# 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:** | **7 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? | |
| Heritage protection in Australia has been weakened over a period of time by all levels of Governments; the removal of the Register of the National Estate from the Act was the most deplorable thing that has been witnessed by the community in decades. There should be an Australian Committee of concerned, passionate, knowledgeable historians and heritage people, who have no affiliation with paid consultancies, developers, or politicians. The Heritage of Australia needs a transparent body to determine the value of all items.  Our Group is interested in the Parramatta Local Government Area, but support all areas of NSW with the environmental and heritage concerns. Big business and political issues that are not concerned about History or Heritage are a deep concern to the local communities, especially the land owned by the Australian community (Crown Land), because there is a push by the Federal Government and the State Governments to have a massive sell off of community assets, which will be detrimental for the future of open space, especially Aboriginal artefacts that are not always identifiable.  If a group was formed to assist with National, State and local heritage this would enable the community to save some of the precious history that has survived in our community.  In that group there should be people who are experienced in writing and filling in the heritage forms to save important areas from demolition by developers, mining, coal seam gas and fracking.  The greed for money is putting at risk some of our pristine areas such as the Moxham Quarry Wetland in Parramatta, Gardens of Stone in the Blue Mountains, our drinking water catchments and our communities from the risk to health and land used for growing food.  What has this got to do with Heritage, Heritage is what you value, and Heritage is what we save for the future use of our communities. It is about time that politicians took some responsibility for the people they are elected to represent. It is also about time that what concerns the community is heard, and is looked after by our elected representatives.  And no we do not belong any political party, hundreds of people in our communities are fighting every day to save our history, the current history and the unique places in our country for creating tourism, have an interesting neighbourhood to live and work, people will not come to see glass skyscrapers that can be seen around the world.  We need people of vision, we need people to step up and protect our history and heritage both built and environmental. | |
| 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 of concerned communities, historical societies, family history groups and people who have the expertise to write submissions, but to be transparent no lobbyists, consultancies, developers or architects whose business is to sell modern architecture, but people who have conservation and restoration techniques.  The Heritage Act needs to be given more strength and guidelines to ensure that the Act does in fact protect and cannot be side stepped by the people who can afford to destroy areas of importance.  Resources can be shared and the historical societies at the local level have networks for information sharing now, this can also be accomplished at the higher levels. There are a number of National Federations of volunteers who would be happy to work with a committee to save important items.  Our organisation has set up a network of organisations that are like minded, as volunteers we do not have the finance to have offices, but we do share and give information, assistance and guidance to groups who require it, this was necessary from 2012 because of the amount of heritage that is under threat by the massive height and size of developments, we now have an organisation that networks with other groups with over 460 member groups, we have written guidelines and strategies to assist and our networks are state wide. | |
| 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? | |
| The expenditure for glossy brochures and the like do not encourage people to learn about our heritage, we have in the past couple of years joined with the Arts sector (Plays, Artists etc) and a group called ICE to prepare virtual tours, and presentations to community groups, schools and Rehab centres. This has proved very popular for students, the young and also people of the older generation that who have never experienced history in an innovative and visual way. This takes time, to prepare but it has been a part of our work for over ten years since being able to afford the equipment and acquire the expertise to carry out the project.  The World listed Parramatta Park is an important part of our area; however this is threatened by the appointment of a management committee who has little or no interest in the value of the heritage. To counter this we as a local community group need to monitor all aspects of who serves on the committee and what they are proposing, this is not an ideal situation because it detracts from our core business which is research and presentations. A Community representative who has no vested interest, but has heritage knowledge should be able to advise the committee.  Yes the Open Sydney programme which is held biannually has always been extremely popular, the Granville Historical Society worked with ICE (Information and Cultural Exchange) and produced the very popular tour entitled “Pearls of Granville” for Architectural Week and The Lennox Trail, a virtual walking tour that can be done by ones’ self on an iphone.  The role of technology is very important for Heritage, not only with information sharing by social media, the use of smart phones is also important, the assistance that our members provide to students of TAFE, Schools and Universities by email and Drop Box if the file is too large to transmit has proved very popular, we handle enquiries from all over the world by this method. We also find the visual impact for story telling has a greater absorption of information than using the lecture method. It also increases the person’s research skills, and their understanding of the subject. This benefits members of our organisations because they learn valuable skills. | |
| **Other comments** | |
| The importance of strong legislation that is clear, concise, in plain English and transparent is a must. The Register of the National Estate should be reinstated in the Act, to ensure the Act works in accordance with the List, and the List should contain explanation of World, National, State and Local significance, and a form that should be included that can be easily read by the ordinary person for listings would be very helpful for all the people who want to protect our Heritage.  There should be a tribunal and a committee where the community can lodge their concerns, the different tiers of Heritage levels is also a concern, people such as the Royal Australian Historical Society, ICOMOS, National Trust, Sydney Living Museums, Federation of Family History Societies should be consulted for Heritage items and concerns. | |