



## 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?

The most important thing that the Australian Government should be doing is providing national leadership in heritage, by committing to best practice in all aspects of heritage administration, management and conservation. This will involve:

- endorsing, supporting and encouraging the ongoing development of charters and other guideline documents such as the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, Ask First, and the Australian Natural Heritage Charter;
- promoting the conservation planning processes that these documents espouse (e.g. the Burra Charter Process);
- developing and setting standards of practice for all stages of heritage management, including the later works phases for which there is currently a lack of standards;
- ensuring that all stages of investigation, management and conservation are undertaken in accordance with these standards, through the use of a quality framework, or similar



measures;

- engaging with tertiary education and training providers to ensure that courses are tailored to needs, and that graduates possess appropriate skills; and
- revising the heritage provisions of the EPBC Act to remove such absurdities as the “condition of heritage values” and replacing them with plain English.

All these points need to be progressed as a priority. Of those suggested in the consultation draft, “promoting Australia’s standing internationally . . .” should not proceed until significant progress has been made on the points identified above.

Practical actions to improve national heritage leadership will include funding and coordination (with the States and Territories) of:

- provision of high-level technical advice to develop standards;
- commissioning and publication of technical advisory material to disseminate standards;
- development of a quality framework, or other similar measures, to ensure that standards are being met; all with the aim of improving heritage outcomes.

## 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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?

The partnerships that are most needed in the heritage sector are between Commonwealth and State (and Territory) governments to (as identified in 1 above):

- develop and set standards of practice through high-level technical advice;
- commission and publish technical advisory material to disseminate these standards;
- develop and implement the concept of a quality framework, or other similar measures to ensure that standards are being met; and
- work with the higher education sector to ensure that their offerings meet the needs of the heritage sector.

An example of an innovative partnership that I’ve been involved with is the Longford Academy, which is a partnership of the Australasian Chapter of the Association for Preservation Technology with the Woolmers and Brickendon convict world heritage sites at Longford, Tasmania, and which



is now in its fifth year. Theoretical and practical training is provided to heritage industry workers from a diversity of trade and professional backgrounds (and from around Australia and New Zealand), while at the same time real (albeit small) advances are made in the physical conservation of these important sites. My colleague, Dr Donald Ellsmore, and I would be happy to expand on the opportunities that this partnership offers.

The consultation draft seeks views on which of the identified partnership approaches should be focused on. 2b. *Building heritage capacity through workforce support, education and training* should have the highest priority. While the others are important, successful long-term conservation of our heritage depends on the development and maintenance of appropriate skills and knowledge.

The consultation draft notes that the “construction industry has an important role in maintaining heritage buildings” and makes the valid point that “tradespeople with the traditional skills needed for built heritage conservation work are becoming harder to find.” However, the issue is much bigger and broader than the availability of specialist trades alone. Rapid changes in building practice, with the development of new materials and processes, mean that many workers are simply unaware of traditional practices and therefore seek to apply contemporary methods and materials to older buildings and structures, often with very damaging consequences. The problem is compounded by changes in the way building industry projects are managed — no longer are projects managed by architects and clerks of works (who between them knew about traditional construction practices) but by project managers who may know very little about traditional buildings and structures and even less about heritage conservation. In this environment it is very hard to achieve good heritage outcomes. Effective partnerships with State and Territory governments and with education and training organisations are urgently needed to address these issues.

### **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 consultation draft asks for views about which of the identified points should be priorities for the heritage sector. Of those, 3d. *Management of heritage places* is by far the most important, though some priority should also be given to 3a. *Incentives* and 3b. *Knowledge and engagement*.



The proposed action at 3d: “Explore the further development of national standards and best practice guidelines for conservation and management of heritage places” is strongly supported.

As noted in 1 above this work should include:

- provision of high-level technical advice to develop standards;
- commissioning and publication of technical advisory material to disseminate standards;
- development of a quality framework, or other similar measures, to ensure that standards are being met; as well as,
- endorsing, supporting and encouraging the ongoing development of charters and other guideline documents such as the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, Ask First, and the Australian Natural Heritage Charter.

#### Other comments

I would be happy to elaborate on any of the points made in this submission.

I am a heritage consultant and educator with over thirty years experience in the field, as well as being an owner of heritage listed property.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David Young'.

David Young OAM M.ICOMOS