# 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:** | **8 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?**  The Australian Government should promote best practice heritage management in its legislation, policy and actions, be consistent with international treaties (i.e. Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage), and embody the principles of the widely used *Burra Charter* and its guidelines.  The Australian Government should continue to lead by example, such as its Defence heritage management. A nationally consistent Australian Heritage Quality Framework would set best practice quality measures, particularly for physical intervention in heritage places. All of a place’s values should be documented, understood and appropriately managed for our National and World heritage places.  The Australian Government should embrace a national leadership role in Heritage, through the workings of the Australian Heritage Council and facilitating national coordination and cooperation between all jurisdictions in regards to heritage management and integrated decision. An initial focus should be on:   * progress the National Listing of places that have already been recognised as having National Values, such as Broken Hill; * provide ongoing support for heritage training; * promote a comprehensive and integrated view of Australia’s heritage; * provide an integrated national database of heritage places; * promote a coordinated national program of research.   **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?**  There are various avenues for the Australian Government to provide important guidance and support for our national heritage, such as:  International Practice   * Make improvements to our heritage legislation, policy and practice (i.e. be a signatory for the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage). * Provide support for international heritage activities aimed at sharing skills and expertise such as ICOMOS Pascifika.   National Practice   * Provide support to Australia ICOMOS to hold seminars on the *Burra Charter* for government, industry and community members, which is our best practice standard for managing cultural heritage places in Australia. * Provide support to Australia ICOMOS, State Government and other relevant organisations to provide further Guidelines that reflect international best practice in the Australian context. (a recent example is the Ruins publication) * Provide support for Australia ICOMOS initiatives in management of indigenous heritage management (Indigenous Cultural Heritage and World Heritage List; Statement on Indigenous Cultural Heritage and Code on the Ethics of Co-existence in Conserving Significant Places).   Training and Practice   * Establish a national consistent Australian Heritage Quality Framework that sets best practice quality measures, particularly for physical intervention in heritage places. * Encourage cultural heritage education programs and support Australia ICOMOS and other initiatives in relation to heritage trades (eg current and ongoing successful Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) heritage trades training programs). * Ensure the Green Army are trained, supervised and undertake work to high conservation standards when working on heritage places   Place Management   * Provide support for digital scanning of cultural heritage places (i.e. provision of CSIRO zebeedee scanner to each state agency who wishes to utilise this technology[[1]](#endnote-1)). * Provide support to Blue Shield Australia in working with the community and emergency services agencies to prepare for and prevent damage to cultural heritage places from natural disasters and improve response.   Understanding and Promoting   * Improve processes for the documentation of significance and its availability to the community, including local tourism providers. * Provide support to local communities to maintain local heritage places, such as financial support for conservation and management initiatives.   **What priority areas are important to you, your organisation or group?**  Priority areas important to Australia ICOMOS include:   * **Implementation plan:** creation of a five-year action plan to implement and monitor the effect of the Australian Heritage Strategy. * **Best practice heritage:** incorporation of *Burra Charter* processes in heritage legislation and policy. * **Indigenous heritage:** take a leading role in coordinating all of the listing and regulatory agencies dealing with Indigenous heritage, so as to be able to respond to issues identified by the 2011 State of the Environment Report (i.e. erratic identification of sites, legislation provides a recipe for destruction, intangible heritage at great risk). * **Representative National Heritage List:** Assistance could be provided to State Government agencies to determine places that display national and international values. We are concerned with the lengthy timeframe for assessing some places on the NHL. For example the nomination for the town of Broken Hill has had its values assessed as being of national heritage significance, but the nomination has not been finalised. Timely decision making on applications is important so significant places are protected and managed appropriately, and avoid risk to their cultural values due development pressures. * **Traditional trade skills and education:** a decline in technical education in many states has seen the loss of many skilled trade courses; the management of cultural heritage places requires a range of skilled practitioners; there is an opportunity to support skills training in traditional and other vital conservation trades for professionals (as different to the Green Army initiative). * **Information sharing:** sharing of information on heritage significance with land owners, the community and visitors; appreciating and understanding a place’s values.   **What practical actions would you suggest to improve national heritage leadership?**  Practical actions to improve national heritage leadership include:   * Embedding *Burra Charter* practices in all federal agencies interaction with and funding of cultural heritage places. * Encouraging the use of *Burra Charter* principles as a basis for a consistent approach to cultural heritage across all jurisdictions. * Embedding the proposed Australian Heritage Quality Framework in Commonwealth funding for any heritage place when this is developed. * Requiring Conservation Management Plans and a detailed understanding of significance before funding heritage conservation and tourism projects. * Improving communication between heritage and tourism sectors, through government initiatives such as education and partnerships. * Providing funding to local councils in rural and regional Australia to undertake thematic heritage studies so that cultural heritage tourism opportunities are based on an understanding of significance. | |
| 1. **Pursue Innovative Partnerships** | |
