



## TEMPLATE FOR INPUT INTO THE AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE STRATEGY

### Overview

This template should be used to provide comments on the design of the Australian Heritage Strategy.

### Contact Details

<b>Name of Organisation:</b>	Significance International
<b>Name of Author:</b>	Veronica Bullock
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### Questions

Please add your comments for some or all of the three questions below. If you have other information you wish to provide, please add this in the other comments field.

#### 1. What do you think are the key elements of the Commonwealth's role in heritage?

1. Coordinated leadership which reflects contemporary understandings of heritage significance, heritage process and our local-international obligations in legislation, operational policy, and programs.
2. To act as the leader in our region in regard to heritage by, for example, ratifying the Second Protocol of the 1954 UNESCO *Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*.

#### 2. What new cooperative models could be explored to open up opportunities for heritage protection?

3. U.S. Heritage Corridors and Areas approach which incorporates indigenous and non-indigenous, natural, historic, recreational and cultural heritage significances into cooperative governance arrangements. Could be part of the new 'National Corridors Plan' in Australia. Such an approach would be entirely consistent with the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (1999).
4. Heritage legislation overhaul. The AHS Summary of Public Submissions document quotes Submission 67 as pointing out "the current national and state and territory legislative and policy regimes have been developed over many decades, and have succeeded in preserving much of Australia's valuable heritage." A question and an observation/suggestion must be voiced:



- a. how do we know what we have lost?
  - b. the preservation of heritage fabric was the initial approach taken to heritage since the 1800s everywhere. Philosophically we have moved on, not least because we now have much more complex societies. This situation will only be exacerbated into the future. With limited resources in the face of incomprehensible challenges for humanity, it is essential that we take the unprecedented Australian Heritage Strategy opportunity to recognise this by adopting a values/process based approach to the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage in all domains, as an important inter-generational stabiliser. Conflict resolution is an inevitable part of this way forward (when isn't it?), in which the field of heritage is something of a leader e.g. Getty Conservation Institute project 'Heritage Values, Stakeholders and Consensus Building'. Regarding the suggestion of taking an Australian Indigenous cultural landscape organising approach to heritage the Summary document concludes: "In a practical sense, however, the range of values within any 'cultural landscape' in Australia would be subject to complex and competing management regimes dealing with natural and cultural values in isolation". This need not be the case at all (*cf.* 12 (e) below). It is critical that "heritage should be joined to the nation's larger public agendas", not only in the fields listed in the Summary AHS document (p. 8), but as part of a sustainable development frame.
5. Assign culture and heritage combined Standing Council status in the 2011 COAG Council scheme.
  6. In the interim create/update an Intergovernmental Agreement on Culture and Heritage.
  7. Sponsorship of improved interdisciplinary collaborations between different professional heritage divisions e.g. natural/place-based/movable; within movable cultural heritage, archives/galleries/libraries/museums (the role proposed for Museums Australia in the National Cultural Policy is just a beginning); specifically Blue Shield Australia to have real input to Emergency Management Australia and Australian Defence Force training in cultural heritage for conflict and natural disaster situations.
  8. Adapt the model proposed in the belated AHS Consultation Commissioned Essay by Worboys 'Conserving Australia's Geoheritage' to movable cultural heritage:
    - a. Understand what movable cultural heritage exists in Australia through a more perspicacious mechanism than the 'Control List' (p. 3);
    - b. Systematically mapping the Distributed National Collection would permit the comparative analysis of objects and collections to enable reasonable significance assessment to occur, which in turn would enable 'sustainable collections' prioritisations (p. 4);
    - c. Make the collections publicly available as a "virtual" collaborative whole-of-nation e-collection (p. 4);
    - d. Use the recommended system to undertake such work (p. 5): *Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections* (2010), after the three recommended investigations arising from the *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage* (1986) 2009 Review are prioritised and completed;
    - e. Update the list on a regular basis (p. 6).



9. Include geoheritage and reinstate movable cultural heritage as categories for definition and monitoring in the next *Australia State of the Environment* Report. Much valuable work was done for movable cultural heritage monitoring including the refining of indicators from 1996, before this type of heritage was summarily removed by the Heritage Committee member from the last report. Apart from being internally inconsistent, this contravenes the wordings of the EPBC Act (1999) and *The Burra Charter*.

### 3. How can communities engage more effectively in the management of heritage places?

10. Coordinated training for paid and unpaid heritage workers across jurisdictions. This and other heritage matters requiring jurisdictional coordination would be aided by the re-establishment of a national coordinating body with sufficient staff and budget to guarantee achievement of agreed objectives across six five-year plans.
11. As a corollary to this online resources need to be made more accessible once again. For example, with the closure of the Culture Portal, the Collections Council of Australia 'Resources', and the award winning Collections Australia Network 'Sector Info.' information sources, community learning was nobbled in 2010. The new 'Community Heritage Portal' (currently only an opt-in showcase) should be upgraded to carry this important element.
12. Learning imperatives include:
  - a. presenting heritage as holistic – not divided according to government management regimes e.g. into built/ natural/ movable/ intangible/ maritime/ landscape;
  - b. presenting heritage as an orienting concept within a rapidly changing world;
  - c. understanding that significance of places cannot be determined without objects;
  - d. The Distributed National Collection;
  - e. the value of Indigenous Australian worldviews to Australians more generally i.e. "Indigenous communities do not generally make the distinction between natural and cultural values" (Summary AHS document p. 6) *cf.* 3 (b) above.

### Other comments

Please see the Significance International submission (No. 17) from the original 2012 Australian Heritage Strategy for background to the above, template-led additional comments.

It is acknowledged that the above offers suggestions both for 'tweaking' the existing heritage management system in Australia, and for overhauling this system towards a much preferred model.

To begin down the path of re-structuring heritage management around values/process the Department might consider a conversation with Prof. Laurajane Smith, who we are fortunate to have back in Australia at the Australian National University [REDACTED]