

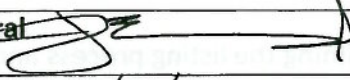


## TEMPLATE FOR INPUT INTO THE AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE STRATEGY

### Overview

This template should be used to provide comments on the content of the Australian Heritage Strategy.

### Contact Details

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Name of Author:	Ms Dorte Ekelund, Director-General 
Date:	4/6/14

### 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?

#### Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the three tiers of Government, and the status of non-statutory community bodies

There is still much confusion amongst the public about the different lists (statutory and non-statutory) and threshold levels that apply across the three tiers of Government in Australia. The Australian Heritage Strategy should be used as a platform in which to further convey clearer messages about the various lists and threshold levels that apply across the country, and the different responsibilities of the three tiers of Government.

The Strategy should also clarify that responsibility of the Commonwealth Government is for those places and objects which are entered on the National Heritage List and/or are owned and/or managed by the Commonwealth Government, providing examples. The Strategy should also make mention of the National Capital Authority (NCA), and the important relationship between the Commonwealth and NCA in Canberra.

The Strategy could also clarify that the three tiers of Government provide regulatory functions





rather than ownership and management responsibilities (though noting that there are, of course, exceptions to this).

The Strategy should also clarify the important differences between the statutory lists of Governments, and the non-statutory lists of community groups and organisations such as the National Trust and Institute of Architects. It should also acknowledge the status of the Register of the National Estate.

This action also relates to a proposed action under heading 2 (Pursue innovative partnerships), through the proposed action 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'.

### **Streamlining the listing process and encouraging expert partnerships for assessments**

ESDD notes the importance of early consultation with property owners and occupiers to improve relationships and understandings of heritage across the broad community, and supports the Commonwealth's commitment to streamlining the listing process.

ESDD also applauds the Commonwealth's proposed action to 'encourage expert partnerships to help facilitate future assessments'. Ensuring that those with the right knowledge, skills and experience provide input at the early stages of research and significance assessment is critical. Accurate and comprehensive assessments ensure clarity and certainty, and ensure appropriate identification for optimal long term conservation goals and outcomes.

ESDD strongly supports concept 2a in the draft Strategy: 'Greater heritage policy and process alignment across all levels of government', though notes challenges associated with differences in legislation across jurisdictions. For instance, the ACT is one of the few jurisdictions where the one piece of legislation covers natural, Aboriginal and historic heritage; it includes places *and* objects; and is unique in the sense that State and local are one and the same for the purposes of threshold levels and tiers of Government.

The existing Heritage Chairs and Officials network is ideally placed to assist in the achievement of aligning Government policy and process, and its continuance is encouraged.

### **Improving the public perception of heritage**

An important aspect of national leadership is to address the broad public perception of heritage. Despite ongoing efforts across the heritage sector, including Government jurisdictions, there still persists an image of heritage as involving cumbersome development approvals processes, reducing property values and placing unfair obligations and burdens on private property owners. It would be advantageous for the Commonwealth to provide national leadership in continued efforts to address this image problem.

Most, if not all jurisdictions have undertaken work to better communicate the implications and impacts of heritage listings. However, the message is still often falling on deaf ears and some property owners express great alarm at the thought of a heritage registration of their place or object. This is mostly unwarranted, if only they were better informed.





### **Address the tension that occurs between private ownership versus public good**

There is a challenging difference that exists between the iconic/well known and recognised heritage places and objects, and those which are the 'everyday'. While the Commonwealth's role is primarily – particularly in the context of the NHL – about recognising and protecting the more well known and iconic places, there is also a role for the Commonwealth in assisting other tiers of Government in their roles relative to the local community's lived experience, and places of heritage which are often taken for granted and therefore do not always receive the recognition that they deserve.

There is also a related tension which exists between private ownership and financial responsibility of local 'lived-experience' heritage, which may include residential streetscapes and heritage precincts, versus the public good that they provide. While in some cases it may be enough for owners of those places to benefit from the enjoyment of the heritage characteristics of their home, and of their surrounding streetscape, this is not always the case and there are times that the burden of heritage conservation overwhelms the benefits.

Admittedly, property owners generally buy into these places with knowledge of the heritage constraints and opportunities posed. However, there are many instances where heritage listings occur after purchase, and often without the owner's agreement. Improved communications and messages, and improved partnerships with private property owners are vital.

The Commonwealth has an important role as a national leader to develop ways to create a sense of community and shared pride for private property owners. The Commonwealth should also lead the way in promoting initiatives for urban renewal and adaptive reuse.

