



TEMPLATE FOR INPUT INTO THE AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE STRATEGY

Overview

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

Contact Details

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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?

In response to the priorities in national leadership, we suggest the following:

- While our national icons are important and should be conserved as an expression of who we are, care of heritage places is lacking investment for small-scale and local places, which are often highly valued by, and have a strong role in sustaining, local communities. The Green Army initiative is welcome, but its reach is limited, and well-targeted resources are needed to complement the existing, substantial volunteer commitment to caring for our local community heritage.
- We recognise the important role of the Australian Heritage Council and welcome the commitment to additional support, but it has a huge job ahead of it and needs access to more departmental resources. We also believe the addition of NGO voices on this important advisory body would better reflect the contribution of existing volunteer



organisations and provide opportunities for exploring innovative and effective partnership activities in the future.

- We are concerned that the timely listing of the planned city of Canberra has not proceeded, and offer our expertise and support of our membership to facilitate this important addition to a representative National Heritage List.
- The Australian Government should continue to lead by example in the care of its Commonwealth-owned and managed heritage places, exemplifying and strengthening best practice approaches as valuable guidance and standard setting for others.
- Missing from the current draft priorities is a coordinated national research program; in particular, we need more research on the economic benefits of heritage conservation, as well as a better understanding of the important contribution it makes to our cultural and social capital, and the added-value of existing volunteer work – this would strength the appeal for investment in the sector, especially from philanthropic organisations.

2. 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?

- While we support greater heritage policy and process alignment, we are concerned that substantial delegation of responsibility for matters of national significance is occurring a time when State and Territory governments are downsizing their heritage advice and approvals units and shedding experienced staff and relevant expertise. There is a strong risk of lowering of environmental and heritage standards, with loss of adequate protection for our natural and cultural heritage.
- As a grass-roots community-based organisation, the National Trust largely works through volunteer efforts to foster public knowledge about and conserve places and objects that are significant to our heritage. We know from long experience that some resourcing by government can have a substantial impact on maintaining and strengthening the contribution of the volunteer/NGO sector. We are very good at doing a lot with a little!



- We believe that targeted grants programs comparable to the Indigenous Heritage Program and Your Community Heritage would deliver substantial benefits through supporting many small community-driven heritage projects around Australia and enabling partnerships of community groups, NGOs, small businesses and government. Such partnerships can deliver a wide range of cultural, social and economic benefits, especially in regional and remote communities.
- Sustainability is a key factor in the community today yet the basic tools that are used to measure benefit such as energy rating schemes do not consider all aspects of the energy consumed for a project. The key factor is the embodied energy of an existing building. The schemes tend to consider the running cost of the building when completed and not the total energy consumed over the life of the building which is a more realistic situation. There also needs to be some consideration of the benefit of heritage places in their appropriate conservation which may mean some flexibility in energy rating schemes where heritage values may be affected

3. 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 ACT NT has contributed to programmes that have great benefit to the community such as the information base of the National Tree Register and the wide reaching Heritage Festival which have engaged with a wide sector of our community and provided a greater understanding and benefit of our heritage.

- Some added values that the NT can assist in developing a wider heritage appreciation in our community are:
- Some basic support for administration so the NT can assist the community and coordinate activities at a local level. The NT is relied upon but is not always available to assist.
- Coordinated national programmes that are worked through all NT in Australia can have wide benefits for the whole of Australia.



- The Heritage festival has a very wide exposure and community benefit and this needs ongoing support if the grass roots of our community is to understand and benefit from our heritage.
- The adoption of new technologies such as Iphone apps on heritage places engages a wider and younger community and is exposing heritage to a wider sector of our community.
- The ACT NT conducts an annual heritage symposium with other conservation organisations and this has proved a useful tool to raise new issue, discuss heritage aspects and provide information on what is happening about heritage. This has a wide benefit.

Other comments

- The National Trust of Australia (ACT) is a community-based, non-government, non-profit, community organisation. Our purpose is to foster public knowledge about and conserve places and objects that are significant to our heritage.
- The NT (ACT) welcomes the release of the draft strategy for public consultation and congratulates Minister Hunt and the Department of the Environment on this long overdue initiative. The key themes focussing on national leadership, collaborative approaches and community involvement are timely and set welcome priorities.
- Will the Australian Government 'walk the talk'? – I guess that's what we're all wondering. How about a targeted investment in a heritage care program, comparable to the Australian Government's generous Landcare initiative, to strengthen the engagement of local communities and volunteers with Australia's remarkable cultural and Indigenous heritage?