| **What partnerships are most needed within the heritage sector?**  Inter-government  Inter-government partnerships and good communication is important to co-manage our heritage. Different government agencies have responsibility for heritage place management, although it may not be their primary responsibility. Competing management objectives sometimes see poor outcomes for heritage places, which can be avoided through a better understanding. Current good examples include:   * The State Heritage Place Managers Forum in Victoria which provides guidance and support and improves outcomes through early identification and rectification of management issues; * Mint Inc funding adaptive reuse of government places to ensure beneficial use whilst respecting the place’s significance (i.e. modern additions, new fitout); * Construction Industry Training Board heritage trades training programs which exist in South Australia, Tasmania, and proposed for Western Australia. These are fully self funded through the Training Board Levy and are delivering excellent practical outcomes of building conservation and trades training.   Recommended initiatives include   * Integrating heritage into the Green Star sustainability system (e.g. allowing points for heritage conservation and the embodied energy in existing structures, not just for measures of operational energy efficiency). * Furthering co-operation on nationally applicable guidelines through the Heritage Chairs and Officials Group (HC&OG) * Development of a Nationally consistent Australian Heritage Quality Framework   Government – Industry - Community  Currently there is little opportunity for ongoing dialogue between heritage officials and key professional and community bodies in heritage. Australia ICOMOS, Australian Council of National Trusts and the Federation of Australian Historical Societies have a memorandum of understanding. Australia ICOMOS would support opportunities for dialogue between the three lead agencies in cultural heritage and the HC&OG which could include joint projects to better document, manage and promote Australia’s heritage and identify key thematic priorities for the National Heritage List.  Other partnerships that benefit our heritage are between non-government organisations and the community. The Australian Government could lead by example to demonstrate how input from cultural heritage professionals in the tourism sector can improve tourism product and the ongoing management of cultural heritage places and objects.  **What heritage roles and responsibilities should be led by governments, peak heritage organisations or community groups in the 21st century?**  Government’s role should be to identify, assess and support the conservation and understanding of our shared heritage to best practice heritage.  The Heritage Chairs and Officials Group should provide guidance to ensure jurisdictional legislation and practice in accordance with *Burra Charter*.  Australia ICOMOS should identify technical specifications and guidance in heritage practice, and identify education needs to achieve practice under the *Burra Charter*, including technical trades.  **How should resources be shared through heritage partnerships to ensure the greatest return on agreed priorities?**  Australia ICOMOS is aware of the current fiscal climate and its impacts on heritage management. Our experience in heritage management shows that resources dedicated to understanding significance and fabric leads to cost effective management (i.e. regular management reduces major expenditure). Given the tight climate, national leadership is desired to ensure that effort is not duplicated across jurisdictions and to encourage access to information are critical.  If voluntary community groups are to have an increased role in managing heritage they will need access to professional advice and information. Conservation Management Plans, access to advisors and web based access to information will be critical, as well as training to understand key principles of significance. Training programs, such as those run by Museums Australia, could be broadened to apply to place as well as objects and collections.  **Can you provide examples of successful innovative partnerships you or your organisation have established?**  Australia ICOMOS develops partnerships in response to its key strategic priorities. Presently we have five key partnership arrangements:   * Australian Heritage partnership (Australia ICOMOS; Australian Council of National Trusts and Federation of Australian Historical Societies) to encourage dialogue between the leading professional association, heritage place managers and community historical societies. * Mentoring program with Deakin University. * Working with the Australasian Chapter of the Association for Preservation Technology (APT) on promoting Nationally consistent Australian Heritage Quality Framework * Blueshield Australia, with pillar partners ICOM Australia; Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities; and Australian Library and Information Association * Translation of the *Burra Charter* with Macquarie University * In addition, the involvement of ICOMOS in the Construction Industry Training Programs mentioned above is a very successful practical initiative requiring no external funding | |
| 1. **Enable encourage communities to understand and care for their heritage**   Australia ICOMOS supports the idea of increasing the presence and profile of a National Heritage Festival. We believe that to ensure community capacity to manage heritage there needs to be a National Heritage education strategy from High School through to heritage trade education and tertiary and Masters programmes across all elements of cultural heritage places and collections.  **What should the Australian heritage sector be doing to help the Australian community better engage in heritage activities?**  To ensure that the community has access to the knowledge and skills required to manage heritage places and collections the Australian heritage sector should be undertaking thematic assessments of heritage places and collections. This would allow community groups to understand what was significant about their place and/or collection and how those values can be managed and interpreted.  **How can a shared understanding of our national heritage be developed and best celebrated together?