# 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:** | **7 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? | |
| Heritage practice, its management and protection, in Australia is challenged by insufficient resourcing from all levels of government. Aspects of the draft strategy suggest the handing over of heritage management by default to community groups. ASHA believes cultural heritage and national identity is defined and strengthened by recognising the importance of maintaining and resourcing significant heritage places. Historical Archaeology is an important contributory element of defining the significance of heritage places. We consider it is essential that the Australian Government provides leadership in a range of areas:   * Commonwealth maintaining heritage best practice in regard to Commonwealth owned and managed heritage. * National government should have a profile internationally, by being involved in world’s best practice. This will provide useful leadership models for Australian heritage and feed into other parts of the strategy. * Create a credible list of potential world heritage properties and capture a representative National Heritage List through a timely, robust, evidence-based process. * Australian Government needs to engage with peak heritage and archaeological bodies to understand their concerns and needs so that national leadership is based on areas of concern to these groups which are part of the heritage community. * The amount of funding in the budget for Cultural Heritage is minimal. Much more is spent on the Green Army (half billion over 5 years), Land Care (1 billion over 4 years) but in comparison Australia’s cultural heritage gets comparatively little money. * The strategy should have an inbuilt review and evaluation process to measure progress and implementation. * Provide support to local environment and heritage conservation projects across Australia based on regional strategic needs assessments, through the Green Army program, which will include provision of supervision by environment and heritage experts. * Ensure linkages to and between other national policies e.g. National Cultural Policy and National Tourism Policy, Australian National Curriculum. * Include proper understanding of archaeology, both Indigenous and historical, in its Heritage Strategy. * Conserve and recognise Indigenous heritage , archaeological sites and cultural landscapes. * Encourage states to provide consistent approaches across states, i.e. archaeological repositories are an issue in NSW while Victoria and Queensland have archaeological repositories. Important irreplaceable resources in NSW are not centralised and do not provide real opportunities for research for students and the public. * National policy for digital archives for heritage reports, including archaeological reports, primary materials and photo archives. * Recognise need for specialist expertise in government and private sector and support this specialist expertise. Do not disengage from funding peak organisations such as Australia ICOMOS which is the peak heritage body in Australia. * Provide funding for developing archaeological resources for the National curriculum. * Help ASHA establish overarching principles for the management of archaeological resources - Best Practice management and to improve outcomes for communities so they understand the findings of archaeological programs which frequently offer new insight into the past. * Provide grants to encourage research outcomes from archaeological consulting projects. These are not typically funded by ARC programs or other grant programs. At a minimum make archaeological research programs eligible for grant funding. These research outcomes could feed into community engagement and involvement in archaeological heritage. * Acknowledge and value the results of archaeological research to provide new, different, alternative views of the past which contest received histories. Archaeological research on significant sites provides opportunities for the voices of convicts, women, children and other groups to be heard beyond the pages of history books. | |
| 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? | |
| * Development of partnerships between Commonwealth & State government and peak representative bodies. There should be a National peak advisory body, other than the Australian Heritage Council, to provide government advice and feedback to and from peak representative bodies. * Funding the creation of new archaeological and heritage curriculum materials through grants via peak bodies. * Use the Green Army in heritage conservation work with appropriate supervision and training from heritage experts. This will encourage their engagement and knowledge of heritage and they in turn will take it back to their local community. The supervision needs to be managed through local councils in consultation with State heritage agencies. * Encourage partnerships with State and Commonwealth departments/museums to value archaeological collections and present exhibitions of archaeological material, both historical and Aboriginal. This is currently not seen as ‘sexy’ and a topic in which the public is seen as not interested but they are quite interested * Develop opportunities for the involvement of philanthropy in heritage projects.   **Examples of innovative partnerships**   * The Big Dig centre in the Rocks, Sydney was developed as a partnership between Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Youth Hostels Association and GML Heritage and has been highly successful as accommodation for tourists, providing opportunities for tourists and visitors to engage with *in situ* archaeology. * The Australian Maritime Museum obtains philanthropic funding for its survey of shipwrecks in the great Barrier Reef. * The Archaeology of the Modern City project, which Latrobe University lead involved State government agencies and consultants, produced substantial analysis and publication of archaeological sites in Sydney and Melbourne. * The Dept of Archaeology, University of Sydney is working on a project with Port Arthur to re-examine old archaeological projects which have not been written up. Students produce Honours thesis from this research which provides Port Arthur with new knowledge about import early archaeological projects which feeds into their public programs. * Casey & Lowe undertook a partnership exhibition with the Parramatta Heritage Centre on archaeological sites in Parramatta in 2009. This was the first specific exhibition on the archaeology of Parramatta. It was very successful in terms of public