



TEMPLATE FOR INPUT INTO THE AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE STRATEGY

Overview

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

Contact Details

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Questions

Please add your comments for some or all of the three questions below. If you have other information you wish to provide, please add this in the other comments field.

1. What do you think are the key elements of the Commonwealth's role in heritage?

The Australian Academy of the Humanities made a submission to the previous public consultation on the Australian Heritage Strategy in June 2012. We understand that this current consultation process will inform the release of a draft Strategy in April 2014. We look forward to commenting on this document in due course. In this brief submission we have focused on policy development issues and have made some additional observations below, which extend key recommendations we made in our earlier submission.

- **National leadership and coordination:** The Commonwealth Government has an important leadership and coordination role. A national heritage strategy is a welcome step towards developing a more integrated view of heritage, and promoting cooperation and information-sharing across different levels of government. The Australian Heritage Council has a prominent and active role to play here.
- **Leadership on Indigenous heritage:** With respect to Indigenous heritage, urgent Commonwealth action and leadership are essential. There is no national coordination body for the protection and regulation of Indigenous heritage. The UN declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples is framing debate and action in this area (articles 11 and 15 are particularly relevant). One of the pressing issues is the area of Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) – both past and current heritage will be relevant to ICIP provisions, such as in the reproduction of rock art images.
- **Promoting legislative consistency and transparency:** Increased disharmony between state and territory heritage instruments and their regulations has led to a lack of transparency and certainty for heritage stakeholders. There is a need for a systematic review of heritage legislation which will be crucial to the effective realisation of a coherent, national heritage strategy.



- **Ensuring a whole-of-government approach:** The Commonwealth has a role to play in ensuring that the protection and promotion of heritage is considered within other national policies and frameworks, such as the Indigenous Languages Policy, with arts and cultural policies, and education (notably the Australian curriculum) and research policies. Importantly, the Commonwealth has a key role in anticipating the types of regulatory frameworks that may be necessary for new or unexpected developments with potential for significant heritage impact: for example, new exploration technologies such as shale gas extraction.
- **Building capacity through skills and training:** Building capacity in heritage management, preservation and research is a national issue. The ability to develop innovative solutions and approaches to complex heritage matters (for instance in disaster recovery or mitigation), raise community awareness and understanding about heritage, and ensure compliance with heritage legislation by land-users and managers, is predicated on appropriate levels of heritage education and research.
- **Supporting research and development:** There is a clear role for the Commonwealth in funding and prioritising heritage research and development. Internationally, research and innovation in heritage is strongly supported by such funding schemes as the European Union's Horizon 2020, recognising that "In all its forms, cultural heritage, values and language are crucial for the collective memories and sociability of groups but also for the personal development of citizens, enabling them to find their place in society".¹ In Europe there is also a strong focus on infrastructure and innovation enabled by new digital technologies, recognising that these are not only impacting on current cultures and identities, but are "transforming the shape of the knowledge that we will transmit to future generations as our legacy". Australia has been specifically identified as a "key international partner country" in the latest Horizon 2020 work programme with the EU seeking to enhance and focus research and innovation cooperation in these areas.
- **International leadership and opportunities:** Australia is in a position to become a world leader in heritage, with world-leading expertise in heritage management, research, World Heritage listing, and lead roles on international Science Committees for ICOMOS. The Government has a role to play in facilitating and promoting Australian expertise in heritage research and management through its bilateral and multilateral agreements and mechanisms. A national heritage strategy should recognise the role for cultural diplomacy, and include strategies for international exchange and cooperation.

2. What new cooperative models could be explored to open up opportunities for heritage protection?

The Academy would just observe at this point that policy cooperation and links between different portfolios will be vital to the effective realisation of a national heritage strategy. We made a number of observations in our previous submissions about the need for specific leadership in heritage education and research.

- Governments and regional councils often overlook the economic returns generated by

¹ Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2014-15, *Europe in a changing world – inclusive, innovative and reflective societies*, http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/main/h2020-wp1415-societies_en.pdf



heritage places. Tourism returns can often justify conservation costs which are reduced over time and provide employment. This requires government education inputs.

- What are the incentives in the system for heritage protection at the individual level? A potential model worthy of further consideration is the introduction of tax incentives to encourage owners of heritage properties to undertake restoration, maintenance and conservation of such properties.
- The nation's cultural institutions play a vital leadership role as custodians of and repositories for cultural heritage. Investment in digitisation of resources needs to be matched by a clear cultural collections policy that necessarily links these resources to strategic research (and access) by university researchers and students, as well as public benefit.
- A significant amount of heritage research is funded privately and much of this is not publicly available. In some instances this material may be of national interest. These are also matters of Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property and significance assessment under state and territory heritage statutes which demand that such collections become more accessible. Commonwealth Government leadership on this issue could improve the flow of information about the outcomes of research in the heritage domain.

3. How can communities engage more effectively in the management of heritage places?

The Academy considers that heritage and cultural organisations that directly interact with people and communities in regard to heritage places are best placed to respond to this question.

Other comments

The Academy would stress the importance of intangible cultural heritage, which was somewhat overlooked in the previous consultation paper. Non-tangible heritage – languages, cultural practices, values, and social structures – could be considered among the most important of all heritage and culture policy principles because it links 'tangibly' to the psychological health and wellbeing of communities and society more generally. The retention and support of these across generations is important for the psychological health, cultural integrity and sense of place and belonging of communities and to communities. At a time of globalisation with its risk to the sense of place, nation and community, fostering non-tangible heritage is an investment in a more trusting, secure and integrated community.