**  Australia ICOMOS supports the idea of increasing the presence and profile of a National Heritage Festival, potential community and tourism benefits in a similar way to other cultural festivals such as film and writers’ festivals. We recognise that these festivals rely on significant volunteer hours to stage, which should be considered in decisions on timing.  By ensuring thematic environmental histories and studies are undertaken these studies can be compiled to determine examples demonstrating national, state, regional and local historic themes. This supports listings, management and interpretation of our heritage. It may also be the basis for the creation of online touring routes to develop cultural heritage tourism markets. Tourism agencies could fund these studies with the output to include heritage trails and information on a national cultural heritage website.  By understanding significance, community organisations can more readily identify the government, professional, community and philanthropic organisations that may be able to assist in the management of these values.  **Do you have any examples of activities that have been successful in promoting local heritage to a broader audience?**  The Australia ICOMOS *Burra Charter* has had outstanding success nationally and internationally because it:   * Provides a consistent approach, language and understanding across Australia * Promotes intellectual thought on why we value and how to best conserve our heritage * Promotes solutions tailored to each heritage item and each proposed protective or other measure taken in relation to the heritage item * Promotes community involvement. * Provides documentation on cultural heritage to support heritage tourism and festivals.   **What is the role of technology and new media in providing greater community access to heritage?**  Australia ICOMOS supports the use of technologies and new media. Websites such as the Victorian Heritage Database and Victorian Collections are improving community access to information. The experience of Victorian Collections demonstrates that some community partners may need support and funding to assist with access to and understanding of technologies and new media and how they assist the operations of the organisation.  Australia ICOMOS is interested in how the national adoption of databases, such as Victorian Heritage Database and Victorian Collections, will assist in preparing for and responding to natural disasters. Geographic knowledge of cultural heritage places and collections would assist in identifying places at risk from natural disaster and planning disaster response by key agencies.  Technology can enhance our understanding of place through normal interactions. For instance, a car’s GPS could have an option to be linked to heritage information about a place they are going past, which would contribute to a community’s or visitor’s experience of a place’s cultural significance.  Another example is the National Trust of South Australia who in partnership with Adelaide City Council launched the *Adelaide City Explorer* in March 2014. This is an interactive, mobile guide to the architecture and heritage of the City of Adelaide. The website (<http://www.adelaidecityexplorer.com.au>) and the associated mobile apps for Android and iOS devices share the stories of the city and showcase its architectural landmarks, hidden gems and most treasured spaces. | |
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| **Other comments** | |
| Australia ICOMOS congratulate the Australian Government on releasing a draft Australian Heritage Strategy. Australia is at a crucial period for its natural and cultural heritage. These places have intrinsic values but also high social and economic values. They express who we are as a nation and what we value. They are important tourism destinations that underpin many regional economies, and they demonstrate leadership in best practice heritage management.  Australia ICOMOS would support the final Strategy including both strategic goals and a five year implementation action plan. Partnerships with key state agencies with legislative responsibility for land use and heritage to improve consistency to heritage management using the Burra Charter as common ground. We believe the *Burra Charter* in association with the Australia ICOMOS Statement on Indigenous Heritage and Code of Ethics for Co-existence in Conserving Significant Places provide a strong basis for the future.  Australia ICOMOS seeks a strong focus on the role of the Commonwealth in managing the National Heritage List assessment process and finalising current listings to remove the current back log. We support the position of a representative list of places and support a thematic approach to listing. Assistance to state agencies in creating a representative list of state places would assist in the determination of places, which display national and international values. We are very concerned that there are many places that have been submitted for listing where the national values have been confirmed and no final decision made.  Australia ICOMOS has reservations about the effectiveness of the Green Army in relation to operations on cultural heritage sites. Careful consideration needs to be given to ensuring that the actions to be undertaken have been identified by a qualified professional and that there is adequate training and onsite management to ensure that there is no negative impact on significant fabric or values. It is noted in the project guidelines that it is the responsibility of the project sponsor to seek necessary approvals for works to listed heritage places. Approvals and any conditions of consent need to be in place prior to project approval to ensure a good outcome is achieved for the heritage place and its significance is retained and conserved. The project assessment should also focus on ensuring that quality work is achieved. Whilst the opportunities that are presented through Green Army projects for young people and engaging the community with heritage places is important, there are many trained professionals who undertake conservation works who will not have these opportunities to work.  It was noted in the public forum sessions in the states that there is no finite timeframe to finalise the Australian Heritage Strategy. Set objectives and measurable outcomes would be a positive outcome, along with a finalised strategy to produce outcomes from its objectives. | |

1. http://www.csiro.au/Organisation-Structure/Divisions/Computational-Informatics/Zebedee-3D-mapping.aspx [↑](#endnote-ref-1)