

ADDRESSING THE FAILURES OF CAVE ACCESS CONTROL SYSTEMS; A VISION FOR PROTECTING WILD CAVE VALUES

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ABSTRACT*

In Australia over the last few decades there have been many papers written in relation to the protection of cave values, in a country where karst resources are scarce, yet in many cases of high significance. Karst managers have advocated that a site classification system, which identifies karst values, should be used to develop management prescriptions for caves. This process would in turn guide the amount of cave access by various users.

It is argued that in many cases the values of caves remains unknown despite increasing use and impact from mainly recreational access to these caves and their entrance zones. It is proposed that shared vision for the protection of karst values needs to held by managers, cave users, governments and the wider public. The proposal is not innovative but seen as the only long-term solution to protect cave values.

To implement such a vision will require a coordinated effort and use of high-level interpersonal skills by advocates of the vision. Recommended initiatives involve taking a precautionary approach to cave access until cave values are assessed, elevating public and government awareness of karst values, more effective training of cave users and clarification of the role of cave users in recognition and documentation of cave values.

*Full paper not provided.