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Australian Heritage Strategy Project Team  
c/o Ms Megan Smith  
Assistant Director, Heritage Strategies Section  
Heritage and Wildlife Division  
Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities  
GPO Box 787  
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Ms Smith

**Submission in response to the Australian Heritage Strategy Public Consultation Paper**

The Heritage Council of Victoria believes that the proposed Australian Heritage Strategy is an important initiative and is pleased to provide a submission. Last year we completed our *Strategic Plan 2011-2015* and a copy of this document is enclosed. Our comments are particularly focussed on issues identified during development of the Plan and how they may contribute to the Commonwealth environment.

Our vision is that Australia's diverse cultural heritage is understood and valued now and in the future. The Australian Heritage Strategy can provide leadership in the recognition, conservation and celebration of our heritage.

*Engaging the community*

It is important to engage the community in discourse and promote recognition of the enduring contribution of cultural heritage to our lives. The Heritage Strategy is an opportunity to broaden the audience that engages with heritage, promoting the use of new media and creating opportunities for working with communities and benefitting from their knowledge.

*Recognising the contribution of cultural heritage to our wellbeing*

Although communities may recognise the contribution of cultural heritage to their identity and wellbeing, the contribution of cultural heritage to sustainability and to the economy is often undervalued. The Heritage Strategy provides the opportunity to acknowledge this contribution and promote the values of cultural heritage for example through support for volunteers and volunteer organisations and by integrating the benefits of heritage conservation into energy rating systems and recognising positive economic management of assets.

*Championing exemplary heritage conservation policy and practice*

The Heritage Strategy needs to champion and support exemplary heritage conservation policy and practice. The Heritage Council of Victoria has been pleased to participate in national forums like Heritage Chairs and Officials which facilitate cooperation and coordination across the jurisdictions. We would like to see this cooperation strengthened through an integrated approach to education about heritage at primary, secondary and tertiary levels and consistent, ongoing support for research programs including thematic and technical studies which will benefit the nation. In particular we see a gap in the promotion of good design for heritage places and precincts and a need for a national focus on heritage training and skills development for

both trades and professionals. There is a need for increased support of Indigenous heritage, greater recognition of intangible and moveable heritage and also the monitoring and reporting of the ongoing condition of all heritage as identified in the *2011 State of the Environment Report*.

*A comprehensive approach to legislation and management*

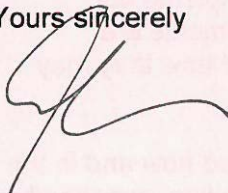
National leadership by the Commonwealth and the Australian Heritage Council is important for ensuring heritage has a strong place in all government activities and strategies. There should be a clear and comprehensive approach to recognition and management of heritage at all levels, international, national, state and local consistent with best practice in heritage legislation and administration to ensure robust, consistent and effective decision-making. This should include an integrated and searchable listing of Australia's heritage and programs for adequate resourcing especially for community heritage projects.

*An inspirational strategy*

The Australian Heritage Strategy is an opportunity to inspire the Australian community by providing national direction for the benefit of all.

I would be happy to discuss this further if it would be of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Daryl Jackson AO  
Chair

14 JUNE 2012

Encl: Heritage Council of Victoria *Strategic Plan 2011-2015*