# 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:** | Department of Premier and Cabinet, Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division |
| **Name of Author:** | **Ms Nerida Saunders, Executive Director** |
| **Date:** | **3 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? | |
| The preservation and conservation of Australia’s cultural heritage is critical to well-being and plays an important role in the realisation of the nation’s prospectivity.  A significant part of South Australia’s heritage is preserved in its Aboriginal cultural heritage. Over thirty language groups actively manage Aboriginal cultural sites across most areas of the State using arrangements of traditions which have evolved from ancient customs. The links between Aboriginal cultural heritage, including the long standing cultural responsibilities of Aboriginal people, and national economic levers could be clearer in the Strategy.  Mechanisms for the sustainable management of Aboriginal heritage could be strengthened to include commitments to funding for Aboriginal heritage organisations to record and manage heritage. For example funding and support could be provided for the development of digital information systems and interfaces that allow Aboriginal communities to map their country and importantly, control this information with encryptions that maintain cultural confidentiality protocols.  Improvements to the facility for Aboriginal communities to record and provide information about heritage sites will improve government’s capacity to give advice to proponents in relation to obligations under the Aboriginal Heritage Act and will improve the quality of the data considered in any decision making which affects Aboriginal heritage. | |
| 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? | |
| The establishment of a one stop shop, streamlining processes to make it easier to navigate heritage regulations should be careful to consider the value of consultation with Aboriginal communities in the planning stages of any project. The value of consultation with traditional owners should be in the forefront of Government advice, particularly in those areas of country where Native Title may be extinguished, however, important cultural heritage sites may exist.  The Green Army program provides short term opportunities for young people to become involved in heritage conservation. To maximise the value of that participation, consideration should be given to aligning the Green Army program with accredited learning outcomes that can be transferred into further opportunities for study.  Innovative tourism experiences need to be supported with increased capacity for local communities to manage visitors. This is particularly important in areas of country where important cultural sites are co-located in national parks. Regional communities need to be supported to develop and implement the controls that manage visitors in ways that maintain protection for sacred heritage sites whilst at the same time providing visitors with a deep and enduring experience. Improving access to the learnings from the Northern Territory, particularly visitor management of Uluru and Kakadu national parks could be very helpful. | |
| 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? | |
| The Strategy needs to deal with the challenge of how to manage the inherent tension of Aboriginal cultural confidentiality protocols against a desire to celebrate heritage as a way of contributing to the growth of a vibrant and responsive awareness of cultural heritage. Dealing with this challenge will help the strategy be more inclusive of Aboriginal cultural heritage as fundamental to the nation’s identity. | |
| **Other comments** | |
| One consequence of the implementation of the Native Title Act is the body of research into Aboriginal anthropology, archaeology and traditions resulting in a large national collection of Aboriginal cultural information. This research is held by a combination of academics, traditional owners and others and the onus for its preservation is loosely with those who currently have access to it. As some of the anthropologists and archaeologists responsible for the research outcomes start to reach the age of retirement, questions have been put to the state government regarding ownership of and access to their research material once they retire.  Given the significant public investment into what is now a massive dispersed national research collection some thought should be given to how this cultural information can be systematically provided to traditional owners now and into the future; how these traditional owners can be supported to provide the appropriate preservation and care for that material; and how the traditional owners’ permission can be provided for others to appropriately access the research in the future. | |