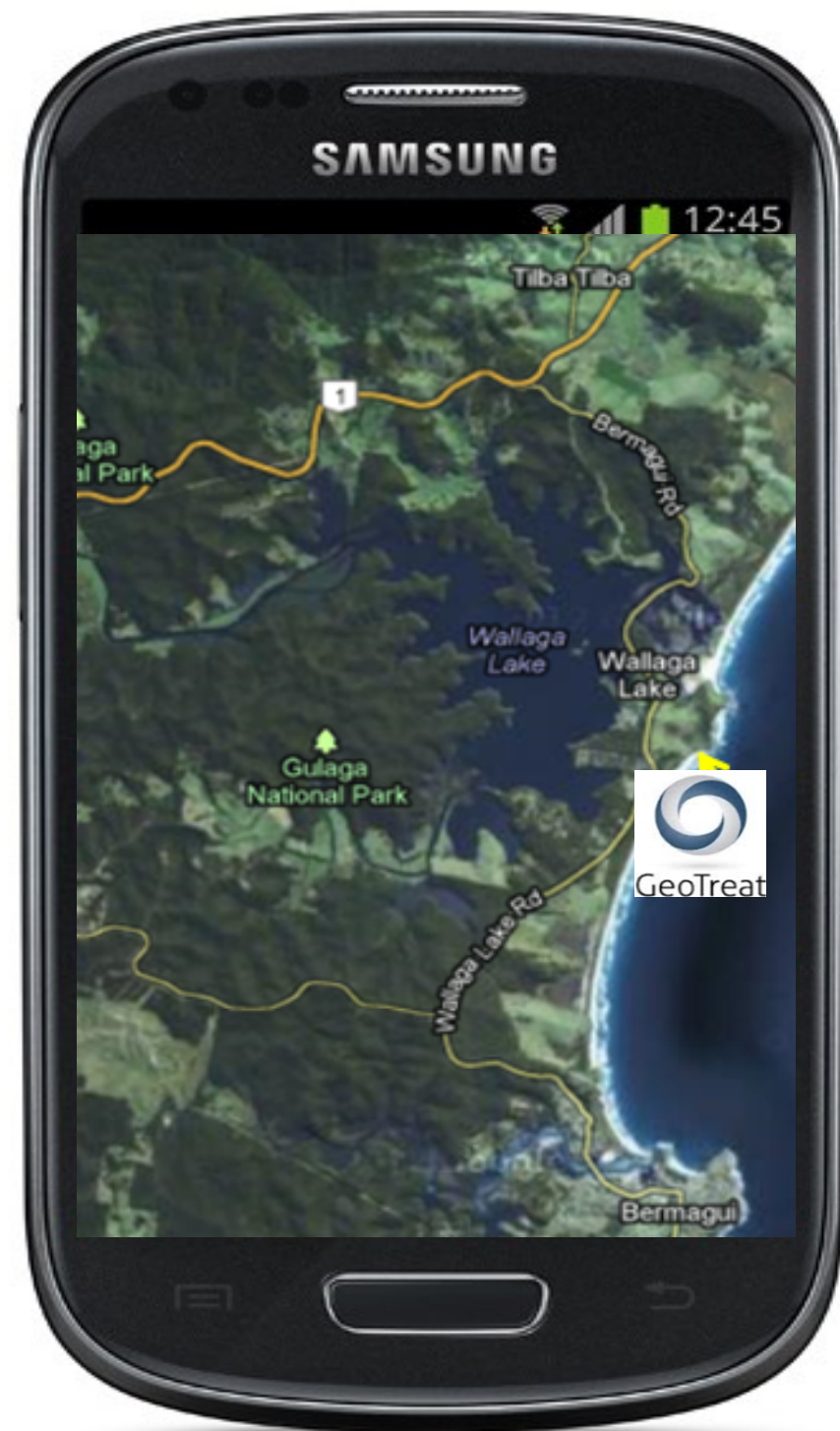
# Australia's Coastal Wilderness - geoheritage tourism case study













# What is a Geopark?

- A Geopark is a unified area with geological heritage of international significance and where that heritage is being used to promote the sustainable development of the local communities who live there.
  - The Geopark brand is a voluntary, quality label and while it is not a legislative designation, the key heritage sites within a geopark should be protected under local, regional or national legislation as appropriate.
  - These Earth heritage sites are part of an integrated concept of protection, education, and sustainable development.
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# Core Elements of a Geopark

A **GEO PARK** achieves its goals of **fostering local development** through a three-pronged approach:

- **GEOCONSERVATION**: A GEOPARK seeks to conserve significant geological features, and explore and demonstrate methods for excellence in conservation.
  - **EDUCATION**: A GEOPARK organises activities and provides logistic support to communicate geoscientific knowledge and environmental concepts to the public.
  - **GEOTOURISM**: A GEOPARK stimulates economic activity and sustainable development through geotourism.
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# Geotourism - Establishing 'Common Ground' with the Parks Movement

