# 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:** | Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Advisory Committee |
| **Name of Author:** | Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Advisory Committee |
| **Date:** | **9 June 2014** |
|  | |
| 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? | |
| 1. The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWHA) Advisory Committee notes that the first program under this theme is "Improved Support for Australia's Iconic World Heritage Sites". This is supported however **the Strategy should also provide a commitment to support all 19 Australian World Heritage properties**. 2. **The Strategy should provide a clear commitment for ongoing for funding programs and actions** that are directed at compliance with the World Heritage Convention obligations – for example: consistent, recurrent funding of Executive Officers and Advisory Committees. 3. The commitment to conservation works on the Port Arthur World Heritage site **should be complemented by similar commitments to other Australian World Heritage areas**. For example, the Blue Mountains National Park, heart of the GBMWHA, contains 37 tracks and track complexes listed on the State Heritage Register. This is over 100kms of popular walking tracks, some of which have been upgraded and all of which require ongoing maintenance. Over 336kms of walking tracks in the Blue Mountains alone and a much more vast network across the million hectares of reserves that make up the GBMWHA would benefit from further investment in heritage conservation works funding. 4. **Support for Indigenous heritage could be strengthened considerably**. In this regard, attention is drawn to the findings of the *State of the Environment 2011 Report*. **The Strategy should commit to appropriate processes for engagement of Traditional Owners in World Heritage management**. This could be achieved by the commitment of ongoing resources to support regular face-to-face meetings of the AWHIN (Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network) and dedicated, funded secretariat services. 5. There are 6 Aboriginal language groups who share connection to the Country of the GBMWHA. The GBMWHA Aboriginal Reference Group, made up of representatives of the Darkinjung, Darug, Dharawal, Gundungurra, Wiradjuri and Wanaruah is supported by current Cwlth funding. **The Strategy should provide for permanent, ongoing commitment to support this valuable engagement process** for the Greater Blue Mountains and other World Heritage properties with similar, representative advisory groups. 6. The GBMWHA Advisory Committee notes with interest the proposed actions relating to future World Heritage nominations and notes that the GBMWHA was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000 for its natural biodiversity values. However, its listing did not recognise the area’s cultural, geodiversity or scenic values so seeks inclusion of the re-nomination of the Greater Blue Mountains Area to the World Heritage List for additional values and an expanded boundary.   The values are:   * cultural associations (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous); * geodiversity and geoheritage; and * scenic and aesthetic values.   The expanded boundary will include those inholdings and areas gazetted to the constituent reserves since listing in 2000 and some additional adjacent areas to provide further biodiversity population security, improved boundary management and particularly to improve biodiversity resilience to climate change.  The Advisory Committee has provided a series of draft theme-based essays to the Government to support the current National Heritage List assessment. In addition to furthering and expediting the re-assessment process for the Greater Blue Mountains, the Advisory Committee hopes that this process may provide a useful model for community-based ‘expert’ nominations to the NHL, which might be able to be considered by the Council, without the need for such extensive resources as have been allocated to NHL assessment in the past. | |
| 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? | |
| 1. The GBMWHA is threatened by activities on adjacent lands. **The Strategy should seek to ensure that zoning and development controls on land adjacent to World Heritage** (and National Heritage) properties are appropriate and act to protect World Heritage (and National Heritage) values. 2. **The benefits and opportunities of the Caring for Our Country program should be extended to all Australian World Heritage propertie**s. 3. There is a risk posed to heritage values, if the Green Army Programme participants are not adequately trained prior to working at World Heritage properties and/or if they are inadequately supervised. **The Government is encouraged to progressively adapt the Green Army Programme to ensure that it does contribute to conservation while also providing meaningful skills development for participants**. 4. The ‘Innovative Partnerships’ theme, **should include greater links with educational institutions, particularly through use of World Heritage properties like GBMWHA in conjunction with the new national curriculum outcomes**. 5. **Applied research for World Heritage should have priority within the new National Environmental Science Program**. For eg. the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute (BMWHI) was established to support adaptive management of the GBMWHA, including recruiting and directing investment in support of research. This distinctive approach has helped strengthen partnerships between researchers and stakeholders and continues to seek funding for research from sponsors and donors. The continuing viability and contribution of the Institute depends on its capacity to source such funding. 6. The Advisory Committee notes that officer-level discussions between the Heritage Division of OEH and Department of the Environment have occurred to ensure that key policy directions and objectives of the forthcoming draft NSW Heritage Policy are consistent with the objectives of the draft Australian Heritage Strategy. | |
| 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? | |
| 1. Effective management of heritage places requires a proactive program of monitoring and evaluation and therefore **recommends that the strategy should commit to such a program, using the framework already provided in the State of the Environment 2011 Report**.   Bush Trackers is an innovative environmental education/engagement project in the GBMWHA, which enhances community access, engagement and appreciation of a number of significant natural, cultural and historic heritage places across the Blue Mountains with a series of bushwalking guides created by kids, for kids. This ‘example of an activity that is successful in promoting local heritage to a broader audience’ was only possible due to funding under the Your Community Heritage program. The Advisory Committee **recommends that the Your Community Heritage program be continued and expanded to support innovative, creative and engaging ways for the community to understand and celebrate our local heritage**. | |
| **Other comments** | |
| The GBMWHA Advisory Committee welcomes the preparation of the Strategy and congratulates the Government on its development and opportunity for community input and comment.  The Advisory Committee is supportive of the three major themes: National, Leadership, Innovative Partnerships, and Community Engagement.  The Advisory Committee overall **recommends ongoing, committed funding to support the vast range of natural and cultural heritage projects** across the GBMWHA and looks forward to increased opportunities for providing local, technical, Indigenous and specialist advice on the conservation, promotion and celebration of our heritage across the Greater Blue Mountains. | |