# 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 | |
| **Name of Organisation:** | State Heritage Unit, South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources |
| **Name of Author:** | **Anna Pope** |
| **Date:** | **6 June 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? | |
| The Australian Government has an opportunity to offer leadership in heritage by:   * **Better heritage outcomes for the whole country:** Focusing less on the few places on the National Heritage List, and more on the many thousands of places on various government registers throughout the country, and in particular, on achieving better outcomes on Australian Heritage as a whole. * **Centralised information about heritage places**: Providing an electronic platform for information to be stored and accessed by all Australians about all types of heritage places in Australia (state, local, national and world). This could be similar to the AHPI, but perhaps expanded to link with additional sources of heritage information such as the cultural heritage network. * **Best practice information for heritage professionals**: Providing an online forum for best practice information about heritage policy, assessment and conservation (including links to a range of publications and information about case studies of good conservation outcomes, good policy and heritage documentation, etc.) * **Tax incentives and other incentives**: Providing centralised opportunities for encouraging the community to look after their heritage well, including tax incentives for heritage conservation work. This has the benefit of increasing fairness to all Australians by providing financial incentives to all Australian heritage owners, not just those in jurisdictions which are able to offer grants. * **Environmental ratings for buildings**: Influencing the improvement of the Building Star Rating system to recognise the value of embedded energy, and to build the environmental costs of demolition (loss of fabric) into development. This would support adaptive reuse as well as have environmental outcomes. * **Seed fund projects with broad social outcomes (including heritage):** Investigate, promote and initiate strategic projects that invest in social capital, including providing seed funding to projects which will have a range of outcomes. (eg. Main Street programme in Australia 10-15 years ago. A programme investing in dilapidated towns to restore heritage, increase amenity, attract new business, provide employment and increase wellbeing). * **Heritage at Risk**: Encourage passion in the community about Heritage through strategic programs such as ‘Heritage at Risk’. (Harness the passion which comes when people realise something is about to be lost. Eg, English Heritage’s Buildings at Risk Program). * **Heritage education:** Encourage Heritage to become part of the curriculum for all Primary Students. For example, some history programs spend more time talking about European History than they do about Australia’s own special heritage. * **Maritime heritage:** The strategy could do more to reflect maritime heritage.In particular, the Commonwealth should pursue ratification of the 2001 UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage. | |
| 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? | |
| **Partnerships**  Probably the most crucial partnerships are with those who own and manage heritage places, as they have the largest impact on that heritage place. Having tools to make it easier to engage effectively with potentially thousands of heritage owners would be useful for all jurisdictions. For example, best practice guides to engaging with owners, case studies of effective practices, and information about potential incentives and advice which could be provided to owners.  There are of course many other important partnerships, including with Government departments, NGOs, Universities, Architects, Planners, Building professionals, and the community as a whole.  **Funding and incentives**  Having direct funding commitments for Heritage (such as Green Army) would demonstrate the Australian Government’s commitment to improving heritage outcomes in Australia. This could include new direct funding as well as expansion of the Your Community Heritage Grants program (which should at least be indexed to CPI). The risks associated with crowd sourced funding for projects also needs to be better understood if this is going to be used as an alternative to traditional grant funding models.  Another opportunity for getting better outcomes for heritage and providing support for owners is through tax incentives for heritage conservation. | |
| 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? | |
| New media and internet in general can provide an information portal for all information about heritage places (what they are, what we can do to manage them better, etc), as well as opportunities to engage with communities in new ways. It is vital to understand what the community needs to better manage its heritage, and how we can work together to achieve the best outcomes. We need to use every avenue available to promote heritage, and to increase community and stakeholder participation. | |
| **Other comments** | |
| The use of the term “one-stop shop” in the Strategy workshops may appear confusing and perhaps misleading to many Australians. Many would assume it meant a place where one could find out everything one needs to know about heritage in Australia. However, it appears that is not the case. Therefore the use of this term should be phrased carefully or reconsidered. | |