# 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:** | **Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee** |
| **Name of Author:** | **Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee Members** |
| **Date:** | **9 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? | |
| **Improved support for Australia’s iconic World Heritage sites**  The Strategy makes no mention of the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC), nor of the Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network (AWHIN), both of which are established under the Intergovernmental Agreement on World Heritage. The Strategy should renew the mandate of, and express strong ongoing support for, both AWHAC and AWHIN as important sources of the national leadership.  The proposed actions in relation to this program should specifically include adoption of the ‘Framework for Best Practice Management of Australian World Heritage Properties’, which is currently in preparation by the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee.  The Strategy should provide a statement of commitment to support all nineteen Australian World Heritage properties, not just specific project-based commitment to particular World Heritage properties.  The Strategy should provide a commitment to ongoing for funding programs and actions that support State and Territory management and Commonwealth compliance with Australia’s World Heritage Convention obligations – especially recurrent funding of Executive Officers for Australian World Heritage properties.  **Capture a representative National Heritage list**  The current National Listing process is cumbersome, slow and demoralising for all involved (vide the *State of the Environment Report 2011*). The Strategy should commit to resourcing for the Australian Heritage Council to prepare a clear ‘specification’ of what a truly representative National Heritage List might look like – types of place, coverage, themes, values and number of listings.  The appropriate mechanism for pursuing future World Heritage nominations, including Cape York Peninsula, Sydney's Royal National Park, and the Queen Victoria Markets in Melbourne, would involve the development of a ‘Tentative List’ to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre, in accordance with Australia's obligations under the *Operational Guidelines to the World Heritage Convention*. The Tentative List should be prepared consultatively and collaboratively, in conjunction with community, environmental, Indigenous and other stakeholder interests, and State and Territory Governments.  **Pursue greater recognition and protection of our natural and cultural heritage, particularly our Indigenous cultural heritage**  The Strategy should address the full range of values that Indigenous heritage places may have – in particular by addressing the gap in other (Commonwealth and State) heritage legislation with respect to associated beliefs and traditions. The Strategy should therefore commit to updating the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* - following the review of this legislation which occurred some time ago; vide *State of the Environment 2011 Report.*  The Strategy should commit to establishment of a national peak body for Indigenous Heritage, like the ‘Heads of Parks’ meeting or the ‘Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand’.  The Strategy should commit to appropriate processes for engagement of Traditional Owners in the processes leading to listing on the World Heritage List and National Heritage List. Listing of places with Indigenous cultural values should support systems of management that fully involve Traditional Owners.  **Contribute to international heritage standards setting and guidance**  The Strategy should commit to best practice domestically, (not just internationally) through formal endorsement of relevant principles and standards such as the *Australian Natural Heritage Charter*, the *Ask First* guidelines, *Burra Charter* of Australia ICOMOS and the *Cairns Communiqué*.  The Strategy should commit to ratification of the *UNESCO 2001 Convention for the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage*, as already agreed at a meeting of the former Environment Protection Heritage Council in November 2009; vide *State of the Environment 2011 Report.* | |
| 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? | |
| **Greater heritage policy and process alignment across all levels of government**  The Strategy should commit to clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local governments in heritage protection, management and resourcing, adopting the principle of subsidiarity; vide *State of the Environment 2011 Report.*  The Commonwealth Government's proposed ‘one-stop shop’ proposals will rely on accreditation of State and Territory planning systems to manage heritage assessment and approval processes under the *EPBC Act*. Delegation of assessment and approval relating to loss of Outstanding Universal Value at World Heritage properties or National Heritage values at National Heritage places is an abrogation of the proper role of the Commonwealth. However, in the event that such delegations proceed, the Strategy should require that the Commonwealth must be satisfied that the States have access to appropriate knowledge and expertise about World Heritage and National Heritage values, so as to ensure standards are maintained and these values are conserved and transmitted to future generations.  The Strategy should encourage collaborative support to help Australian World Heritage and National Heritage properties to develop appropriate management plans that could support bilateral delegated EPBC Act decisions to be made effectively, especially given that the Act already requires the Commonwealth to use its best endeavours to ensure that management plans are in place.  The Strategy should include a specific action which seeks to ensure that zoning and development controls on land adjacent to World Heritage and National Heritage properties are appropriate and act to protect Outstanding Universal Value and National Heritage values.  The Strategy requires considerable strengthening in relation to sustainability, where there is a timely opportunity for the Commonwealth to show leadership. The Strategy should commit the Commonwealth to convening a national process directed at sustainable conservation and adaptation, recognition of the energy embodied in building fabric, the traditional use of appropriate climatic design principles and inter-generational transmission of cultural values.  **Building heritage capacity through workforce support and training**  The Strategy surprisingly does not engage with the looming loss of specialist heritage trade and professional skills, which has previously been identified in an expert report to the Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand. The Strategy should commit to a well-resourced, national program which addresses this increasingly urgent issue.  While recognising the Government’s commitment to the Green Army, the Strategy should acknowledge the value of, and ongoing commitment to, existing community-based conservation programs including Landcare, Working on Country and Caring for our Country.  