# 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:** | **05 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. | |
| **Improve National Leadership**   * 1. What are the most important things the Australian Government should be doing to offer leadership in heritage?   2. 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?   3. What priority areas are important to you, your organisation or group?   4. What practical actions would you suggest to improve national heritage leadership? | |
| * 1. Leadership in heritage needs to be articulated as Environmental Stewardship. Heritage values are one of many values intrinsic in the natural and built environments. At times, heritage is unwittingly policed in such a way resulting in conflict with other management regimes. Accordingly, the Gov’t through its relevant department should espouse management principles that encourage an integrated approach toward the management of all values intrinsic in the natural and built environments. After all, heritage values are one of many values intrinsic in the landscape.   2. Ensure a bi-partisan approach to the management of National Heritage. While the principle of financial responsibility should always underpin the management of heritage across all levels so too the importance of protection, conservation and promotion. Accordingly, heritage management should not fall victim to politics – *‘if it is important and indeed valued today, it will continue to be important and valued tomorrow’*.   3. Funding and Education. Gov’t must come to the party with ongoing funding, whilst ensuring ongoing promotion of our heritage and place in the world through history studies. ‘Heritage contextualises our history’ so very important to protect the very fabric that provides the narrative to our existence and indeed our past. It is of the utmost importance to ensure the curriculum includes studies focused on Australian history and heritage so as to ecourage greater social awareness.   4. See points below:   5. As an extension to point (b) above, maintain support to local environment and heritage conservation projects across Australia. Support can also be in-kind through deployment of the Green Army Programme.   6. Consistent and integrated legislation across States and Territories to avoid inadvertent clashes between different legislation. This will ensure balanced outcomes from the outset.  As a case in point, Natural Resource Management, a core function of our agency, is often in conflict with Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, a situation simply attributed to the legislative process in place. Aboriginal cultural heritage is intrinsic to waterways yet when authorities undertake waterway rehabilitation works, designed to protect the waterway and its environs, it is seen in the same light as development works triggering a whole raft of mitigation measures that often railroad projects. The irony in the situation lies in the fact that rehabilitation works not only protect waterways and their environs but arguably also cultural heritage places, which are intrinsic to the landscape. Arguably, cultural material will be lost without rehabilitation works, however, managed carefully; the overall significance of the place/site need not be compromised. As an agency we often find ourselves having circular discussions around such issues. A further point of irony lies in the fact that certain rehabilitation works are often canvassed as conservation measures for protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage yet we then find ourselves in this ‘catch 22’. | |
| **Pursue Innovative Partnerships**   1. What partnerships are most needed within the heritage sector? 2. What heritage roles and responsibilities should be led by governments, peak heritage organisations or community groups in the 21st century? 3. How should resources be shared through heritage partnerships to ensure the greatest return on agreed priorities? 4. Can you provide examples of successful innovative partnerships you or your organisation have established? | |
| 1. Initially, to help breakdown the current siloed approach, the priority is stakeholder engagement between the heritage sector and industry. The premise is simple: building mutual capacity between the heritage sector and industry will ensure over time, the proper the integration of heritage management into asset management, particularly at planning stages with upfront consideration of potential heritage issues not to mention opportunities. The heritage sector needs to better understand the operational constraints of service agencies, particularly concerning the heritage assets still operation. Also, through consistent legislation and policies, partnerships between government ‘heritage’ departments and agencies across the country need to collaborate to ensure shared language and approach. 2. Government departments and peak heritage organisations need to take the initiative and proactively building relationships with industry (development/service). This is a two prong approach: 3. Education - Communicate heritage laws, regulations and policies to help build capacity and awareness within the industry; 4. Relationship – Through positive respectful engagement, there is an opportunity for industry to become a strong advocate for heritage management, particularly when some effort is made to find out what is and what is not working for them in relation to legislative requirements. A ‘grass roots’ rather than top down bordering on punitive approach is needed. 5. Perhaps an Arts Lottery Fund similar to the Heritage Lottery Fund operating in the UK. Heritage is intrinsically linked to other culturally based programs such as Cultural Awareness, Cultural Diversity, etc. 6. **Example 1**: Melbourne Water has partnered with Parks Victoria and City of Whittlesea to develop The Yan Yean Water Supply Catchment Tour. The Yan Yean system is Melbourne’s oldest and one of Australia’s earliest engineered water supply systems. Through this program, we are showcasing the benefits of collaboration. Parks Victoria manages the grounds of the historic Yan Yean Reservoir under lease agreement with Melbourne Water. City of Whittlesea has long been running their Cultural Heritage Program, which boasts numerous heritage related events and activities. Accordingly, to make the most of our limited resources, a partnership was born with Melbourne Water co-hosting the event with Parks Victoria and City of Whittlesea. The event is run under the auspices of the long running City of Whittlesea Cultural Heritage Program, thereby leveraging off an existing program and a great way to connect with local community.   **Example 2**: Melbourne Water and Heritage Victoria have for many years co-hosted the Government Agency Heritage Asset Management Forum designed to help build capacity in State Government departments and agencies responsible for heritage assets. An initiative of Heritage Victoria, Melbourne Water realised the potential benefit and need for this support not only for its own business but the wider industry. This has been an opportunity for Melbourne Water to take on a stewardship role whilst forging a mutually respectful relationship with Heritage Victoria, which over time has come to pay dividends in relation to dealing with issues more freely.  **Example 3**: Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria have collaborated to partner with the Woodland Players to bring to life an interpretive play titled: “Big Pond”. The play chronicles a day in the life of the Yan Yean Reservoir caretaker John Wilson and his family. A blend of artistic licence and factual information, the play unique brings to life a bygone era.  A unique collaboration that showcases we are merely limited by our imaginations. The benefits from a Melbourne Water perspective are manifold:   * Promoting heritage; * Engagement with community; * Defining our place in community; * Sets our core business of water supply into historical and operational context; * Environmental stewardship – raising cultural awareness, works with community and stakeholders in partnership. | |
| **Enable encourage communities to understand and care for their heritage**   1. What should the Australian heritage sector be doing to help the Australian community better engage in heritage activities? 2. How can a shared understanding of our national heritage be developed and best celebrated together? 3. Do you have any examples of activities that have been successful in promoting local heritage to a broader audience? 4. What is the role of technology and new media in providing greater community access to heritage? | |
| 1. Support local groups such as historical societies develop a profile within community. 2. Fundamentally, this needs to be addressed through education at an early age. Accordingly, the curriculum needs to include Australian History and heritage to invoke a sense of pride. Whilst we must celebrate and indeed embrace our cultural diversity, it is of utmost importance not to lose sight of our origins (good and bad). In particular, we also need to better understand the natural and built environments as cultural landscapes. 3. Refer to **Pursue Innovative Partnerships** above 4. New technology will not help ensure the currency of heritage management in the New World, but it will also help capture a new generation that may otherwise feel disconnected with old modes of communication. | |
| **Other comments** | |
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