outcomes, publication and presentations of the results of a number of archaeological programs in Parramatta. * Casey & Lowe recently developed, funded and set up a temporary exhibition in Holbrook at the National Museum of Australian Pottery on Thomas Ball, Convict Potter (c. 1801-1823). This exhibition displays pottery recovered from the earliest pottery site excavated in Australia. It is on an eight months exhibition in a privately run museum. These artefacts are extremely significant. If they were not on exhibition they would be stored in cupboards in the newly building built on the site in the Haymarket, Sydney. * The Archaeology of Sydney Research Group and the Fisher Library, University of Sydney has created NSW Archaeology online, an important repository of archaeological reports. This was funded by the NSW Heritage Council. These reports are available to the community generally. * Latrobe University, working on the cultural landscape of water management in the Victorian goldfields coordinating with local community groups and a multi-disciplinary group of researchers. * Latrobe University recently finished an ARC research project on the archaeology of Hyde Park Barracks associated with the Asylum period of use. A book on this research has just been published by the research team as part of an ASHA publication series. | |
| 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? | |
| * Local communities frequently already understand the significance of their local heritage. It is after all local communities who have managed it up to this day, who have often fought to save buildings and sites in the absence of other sources of funding. * One issues is that local communities are frequently not able to be involved when specialists are working on local projects. Sometimes there is a disconnect due to development pressures and Health & Safety issues. Find opportunities to provide the public with involvement in heritage projects. * Develop national curriculum materials in association with peak bodies and local communities. ASHA is in the process of establishing a Curriculum Committee so we can find funds to provide grants to develop curriculum materials for significant archaeological projects throughout Australia. * Promoting of archaeological heritage in Parramatta and Sydney CBD has been quite successful when interpretation has been undertaken (under conditions of consent) at important archaeological sites. Such interpretation includes displays of artefacts and information about the site and in some cases it may include *in situ* conservation of archaeological remains. Other methods of public engagement include requiring public Open Days on sites during the archaeological part of the project. This offers an opportunity for locals and visitors to see archaeological program while it is being undertaken through Open Days, and through interpretation which is included as part of the final archaeological project. The inclusion of displays in the final development offers the public opportunities to explore the archaeology of the site and provides some tangible outcomes. * New media can provide a range of opportunities for providing access to heritage. This includes such successes as NSW Archaeology on-line which has made available a series of early reports (otherwise buried in libraries) available on line. This was funded by NSW Heritage grants. * The role of new media needs to be further developed but it needs to be undertaken in partnership with various government agencies, representative groups and individual specialists. * Apps for tourists to show them where archaeological displays are so if they are interested in this they can obtain a quite different view of Sydney CBD or Parramatta. * New media opportunities include: 3D reconstruction of archaeological sites and artefacts, digitising collections, digitising archives so when consultants and academics retire their site archives are available for future research and archived for posterity. This includes paper and photographic archives. Some of this is being trialled at the moment and needs to be supported into the future. | |
| **Other comments** | |
| * While the focus of this strategy on community engagement is laudable it assumes that the community is not engaged. Many members of the community are engaged. In the excavation of part of the Old Sydney Burial Ground in Sydney people lined up around the city block to see the burial ground. More than 4000 people visited the site and many more were not able to get in. This shows that the public is engaged with their heritage and will take opportunities to engage with it when it is provided. * One of ASHA’s main concerns is that our members do not get opportunities to undertake the necessary additional research on archaeological projects excavated as part of development projects. Therefore this important information does not make it into the public arena. In a few cases this information has been made public and has been embraced by the public. The public are very interested in the results of archaeological projects. ASHA is currently developing a series of public publications about results of significance archaeological projects. Some of these will tie into sites where there is *in situ* conservation and/or interpretation of the archaeology. * Heritage generally and archaeology specifically does not ‘exist’ as a given. It is created by the way it is interpreted to the public, by the meaning we bestow on it. This interpretation is done by specialists and local community groups who do their own research. If we have not undertaken the detailed research; either historical research, investigation of fabric, conservation of buildings, archaeological excavation; and then pulled it all together to give it meaning then we do not have ‘heritage’; we have a few buildings, possibly a main street, maybe some buried footings. To engage with the community it is important to make sure that heritage specialists are sufficiently involved in projects to provide major community outcomes. * When dealing with the archaeology of Parramatta and Sydney CBD we are often dealing with sites of National significance. Often when sites are on the World Heritage List the focus of their management is on the built heritage and the archaeology is seen as something on which to minimise expenditure. While this may maximise limited resources it does not maximise knowledge from archaeological remains. Funding for heritage conservation of World Heritage Areas should also include the archaeology. Often the significance of the archaeology is diminished through these processes. | |