

# **Geotourism: The Tourism of Geology and Landscape**

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**Cover photo:** Uluru (Ayers Rock) is a 340 m high inselberg comprised of felspathic sandstone. It is one of the world's iconic landforms located in the heart of the continent and visited by approximately 450,000 people every year. The rock's original sedimentary layers have been tilted almost to the vertical as a result of mountain building which occurred some 300–400 million years ago. Together 'The Rock', as it is universally known, and some nearby rock domes (Kata Tjuta) located west of Uluru, combine to form spectacular geological formations that dominate the vast plains of central Australia. For these values, the area was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987.

*Source:* Jane Newsome.

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**Dedication**

To our wives and families

Jane, Benjamin and Rachel Newsome

and

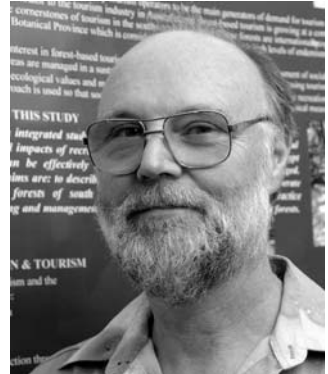
Wendy Dowling and Jayne, Trevor, Shenee & Paige Belstead (England); Simon, Lynette, Amelie & Exan MacLennan (Australia); Mark, Jess & Nessa Dowling (Australia); Tobias & HyeHyang Dowling (China), Aurora, Mike, Helena & Nina Gibbs (New Zealand) and Francis Dowling (New Zealand)

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In 2008 he convened the Inaugural Global Geotourism Conference in Australia and was Advisor to the Sarawak Tourism Board for the Second Global Geotourism Conference held in Mulu, Malaysian Borneo in 2010.

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## Preface

Geotourism is an exciting subject that has arisen out of the nexus between geology and tourism. While interest in both subjects has been around since time immemorial, it is only in relatively recent times that tourism specifically to see geological features has been put in the spotlight.

The 'Grand Tour' of the 19th century was primarily for tourists to see and experience the natural and cultural features of Europe and of course the establishment of the National Parks System in the USA over 100 years ago was mainly to protect America's wild lands and landscapes from forestry, mining and other exploitative activities as a form of conservation through tourism. In the latter part of the last century, environmental tourism emerged as a separate discipline within tourism, largely through the growth of ecotourism, with its focus on tourism in natural areas which is sustainable, conservation supporting, educative and locally beneficial.

Then in the early part of the 2000s, geotourism emerged as an area of interest with research and conference initiatives and the establishment of geoparks. The editors of this volume contributed through their earlier book on *Geotourism* (Dowling and Newsome eds, Butterworth Heinemann, UK, 2006) and their hosting of the Inaugural Global Geotourism Conference 'Discover the Earth Beneath our Feet'. This was held in Perth, Western Australia from 17-20 August 2008. Over 220 delegates from 36 countries participated in the conference which was held to broaden our knowledge of geotourism and introduce the concept of geoparks to Australia. Major supporters of the conference were Tourism Western Australia and the Department of Environment and Conservation; as well as Tourism Australia, Edith Cowan University, the Geological Survey of Western Australia and the National Trust of Western Australia. The conference was held during the International Year of Planet Earth and was endorsed by UNESCO.

For the conference a 478 page book was produced, *Geotourism – Inaugural Global Geotourism Conference Proceedings* (Dowling and Newsome, eds, Promaco Conventions, Australia, 2008). It comprised over 100 abstracts and papers and quickly became sold out due to strong demand for information on the subject.

Arising from this interest we decided to publish a new book to update the subject we first visited in 2006. Interest in our project grew and so this volume represents the first of two new books on the topic. This volume is specifically designed to set the scene and provide a clear definition of geotourism as well as provide information on its characteristics. Thus it contains content on landscape appreciation, geoheritage, management, interpretation, education and the future of geotourism.

Our second publication *Global Geotourism Perspectives* (Dowling and Newsome, eds, Goodfellow Publishers, 2010) brings together in the second volume a range of case studies of geotourism from a number of countries including Australia, Brazil, China, Greece, Malaysia, Mauritius, Oman, South Africa and the USA. Taken together the two books propel the subject to another level and provide an informed platform on which to build the future of geotourism.

Naturally these two books form only part of the picture. There are other books and journals, emerging research and of course now many conferences on geotourism. Recent books have included *GeoTourism in Ethiopia* (Asrat, Demissie, and Mogessie, eds, Shama Books, Ethiopia, 2009) and *Geotourism and Local Development* (de Carvalho

and Rodrigues, eds, *Câmara Municipal de Idanha-a-Nova and Geopark Naturtejo da Meseta Meridional*, Portugal, 2009).

Journals include *GeoTurystyka* [*Geotourism*], published by the International Association of Geotourism in Poland ([www.geoturystyka.pl](http://www.geoturystyka.pl)) and *Geoheritage* published by ProGeo, the European Association for the Conservation of the Geological Heritage, Portugal ([www.springer.com](http://www.springer.com)). Another useful publication is *Earth Heritage*, 'The Geological and Landscape Conservation Magazine', published by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Natural England, the Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Council for Wales ([www.seaburysalmon.com/earth.html](http://www.seaburysalmon.com/earth.html)).

Research is being conducted in a range of countries as evidenced by the chapters in this book and its companion. Conferences abound on the subject with the World Heritage and Geotourism Conference hosted by the Geological Society of South Africa, held in Pretoria from 4–5 June 2009; the 8th European Geoparks Conference focusing on Geotourism, held from 12–14 September 2009 at Geopark Naturtejo, Portugal and the Second Global Geotourism Conference held from 17–20 April 2010 at Gunung Mulu World Heritage Region, Sarawak, Borneo, Malaysia.

Thus the subject of geotourism is growing rapidly. This book is a research volume which aims to add knowledge to the many facets of this emerging subject. It has been compiled for a broad audience including natural area tourism professionals, planners and managers; government and business decision-makers; and students from a wide range of disciplines seeking general information on geotourism development in one volume. We hope that you enjoy it as well as its companion volume of case studies, *Global Geotourism Perspectives*.

David Newsome and Ross Dowling

Perth, Australia

February 2010

## Acknowledgements

The editors would like to thank a number of people who contributed to this book. They include the authors and publishing staff. First we would like to thank the contributors, all 33 of them. Some we have known for many years and have worked with before, others were unknown to us before this project. Some are emerging new or young researchers whereas others are icon academics and well established authors. All we have got to know better through the many iterations of the text during the evolution of the book and we salute each and every one of you for having the faith in this project and the fortitude to deal with our demands over a long period of time. This book is yours and we know that it has been immeasurably enriched by your contributions.

We particularly wish to thank the staff of Goodfellow Publishers, Oxford, England, especially Tim Goodfellow (Co-Director) and our old friend Sally North (Publisher), who worked with us on our first book on Geotourism back in 2006.

Individually as editors we wish to thank some people.

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I would like to express my thanks to Professor Nick Costa (former Dean of the School of Environmental Science) and Professor Stuart Bradley (Dean of the Faculty of Sustain-

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### **Ross Dowling**

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**Chapter extract**

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