There is significant risk posed to heritage values, if the Green Army participants are not adequately trained prior to working at World Heritage properties and/or if they are inadequately supervised. The Strategy should commit to both adequate ‘pre-training’ where the Green Army is to be deployed at sensitive World Heritage or National Heritage places and to monitoring of the implementation of the Green Army program.  The Strategy should extend the benefits of Caring for our Country to all Australian World Heritage properties, including those listed for cultural heritage values.  **Innovative funding, resource sharing and creative partnerships.**  The Strategy should more-strongly recognise that across the nation, the majority of heritage-listed places are owned, conserved and provided to the community as a ‘public good’; vide *State of the Environment 2011 Report.* These owners receive relatively little support. The Strategy should commit to exploration of appropriate programs that may deliver recognition, support in-kind and resources for private heritage place owners  The Strategy should overtly seek to move heritage from the realm of ‘regulation’ into the realm of ‘celebration’ through connecting heritage with ‘culture’, not just with planning and environment in the community psyche. The Strategy should support promotion of our heritage as an integral part of Australian culture and seek to instigate more ‘event-based’ expression of the connection between the Australian community and its heritage.  The Strategy commits to funding support for the Federation of Australian Historical Societies over the next three years and acknowledges the work of the National Trust. The Strategy should also acknowledge the outstanding contribution of the non-government conservation movement, especially including ACIUCN and Australia ICOMOS, which have actually been the leading organisations in campaigning for the protection and conservation of Australia’s icons as protected sites and areas including particularly National Heritage and World Heritage.  The Strategy should re-commit to ongoing grants for volunteer environmental, sustainability and heritage organisations (GVGSHO) which have, astoundingly, just been discontinued in the Federal budget. At the very least the Strategy should express a wide ranging commitment to support for volunteer environmental, sustainability and heritage organisations.  **Collaboration between heritage and tourism**  Recognising the synergistic link between heritage and tourism, the Strategy should include a simple commitment to encouraging tourism which fosters the conservation of natural and cultural values of tourist destinations and recognises that natural and cultural tourism should be culturally sensitive, and ecologically and socially sustainable  The Strategy should commit to national deployment of the Heritage Victoria ‘APP’ which is already in operation – thereby making heritage places and their values more readily accessible to a much wider community.  **Education and Research**  An additional program stream should be added within the ‘Innovative Partnerships’ theme of the Strategy, seeking to pursue greater links with educational institutions, particularly through use of World Heritage properties and places on the National Heritage List, in conjunction with the new national curriculum. This should also be valuably extended to the university sector and the need for co-ordinated and directed research outcomes.  The Strategy should mention and support the inclusion of applied research for World Heritage and National Heritage within the new National Environmental Science. | |
| 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? | |
| **Creating incentives to care for our heritage**  The Strategy should commit the Commonwealth to setting a best-practice example – for World Heritage properties, Commonwealth places on the National Heritage List and Commonwealth Heritage List; indeed, for all Commonwealth-owned heritage places.  The Strategy should recognise that communities may be motivated by different sets of values than those recognised as Outstanding Universal Value or National Heritage value and that there are opportunities to work with local groups to understand how such complementary values and interests can be engaged in managing heritage places at the local level.  **Appropriate timing for the national celebration of Australia’s heritage**  This entire narrative should be deleted from the Strategy. If there must be some re-consideration of the timing for celebration of Australia's heritage, this should not occur in the northern ‘wet’ season, as to do so would effectively disenfranchise heritage places in the ‘Top End’; neither should it occur on 26 January, Australia Day, as this is a day about which Indigenous and other Australians have diverse and disparate opinions and feelings.  **Management of heritage places**  As noted elsewhere in this submission:   * The Strategy should commit to the ‘Framework for Best Practice Management of Australian World Heritage Properties’, which is currently in preparation by the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee. * The Strategy should commit to formal endorsement of relevant principles and standards such as the *Australian Natural Heritage Charter*, the *Ask First* guidelines, *Burra Charter* of Australia ICOMOS and the *Cairns Communiqué*. * The Strategy should commit to ratification of the *UNESCO 2001 Convention for the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.*   Effective management of heritage places requires a proactive program of monitoring and evaluation. The Strategy should commit to such a program, using the framework already provided in the *State of the Environment 2011 Report*.  **Models for recognition of Australia’s heritage champions**  The Strategy should not only seek to recognise ‘champions’; it should acknowledge the outstanding contribution of tens of thousands of local people who care for natural and cultural heritage such as volunteer guides, protected area managers, land owners involved in voluntary historic heritage, wildlife and Landcare conservation, private land conservatories and the simply outstanding success of the Working on Country program for Indigenous heritage. | |
| **Other comments** | |
| I am making this submission, as a private individual, informed by my roles as:   * Chair, Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee * Partner, GML Heritage Pty Ltd * Chair, Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Advisory Committee * Adjunct Professor, La Trobe University * Author, Heritage Chapter *State of the Environment 2011 Report* * Former Chair, Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust * Member, Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter Working Party * Member, Australia ICOMOS * Associate Member, ACIUCN * Former Member, Heritage Council of NSW * Inaugural Chair, NSW State Heritage Register Committee * Team Leader, Heritage Trades and Professional Training Project for the Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand * Expert Adviser, the Hawke Review of the EPBC Act * Author, ‘Mackay Review’ of the Tasmanian *Historic Cultural Heritage Act* * Former Non-executive Director, National Trust of Australia (NSW) | |