



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

Name of Organisation:	Tourism & Transport Forum
Name of Author:	Adele Labine-Romain
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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?

TTF acknowledges that the "aim of the *Australian Heritage Strategy* is to ensure that the way in which we identify, preserve and protect our heritage is the best it can be". TTF believes that the tourism industry, also referred to as the visitor economy, can play a major role in achieving this aim through tourist visitation to heritage locations and also through adaptive re-use of heritage buildings for tourist attractions and hotel accommodation. TTF believes that tourist visitation and tourism adaptive re-use can foster a greater understanding and appreciation of heritage assets among the broader community and increase support for their preservation.

We note that if what is stated in the *Australian Heritage Strategy* is played out in regards to *National Leadership* (including from the *Strategy* document '1. Improve support for Australia's iconic world heritage sites, 2. Advocate greater recognition and protection of our natural and cultural heritage; and 3. Contribute to international standard setting and guidance'), the visitor economy and the overall economy will benefit through preserved heritage places for people to visit now and into the future.



Heritage sites give people reasons to visit a certain destination and these visitors spend money in the local area. The trend to heritage tourism is part of the evolution of experience-based tourism, with more visitors looking for new and authentic experiences to help them learn about and connect with their own and other cultures. There is an increased interest in tangible historic heritage such as sites, buildings, and cultural landscapes, and in the intangible aspects of heritage such as stories and a realistic appreciation of life in the past¹.

Historic heritage products developed from local features have frequently been used to stimulate visitation, help create regional tourism hubs and corridors, and revitalise local economies. Research has shown that heritage attractions that are integrated into regional tourism experiences such as touring routes, trails, accommodation and dining, have considerable visitor appeal if presented in the right way. Often these new products are a result of integrated planning or product revitalisation².

Important to note is that both international and domestic cultural and heritage visitors to Australia spend more per trip on average and stay longer than other visitors. The top two cultural and heritage activities for both international and domestic overnight and day visitors were visiting museums or art galleries and visiting heritage buildings, sites or monuments³.

In regards to the National Heritage List, there could be an opportunity to collaborate with Tourism Australia and the State Tourism Organisations, to provide more detail and to further promote these heritage places. There could also be areas where support may be required by the private sector to ensure these heritage places on the National Heritage List can be preserved.

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 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?

Innovative partnerships are described in the *Strategy* as including the following:

- **Greater heritage policy & process alignment across all levels of government;**
- Build capacity through workforce support, education and training;
- Alternate funding, resource sharing and creative partnerships;
- **Foster collaboration between heritage & tourism sectors.**

¹ Tourism Tasmania (2012), Historic Heritage Tourism Strategy 2012-2015, Page 5.

² Tourism Tasmania (2012), Historic Heritage Tourism Strategy 2012-2015, Page 6.

³ Australian Government Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism, Tourism Research Australia (Snapshots 2009), Cultural and Heritage Tourism in Australia



TTF supports the ideals of fostering collaboration between the heritage and tourism sectors and believe this should be a priority of the Government. In particular, TTF supports the *Strategy's* proposed action of pursuing “improved linkages between the heritage, National Landscapes and tourism sectors to explore better promotion of Australia’s special places.” TTF also supports the commitment on page 9 of the *Strategy* to further explore the linkages with local tourism bodies to further promote Australia’s heritage experiences. If this is achieved, there will be greater benefits for both sectors and the economy overall.

TTF also strongly supports the commitment made in the *Strategy* on page 8, to “develop a one stop shop streamlining process to make it easier to navigate heritage regulations”. In particular, TTF supports the proposal to “improve communication about heritage laws, regulations, policies and decisions to help ensure they are better understood by all, especially for local governments and private owners.”

In relation to adaptive tourism re-use projects of heritage assets, TTF notes that simplifying relevant regulatory frameworks and streamlining tender and approval processes could help to minimise the various risks associated with pre-development tendering and negotiation. Providing clarity to the private sector in the pre-development stages of scoping, simplifying the expression of interest processes, and minimising the regulatory barriers to project approval would significantly improve the ability of the private sector to accurately project revenues and costs over the life of a project and therefore encourage more investors to participate in heritage projects.

TTF also highlights that the current lack of standardisation of documentation and information sharing between agencies impedes approvals and can impose additional regulatory burdens on the investor or developer. Additionally, multiple layers of legislation and preservation standards are often triggered at a local, state and federal level as a result of the heritage significance of the project. While ‘call-in’ powers on projects of significance exist in certain states and reduce some of this duplication, the delays experienced while advice is sought often reduces the effectiveness of this process.

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?



In regards to *Community Engagement*, TTF notes the following aims from the *Strategy*:

- **Creating incentives to care for our heritage;**
- **Greater knowledge & engagement with our heritage;**
- Appropriate timing for the national celebration of Australia's heritage;
- Management of Heritage places; and
- Models for greater recognition of heritage champions

In particular, TTF supports the proposal on page 10 of the *Strategy* to “enhance Australia's Community Heritage web site to allow greater public interaction, allowing them to share their heritage stories”, and the proposal to include a competition asking people to nominate their best loved Australian heritage place or icon. TTF suggests Tourism Australia be consulted on this initiative given their successful experience in launching ‘There's nothing like Australia’ and, more recently, ‘Restaurant Australia’, campaigns that both involved engagement with the public and industry. There is also the potential opportunity for Tourism Australia to profile some of these heritage attractions from the ‘Australia's Community Heritage’ website if and where they deem appropriate to do so.