There is an opportunity for geotourism advocates to engage with park managers to determine commonality on issues relating to:

- Connecting Landscapes
- Forming Partnerships
- Attracting Visitors
- Development of Regional Communities
- Indigenous Engagement
- Identification and Establishment of Geosites/Geotrails
- Geoscience information & interpretation e.g. web sites

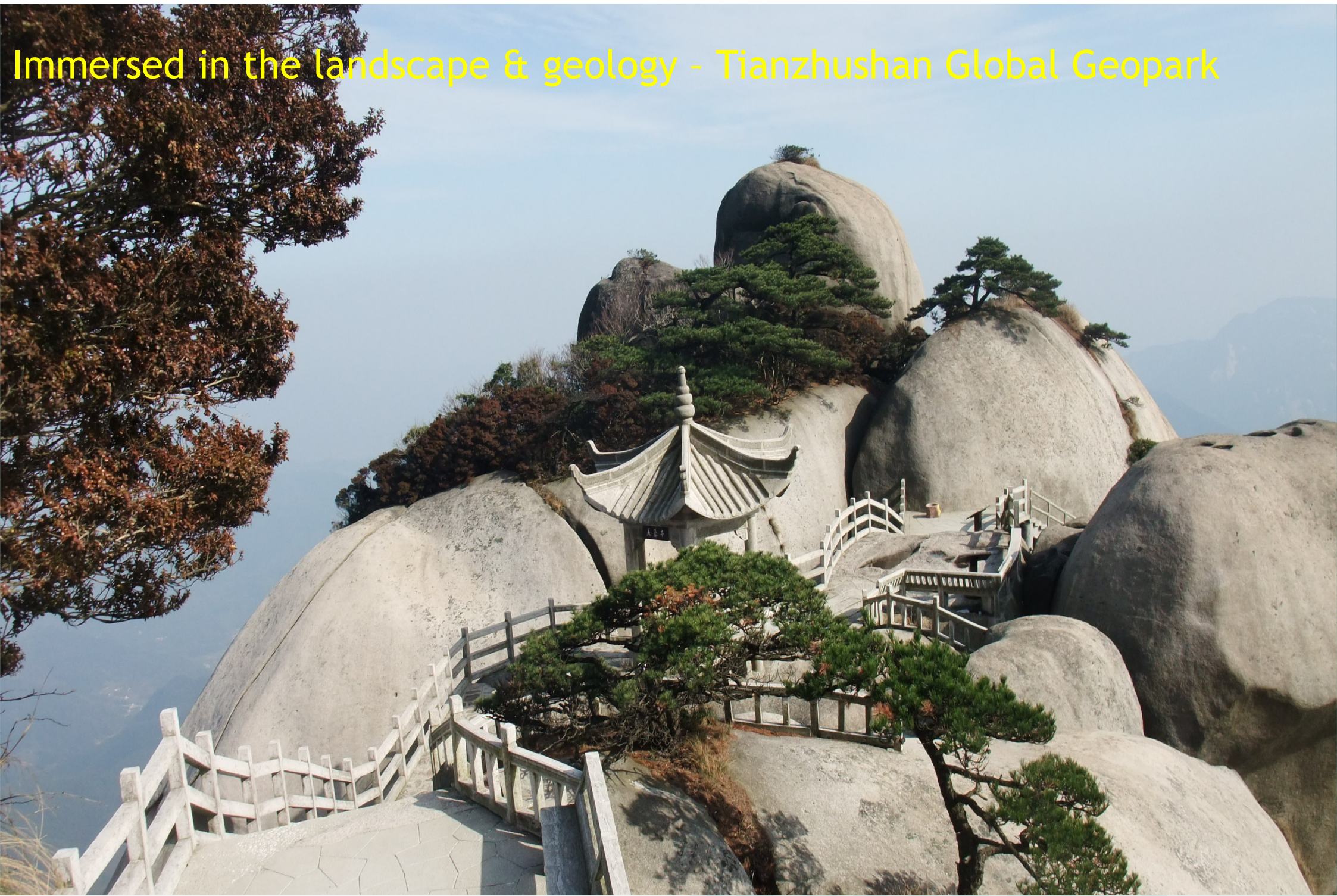


## Distribution of GGN Members In China





# Immersed in the landscape & geology - Tianzhushan Global Geopark





# Take-Aways

1. The incorporation of the geotourism experience (with traditional nature tourism and elements of other 'place based' tourism) creates a more holistic experience, and is a move towards the experiential tourism model. In short, 'experiential tourists seek memorable experiences.
2. Geotourism and Ecotourism are inextricably linked.

# Take-Aways

3. Australia's National Landscapes and geoparks are key places where geotourism is centre stage.
4. Australia has a big future for geotourism particularly given the emerging demand from overseas markets including China.

## Contact Details

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Join the LinkedIn 'Australian Geotourism  
Development' Discussion Group!

<http://tinyurl.com/k8lka5g>