

GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY INC

The Family History Place

Patron The Honourable Austin Asche AC QC

Australian Heritage Strategy Submissions
Heritage Branch
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COMMENT ON THE DRAFT AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE STRATEGY

I attended the consultation meeting in Darwin in May 2014, I offer my comments below, I have not commented on all items within the Strategy, instead I am highlighting some differences, however they could be applied across the document.

The description of "What is heritage?" needs expanding to encompass other organizations other than Heritage and Historical Societies so it does not lock out those which do not come under these umbrellas.

For example cemeteries - These are tangible, they cannot be described as any of the tangible items listed, i.e. buildings, landscapes or shipwrecks. Across Australia there are many pioneer cemeteries, some heritage listed whilst others incredibly significant but not listed. These are the last resting place of early Australian residents of all races. We should be preserving these places as part of our Australian Heritage. In size cemeteries can be small to massive.

It could be argued that cemeteries fall under the intangible section of the Australia's Heritage definition, under *Memorial sites* in the draft strategy, to my mind this section should be used to include an individual memorial to a person/s, or can be a memorial commemorating a particular place or event. I do not see cemeteries as being intangible.

Australia's heritage community

The description in this section - ♦ *National Trusts and Historic Societies and groups, who care for and manage heritage assets on page 14*, does not include Family History or Genealogical Societies.

e.g. there are Family History type groups all over Australia, some are being housed in local historic buildings, or a building of meaning and importance to a section of the community for their particularly area, which saves the building from decay and/or vandalism, it also means that repairs happen in a timely appropriate manner thus preserving the structure from further disrepair and deterioration.

There is another side, Family History organisations are very good at reconstructing the list of internments for old cemeteries where there is a damaged register or no surviving burial register, this is all part of the historic important of a cemetery

In researching remote cemeteries our Society put forward to the Heritage Branch of the Northern Territory Government, a proposal to install bronze markers in our early rural cemeteries. These cemeteries are no longer in use but they remain a significant part of our history and heritage – they are the resting place of pioneers who helped make the Territory what it became.

Seven cemeteries have these markers installed, Brock's Creek (Zapopan), Port Darwin Camp, Stapleton, Emungalan, Southport, Rum Jungle, Maranboy and Fort Dundas.

We are currently working on the Palmerston Cemetery, which was the first cemetery for the Northern Territory. In carrying out this exercise, we have accessed Surveyor's Field Books, Land Titles, Mapping, NT Archives Records, National Archives Records and Birth Death and Marriage records. The Territory was Administered from NSW and SA before the Commonwealth took over in 1911, this is all historical research to determine the facts about a particular cemetery, yet our type of organization is not mentioned under the heading of Australia's heritage community. The NT is not the only Family History organisation to carry out this type of investigation, it happens around the country.

One of the Commitments on page 22 of the Strategy says "support the Federation of Australian Historical Societies over the next three years to strengthen engagement with and support for local community heritage groups". In my view this Strategy leaves out other remarkable organisations, e.g. The Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations Inc.

Cemeteries is only one example of the type of work Societies like ours carry out, yes we do family history research, but we are bigger than this and we are constantly working towards preserving Northern Territory historical data and places.

I am happy for you to contact me if you need clarification on my submission.

Yours sincerely

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Hon. Secretary and Public Officer

8 June 2014