



## **New South Wales Speleological Council**

The NSW and ACT Council of the  
Australian Speleological Federation Inc  
PO Box 388 Broadway NSW 2007

**M E D I A   R E L E A S E**

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### **Carr Government puts World Heritage Area under threat**

**Sydney, May 26, 2004:**

The Carr Government is considering plans to privatise the operation of Jenolan, Wombeyan and other New South Wales cave reserves. The plans include disbanding the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust, which has managed the Jenolan, Wombeyan, Abercrombie and Borenore show caves, transferring control of the cave reserves to the National Parks and Wildlife Service under the Department of Environment and Conservation, and engaging a private operator to run the cave tours.

The New South Wales Speleological Council has condemned the proposals claiming the action risks commercial interests prevailing over the environment and could cause irreversible damage to the sensitive caves and their reserves.

“Jenolan Caves has already been placed in the hands of an administrator who has made it perfectly clear that the Government is considering licensing the show caves tours to a private operator.” said New South Wales Speleological Council President Megan Pryke.

Until now, Jenolan Caves has been under the watchful management of the Jenolan Caves Reserves Trust who have attended to all conservation, financial and indigenous concerns within the Karst Conservation Area.

“The administrator for Jenolan has confirmed the Trust’s contentions that an investment of over \$4m is needed to update current infrastructure. There is no reason why, if the Government was prepared to commit this expenditure, the Trust could not continue to manage the reserves satisfactorily.”

“It is our view that if the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust is dissolved and NPWS takes over, the management of the caves is likely to suffer.”

“The existing Trust Board represents a range of stakeholders such as State and Local Government, the National Trust, and indigenous and conservation interests. It has placed Jenolan at the forefront of cave management, and has managed the caves more effectively than NPWS has managed the caves within its care. “

“The Government has not been able to identify any problems with their management other than the lack of proper resourcing. There is no reason why the Trust cannot continue to manage the lands effectively if the Government is prepared to commit the necessary funds,” NSWSC President said.

The New South Wales Speleological Council is the State arm of the Australian Speleological Federation Inc. (ASF) and is the peak body for speleological groups in NSW concerned with the conservation, study and exploration of Australian caves.

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