

UNDARA VOLCANO, NORTH QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA: SOME GEOLOGICAL WONDERS IN ITS LAVA FIELD – THEIR MANAGEMENT, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Ann Atkinson

The Undara Lava Tube System is remarkable not only for its geology but also for its unique flora and vertebrate and invertebrate fauna. This paper considers some aspects of its geology, in particular those unique features within the tubes that demand protection for all time. Recommendations are made for their management.

A short historical background is given, together with the main events from the initial request in 1967 for the gazettal of a protected area to cover the lava tubes and eight nearby volcanic cones. Tribute is paid to those whose perseverance finally saw a major National Park of 620km² declared in 1992. Aspects of public safety and protection of features are addressed; some of these features are unique internationally.

Finally some recommendations are made to enhance public understanding and appreciation of these national wonders.