Other comments

Overall, TTF agrees with the statement on page 15 of the *Strategy* that “Australia has a rich natural and cultural heritage that underpins our sense of place and national identity.” Heritage brings important benefits to communities through a greater sense of belonging. Cultural and national heritage contributes significantly to our national story and sense of who we are. It plays a major role in domestic and international tourism, and brings other economic benefits to our cities and communities.

TTF also highlights that Australia's Heritage is also manifested in the ‘tangible’ category in the diagram on page 12 of the *Strategy*. Adaptive re-use of heritage assets and tourism uses can assist in preserving these tangible heritage assets.

Adaptive re-use is defined by the Australian Government's Department of Environment and Heritage as “a process that changes a disused or ineffective item into a new item that can be used for a different purpose”. It involves converting a building's use to meet the needs of new or existing owners, either through refurbishment or complete renovation of existing buildings or structures. Changes to buildings can involve major internal space reorganisation and the upgrading or replacement of essential services infrastructure. Alternatively, adaptive re-use may simply require minor restoration works where only the building's functional use is altered. When adaptive re-use is applied to heritage buildings, it not only retains the building but also seeks to conserve the effort, skill and dedication of the original builders.

Adaptive re-use is an effective way to conserve items of heritage value and promote enhanced use by local communities and visitors alike. Adaptive re-use allows retention of a sense of place, identity, ownership, heritage and community, while promoting revitalisation, sustainability, job creation, business incubation and education.



There are many benefits of adaptive re use as follows:

Conservation outcomes

Appropriate tourism use can contribute to conservation via revenue, visitor management or provision of direct conservation services to park agencies. It also raises awareness of the inherent heritage or historical value of a site, converting visitors into advocates for preservation. Conserving heritage assets can also achieve environmental outcomes due to their significant embodied energy, especially when weighed against the materials and energy required to build new structures⁴.

Economic value from visitors

Economic value is generated by visitors who visit the adaptive re-use assets and holiday in Australia because of the heritage attractions.

As previously mentioned, heritage visitors are a high-yield market segment, spending more and staying longer than the average tourist⁵.

Government revenue & reduced expenditure

Re-use of heritage buildings can create revenue streams for government agencies and the sale or lease of heritage assets to the private sector means there can be a shifting of maintenance cost to the private sector.

Place revitalisation

Experience in Australia and internationally highlights that adaptive re-use of heritage assets can transform previously derelict or under-utilised sites and precincts into accessible and useable places, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner⁶. Many cities also realise that re-using heritage buildings is an important part of any regeneration program and is also beneficial to tourism destination branding⁷. Increased visitation can activate precincts after hours, revitalising areas of cities and invigorating the existing tourism offering.

Contribution to accommodation supply

The conversion of heritage buildings to accommodation properties also has the potential to increase the overall accommodation supply in a destination and can assist in alleviating supply constraints in some markets across Australia. This is particularly the case given that tourism operators and hoteliers competing for access to prime land often find themselves crowded out by residential and commercial uses⁸, despite tourism often having a higher economic multiplier due to additional expenditure generated by accommodation visitors. Proactive planning approaches and allowing or, indeed, prioritising tourism use of assets in appropriate precincts can complement commercial usage, helping to activate precincts outside business hours and at weekends.

⁴ Bevan, R., (2008) *Demolish and build anew at nation's peril*, The Australian Financial Review, August 15-17;

⁵ Rypkema, D. (2001) *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide*; Mason, R. (2005) *Economics and Historic Preservation: A Guide and Review of Literature*, Brookings Institution.

⁶ Gilderbloom, J. et al (2009) *Historic Preservation's Impact on Job Creation, Property Values and Environmental Sustainability*, School of Urban and Public Affairs, University of Louisville, p. 13

⁷ Ball, R. (1999) *Developers, regeneration and sustainability issues in the reuse of vacant buildings*, Building Research and Information, 27.3., p. 140-148.

⁸ LEK Consulting, *Tourism Investment and Regulation Review – Final Report*, 3 August 2011, p. 36.



There are a number of examples of adaptive re-use of heritage buildings to tourism assets. A few examples are listed below:

1. Sydney General Post Office (GPO) – now the Westin Hotel with 420 rooms, a non-heritage 26 level office tower, and 5000 square metres of ground floor retail.
2. Salamanca Wharf in Hobart – now offers a range of hospitality venues and famous markets.
3. Central Pier – Shed 14 - Docklands, Melbourne – now hospitality venues managed by Atlantic Group.
4. Ex-Parcels Post Office in Sydney – now the Medina Executive Serviced Apartments – Sydney Central, a 4.5- star serviced apartment and mixed use asset facility with retail.
5. Treasury Building in Sydney, now the InterContinental Sydney Hotel.
6. Melbourne wool stores and office - now InterContinental Rialto Melbourne.