### **Thematic studies**

The Commonwealth's proposed action to prioritise thematic studies for heritage significance assessments is strongly supported by ESDD.

It would be advantageous for a coordinated approach to be taken across the different tiers of Governments to collaboratively determine themes and encourage nominations across those themes. This would assist the community to understand thresholds; allows the different tiers of Government to work proactively together (enabling referral of nominations to the correct threshold tier where appropriate); and provides opportunity for comprehensive recognition and protection across a particular theme. Thematic studies also allow for comparative analysis to be undertaken in an efficient and best practice manner.

## **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?





### **Partnerships between the holders of cultural and scientific knowledge with regards to Aboriginal heritage**

There exists great opportunity for improvement regarding partnerships and shared understandings between Indigenous people who are the holders of cultural knowledge and archaeologists who are the holders of scientific knowledge. In relation to this, ESDD notes and supports the proposed actions in the draft Strategy including:

- 'promote the best practice *Ask First* Indigenous consultation guidelines';
- 'improve recognition and protection of Indigenous cultural heritage'; and
- 'ensure indigenous Australians have a central role in decision making relating to their heritage while providing protection for traditional areas, objects and languages'.

### **Encourage continued and increased partnerships with other sectors, including the Arts**

ESDD supports continued and enhanced partnerships between heritage and related sectors, including the arts. In particular, this provides creative opportunities to engage with broader audiences and communities, and to enhance the appeal of heritage to the broad population.

Partnerships with other sectors also provides opportunities for the community to think more laterally, and 'outside the square' about the many different types and forms of heritage.

Promotion, interpretation and events are an important way to celebrate our heritage places and objects, to provide experiences, and to attract new audiences, particularly through the use of themes and sectors or professions, such as engineering.

### **Partnerships with tourism**

While ESDD recognises and supports the importance of partnerships with the tourism sector, this is relevant particularly for places and objects which are iconic, and often of national heritage significance.

Places and objects of everyday lived experience make up a significantly greater proportion of Australia's overall heritage assets than the iconic. This is reflected in comparatively low numbers of places entered in the National Heritage List, compared to those on State and local registers.

ESDD recognises that tourism opportunities are not so readily available, or of such interest, for the everyday lived experience. Often these places are not publicly accessible, beyond their streetscape and front facades.

However, there may be opportunities through tourism ventures at national icons to create greater awareness and appreciation for everyday heritage places, by drawing links and connections.

Places of lived experience are often those that are more contentious amongst the broader population: they tend to be more privately owned and their values less well understood or recognised. It is these types of places that require greater attention in terms of enhancing community awareness and appreciation.

ESDD notes that, by and large, the Commonwealth is tasked with responsibility for places which are iconic through the National Heritage List, and places owned and managed by the Commonwealth. However, the Commonwealth still has an important role to play in leadership and consistency for the way that heritage places and objects of lived experience are recognised, protected, conserved and promoted.





### **Encourage professional development, particularly for young heritage practitioners**

The draft Strategy aims to 'build heritage capacity through workforce support, education and training'. This initiative is supported by ESDD. In addition to the commitments and proposed action identified in the draft Strategy, ESDD also encourages the Commonwealth to consider the inclusion of a further proposed action, to identify and promote young professionals in the heritage sector. This could be achieved through increased young professional training opportunities, further encouraging memberships of relevant professional bodies, providing development forums/symposiums, establishing a 'young heritage professionals' network and encouraging work experience opportunities, including (or further enhancing) programs similar to the annual international ICOMOS internship. A similar program might be established within Australia, and across jurisdictions.

An accredited volunteer program for skilled young professionals could also be considered as a training partnership which might offer innovative solutions for the continued recognition, protection, conservation and promotion of heritage within a tight economic climate.

### **3. 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?

### **Single entry point information portal**

ESDD strongly supports the Commonwealth's intent for a single entry point information portal for access to heritage information at all levels. ESDD encourages the Commonwealth to consider a mapping tool as central to such a portal, providing an instant visual image to identify heritage places across the country, and which instantly identifies (perhaps through colour coding or similar) the different level of heritage significance for each place.

### **'Appropriate timing of Australian Heritage Week'**

ESDD notes that the Commonwealth intends to further consider the timing of the Australian Heritage Week. While ESDD supports a coordinated approach across jurisdictions to ensure alignment of heritage festivals, it should be noted that the Canberra and Region Heritage festival extends for 16 days, encompassing three weekends.

