# Template FOR INPUT INTO THE

**AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE STRATEGY**

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| Overview  This template should be used to provide comments on the content of the Australian Heritage Strategy. | |
| Contact Details | |
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| **Date:** | **13 May 2014** |
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| Questions  Please add your comments for some or all of the questions provided with the Strategy’s three high level themes below. If you have other information you wish to provide, please add this in the “Other comments” field. | |
| 1. **Improve National Leadership**   What are the most important things the Australian Government should be doing to offer leadership in heritage?  How can the Australian Government provide guidance and support for our national heritage—while still empowering other government, industry and community members to take responsibility and get involved?  What priority areas are important to you, your organisation or group?  What practical actions would you suggest to improve national heritage leadership? | |
| SEE BELOW UNDER OTHER COMMENTS | |
| 1. **Pursue Innovative Partnerships**   What partnerships are most needed within the heritage sector?  What heritage roles and responsibilities should be led by governments, peak heritage organisations or community groups in the 21st century?  How should resources be shared through heritage partnerships to ensure the greatest return on agreed priorities?  Can you provide examples of successful innovative partnerships you or your organisation have established? | |
| SEE BELOW UNDER OTHER COMMENTS | |
| 1. **Enable encourage communities to understand and care for their heritage**   What should the Australian heritage sector be doing to help the Australian community better engage in heritage activities?  How can a shared understanding of our national heritage be developed and best celebrated together?  Do you have any examples of activities that have been successful in promoting local heritage to a broader audience?  What is the role of technology and new media in providing greater community access to heritage? | |
| SEE BELOW UNDER OTHER COMMENTS | |
| **Other comments** | |

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| Following the forum in Canberra on 12 May I specifically draw attention to the need for greater attention on urbanism and urban heritage/ associated urban conservation thinking and practice which spans, in my opinion, the 3 essential elements of the Australian Heritage Strategy: National leadership, Partnerships, and Community engagement.  Given the high percentage of Australians living in cities and towns, the increasing intensity of urbanisation and such factors as urban infill and densification pressures we need to focus on new ways of valuing our urban areas and the sense of history they embody. Essentially this entails understanding urban areas as process through time – a process by which identities are formed – reflecting social, economic and aesthetic values and understanding cities as cultural landscapes reflecting layers through time.  Underlying my comments is the following commentary:  *Current urbanization policies often ignore the importance of cultural heritage preservation and promotion*  *and the great potential of creativity in addressing social, environmental and economic urbanization*  *challenges. How does culture weigh in addressing urbanization challenges today?[[1]](#endnote-1)*  With this in mind, and working through the Australian Heritage Strategy, it is timely to consider the major initiative by UNESCO in the field of conservation of urban areas associated with change that is taking place in the world’s cities and that is the concept of the **Historic Urban Landscape (HUL).** The HUL initiative adopted in November 2011 by the UNESCO General Assembly (UNESCO *General Conference Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscape [HUL])* followed concern by the World Heritage Committee about impacts of modern developments on historic urban areas and compatibility with the protection of their heritage values. This was particularly so with its proposition of the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) notion as a tool to reinterpret the values of urban heritage, and indication of the need to identify new approaches and new tools for urban conservation. The HUL concept applies equally to any urban historic area, whether of World heritage standing or not.[[2]](#endnote-2)  The HUL approach is not focused on famous historic buildings or ensembles of well-known buildings as architectural monuments. Rather it is a management approach that defines heritage as a living, dynamic object that needs to be understood within the urban landscape. It also relies on the significance of local communities associated with heritage and aims to integrate the management of historic sites in a city’s urban planning process. Action based on the HUL paradigm takes into account the following factors: a city’s natural, cultural and historic resources, understanding the heritage values to be protected, vulnerability assessment of historic resources, create a vision for city development that integrates heritage values, prioritise policies for conservation and development, and establishing partnerships for management of historic sites.[[3]](#endnote-3) The latter is particularly significant in that it should involve developer input and city planning input alongside heritage conservation considerations.  The HUL paradigm therefore understands built urban heritage as the places where people live their everyday lives, where social values and a sense of place inhere. There are many examples of such places in Australia cities, some are recognised already as heritage places eg Haberfield, Sydney, whilst many are not recognised or their social values understood. Nevertheless, even recognised examples such as Haberfield are coming under planning pressure to accept changes, not least through urban infill. We need to be able to evaluate proposals for change and the HUL approach offers the best option.  With these points in mind, and in answer to the questions posed in 1, 2, 3 above, it is suggested that the Australian Government could (with the Australian Heritage Council) prioritise a thematic study on applying the HUL paradigm for urban heritage conservation in Australia. This should also entail collaborative approaches to empowering other government, industry and community members to take responsibility and get involved: eg local/state/territory government, developers, urban planning authorities, local communities.  In February 2015 the Centre for Heritage & Museum Studies at The ANU is hoping to have Dr Ron Van Oers, - a leader in HUL - Vice Director, WHITRAP[[4]](#endnote-4) (Tongji University, Shanghai) as Visiting Fellow. One of the planned events is a national seminar on HUL. It would be invaluable to have the Australian Government as a partner in the seminar. Dr Van Oers and Prof Taylor are already working together and will be mounting a HUL Roundtable and Training Workshop at Guangzhou, China, later in the year (2014). There is extensive interest in the HUL approach already in China and there is scope for Australia-China interaction. |

1. May 2013 Hangzhou United Nations Conference on Trade & Development (UNCTAD),‘Culture vital for development progress, Deputy Secretary-General tells meeting’. http://unctad.org/en/Pages/AboutUs.aspx H:\Culture, sustainability, heritage\unctad\_org. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. The city of Ballarat for example is currently the subject of a HUL study. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. # See also ‘[Managing Pindi’s inner city: Bringing pre-‘garisson city’ Rawalpindi back to life](http://tribune.com.pk/story/668575/managing-pindis-inner-city-bringing-pre-garisson-city-rawalpindi-back-to-life/)’ *The Express Tribune with International New York Times*: Interview with Ron Van Oers, Feb 7 2014.http://tribune.com.pk/story/668575/managing-pindis-inner-city-bringing-pre-garisson-city-rawalpindi-back-to-life/

   [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. World Heritage Institute for Training and Research. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)