# 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:** | Maritime Archaeology Association of Victoria |
| **Name of Author:** | **Peter Taylor** |
| **Date:** | **09/06/14** |
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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? | |
| As Victoria’s prime association of avocational maritime archaeologists, and Australia’s most active group, we propose to make comment and suggestions for improvement to the upcoming Federal Government’s Strategy for Australia’s Heritage. We note in the circulated document on this new legislation that there is a dearth of information regarding funding and protection of Australia’s maritime cultural heritage and shipwrecks. We find just one reference to shipwrecks in the document: this appears in a flowchart. This lack of recognition is most surprising considering the importance of ships to the discovery and founding of the non-indigenous period of settlement in Australia.  Under the heading *Australia’s heritage community*, there is no mention, or recognition of the important work carried out by avocational maritime archaeologists in finding, recording and promoting Australia’s maritime cultural heritage and shipwrecks.  There is no mention of future funding for the Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Programme; a very important source of funding that is distributed throughout Australia, amongst various government organisations. | |
| **Leadership in Heritage**   * Part 1 a: ***Commitments and proposed actions*:**   Under this title we propose that an audit be conducted on Australia’s shipwreck heritage resource and a list of significant sites drawn up. The Government should show leadership and commitment to Australia’s underwater cultural heritage by providing funding to carry out conservation, investigation, showcasing and publication of reports concerning significant sites.   * Part 1 d: ***Contribute to international heritage standard setting and guidance*:**   It is noted that the government plan to commit to further work with UNESCO, but as yet, Australia has not showed leadership by signing off on UNESCO’s Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. Though this inaction, there appears to be a contradiction in the government’s objectives and lack of will to do something about it. | |
| 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? | |
| * Part 2 b: ***Building heritage capacity* *th*ro*ugh workforce support, education and training*:**   To educate divers regarding the importance of shipwrecks and Underwater Cultural Heritage; we suggest that funding be provided to the Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology (AIMA) to run subsidised AIMA/NAS (Nautical Archaeological Society) part 1 courses as an introduction to maritime archaeology.   * Part 2 c: ***Innovative funding, resource sharing and creative* partnerships:**   We suggest that an innovative, productive and a cost-effective partnership between government and AIMA could be attained by funding AIMA to employ a full-time training officer in maritime archaeology. This work would include working with community groups, school groups, fishermen and divers to share information, resources and form lasting and rewarding partnerships. This would help to ensure the protection and reporting of shipwreck sites and other forms of underwater cultural heritage. | |
| 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? | |
| * Part 3 a: ***Creating incentives to care for our heritage*:**  1. Incentives for avocational groups should be provided to (a) provide funding to re-establish groups equivalent to the Maritime Archaeology Association of Victoria in the states and territories that don’t have such groups in existence. (b) Provide funding to those groups to conduct physical audits and execute projects under the direction and in partnership with government employed maritime archaeologists. 2. A national coastal shipwrecks trail should be established, linking states and territories that already have these in place. Funding should be provided to erect new signage systems, and applications developed for smart devices. 3. The MAAV have been proactive in promoting Victoria’s underwater cultural heritage through its members’ work as publishers and recorders of shipwrecks and historical diving activities. | |
| **Other comments** | |
| Australia’s underwater cultural heritage is too important to let it disappear without some action being taken by both government and maritime heritage groups. There are too many sites, and to assume that government employed maritime archaeologists can reach and record these is a folly. Groups with proper training and well supervised could undertake some of this work (non-invasive), which would be reported back to the relevant authority.  One of the most effective ways of achieving this would be to fund AIMA to run these courses whereby there is an recognised outcome with a certificate in Part I, II or III of their accredited Nautical Archaeology Association course. This would help to develop a highly trained volunteer workforce to support both government and maritime heritage groups. | |