ESDD also suggest that the annual theme for the Heritage Festival could be the same as, or compliment the annual theme for the call for nominations.





**Explore the development of new incentives and resource gathering partnerships**

This is likely to become increasingly critical in a tight economic climate and ESDD supports this proposed action.

**Ensure appropriate monitoring and evaluation**

While ESDD supports this notion in-principle, it notes that it can be challenging to devote scarce resources to evaluation and monitoring, and would support the exploration of innovative ways in which this might be achieved.

ESDD acknowledges that review, consolidation and revision of heritage lists and conservation guidelines is necessary. However, until jurisdictions have completed the initial phase of registration, reducing nomination backlogs, and ensuring that critical conservation guidelines have been developed where required, it may not be feasible to find the resources to monitor and evaluate. It is anticipated that this may be some years' away.

**Philanthropic and grassroots investment**

ESDD notes that there is already immense philanthropic and grassroots investment (often informal and inadvertent) for the nation's heritage assets, particularly those vested in private ownership. There is much that can be done to better recognise and reward those custodians for their private conservation efforts (both financial and through in-kind labour).

There needs to be a recognition that private property owners, and commercial developers provide funding for conservation of privately owned heritage places without which the place may fall into disrepair. In some cases, financial benefits are reaped from such investments. However, this is not always the case.

An achievable incentive for private property owners is to allow some compromise and negotiation in development outcomes on heritage places. There are some heritage values of any place that are critical for the long-term conservation of that place. However, there are often others which – while supportive elements – may be sacrificed for a greater good. This may mean compromises and relaxed development controls on the retention of some aspects of heritage, for the greater good of the retention of other aspects which may not otherwise have been possible.

**Enhance the National Heritage website to include a competition that allows people to nominate their best loved Australian heritage place or icon**

While an interesting proposal, ESDD wonders what the goal or outcome for this proposed action might be, and expresses some concern that this might result in a false expectation for those nominations to be included on the National Heritage List.

Perhaps an alternative suggestion might be for a similar action which involves school children, encouraging them to think broadly about the varying types of heritage places and objects.

**Explore approaches for recognition of Australian heritage champions**

ESDD agrees with and supports this proposed action, noting that recognition of existing champions can help to improve a positive image of heritage, and can encourage future champions to become involved.



**Other comments**

ESDD further notes that a key issue across all tiers of Government over the next 3-5 years will be increasingly tight budgets and cost savings. The Strategy could acknowledge the critical importance for all tiers of Government, as well as community organisations, property owners and businesses to develop innovative new models for leadership, conservation management, engagement and partnerships for our heritage places, across all commitments and proposed actions identified.

In conclusion, ESDD supports the general framework and approach of the Australian Heritage Strategy and congratulates the Commonwealth Government in its achievement to produce such a document. A final suggestion is the inclusion of a timeframe to indicate the expected life of the document.







Australian Government

## COVER SHEET FOR INPUT INTO AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE STRATEGY

*This completed form must be included with your input. If completing by hand, please ensure your writing is clear and legible.*

### CONTACT DETAILS

Please provide at least one contact address; a telephone number is optional. If you are making a submission for a group or organisation, please provide contact information for one member of your group or organisation.

**NOTE:** The Department needs to collect some personal information in case we need to contact you should further information or clarification be required on your input. Personal information may be disclosed to the Minister for the Environment or the Secretary of the Department or to employees of Australian Government agencies assisting the Department for the purposes outlined above. Some of your input may be included in subsequent publications.

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### INTERNET PUBLICATION

Public submissions may be published in full on the website, including any personal information of authors and/or other third parties **contained in the submission**.  
Please tick this box if you wish for your input to remain confidential (that is, you **do not consent** to having your input published on the internet).

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### ANONYMITY

Please tick this box if you want your input to be treated as anonymous (that is, you **do not consent** to having your name, or the name of your organisation, published on the internet with your input).

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### THIRD PARTY PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please tick this box if your input contains personal information of third party individuals, and strike out the statement that is not applicable in the following sentence:  
The third party individual **consents / does not consent** to the publication of their information.

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### HOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS

Return BOTH the cover sheet and the input template by email (preferred option) or post to the addresses below.

**Email:** [AusHeritageStrategy@environment.gov.au](mailto:AusHeritageStrategy@environment.gov.au)

**Post:** Australian Heritage Strategy  
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Department of the Environment  
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CANBERRA, ACT 2601

\* If you wish for only parts of your input to be treated as confidential, it would be appreciated if you could provide the confidential parts of your input as a separate document.

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