

AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2021

Introduction

The role of the Council includes advice to the Minister in relation to nominating, conserving and protecting places on the National Heritage List or Commonwealth Heritage list, as well as advice to the Minister on other aspects of heritage including promotion of heritage, national policies on heritage, grants and other heritage matters. Details of the role of the Council are set out in Annex A.

In order to meet this, the Council will work closely with the Department of the Environment, seeking to complement the work of the Department by focussing on core areas of need.

The Australian Heritage Strategy outlines a number of actions to be led by Council, and a number of actions in which Council is a partner.

This Strategic Plan sets out the work and direction of the AHC, in accordance with Section 5 of the *Australian Heritage Council Act 2003* (Cwth).

Priorities

Over the next three years, the core priorities for the Council will be:

1. Promotion/Partnerships

- work with the Department to further enhance public awareness, engagement and support for national heritage through a social media plan that increases engagement with existing target markets and provides access to new target markets across key platforms.
- collaborate with the Department, communities, organisations, academic institutions, and all levels of government to identify opportunities to create new innovative partnerships and strengthen existing ones.

2. Leadership/Monitoring

- to play a lead role in debate and provide expert advice to the Minister regarding the future direction of the National Heritage List and potential improvements to the process and administration of the National and Commonwealth Heritage Lists.
- to support the Department in developing an effective system for monitoring heritage places inscribed on the National and Commonwealth lists.

3. Indigenous cultural heritage

- to work with the Department, and others, to improve the identification, assessment, conservation and monitoring of Indigenous cultural heritage and cultural heritage values across the work of the Department.

Approach

Council's approach will be

- **Integrated** – promoting an integrated approach to heritage identification, assessment, conservation and monitoring, which brings together natural, indigenous and historic heritage, reflecting the remit of the Council and the basis of the EPBC Act.
- **Innovative** – supporting the Department in finding innovative strategies to deliver effective identification, assessment, conservation and monitoring of cultural heritage in the context of reduced resources, including strategies for improving the quality and use of information about heritage.
- **Collaborative** – a partnership with communities, organisations, academic institutions, and all levels of government.

Annex A – Functions of the Australian Heritage Council

Under the Section 5 of the *Australian Heritage Council Act 2003* (Cwth), these are the functions of the Council:

- (a) to make assessments under Divisions 1A and 3A of Part 15 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwth);
- (b) to advise the Minister on conserving and protecting places included, or being considered for inclusion, in the National Heritage List or Commonwealth Heritage List;
- (c) to nominate places for inclusion in the National Heritage List or Commonwealth Heritage List;
- (ca) to advise the Minister, in accordance with section 390P of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwth), in relation to the inclusion of places in, and the removal of places from, the List of Overseas Places of Historic Significance to Australia;
- (d) to advise the Minister on:
 - (i) promotional, research, training or educational activities relating to heritage; and
 - (ii) national policies relating to heritage; and
 - (iii) grants or other financial assistance relating to heritage; and
 - (iv) the monitoring of the condition of places included in the National Heritage List or Commonwealth Heritage List; and
 - (v) the Commonwealth's responsibilities for historic shipwrecks; and
 - (vi) other matters relating to heritage;
- (e) to promote the identification, assessment, conservation and monitoring of heritage;
- (g) to organise and engage in research and investigations necessary for the performance of its functions;
- (h) to provide advice directly to any person or body or agency either of its own initiative or at the request of the Minister;
- (i) to prepare reports in accordance with Part 5A;
- (j) to perform any other functions conferred on the Council by the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwth).

ANNEX B: Operating Environment for AHC

Legislation and principles:

- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwth) – recognition of 3 environments of heritage
- Engagement with the Threatened Species Scientific Committee (via *EPBC Act*) and the Indigenous Advisory Committee
- *Australian Heritage Council Act 2003* (Cwth) – enabling Council to determine its work and direction
- Australian Government, *National State of the Environment reports* - provide information about environmental and heritage conditions, trends and pressures for the Australian continent, surrounding seas and Australia's external territories
- UNESCO 1972, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*
- Cairns Communiqué in Australian National Committee of IUCN Members 2013, Keeping the Outstanding Exceptional: the future of World Heritage in Australia
- United Nations 1948, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- United Nations 2008, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*
- Australian ICOMOS 2013, *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (2013)* – best practice for conservation, management and interpretation
- Australian Heritage Commission 2002, *Australian Natural Heritage Charter*, 2nd ed
- Australian Heritage Commission 2002, *Ask First: A guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values* – how to consult Indigenous communities
- Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand (role under review)
- Australian Government 2015, *The Commonwealth Indigenous Procurement Policy and Procurement Contracts*
- Department of Environment 2016, *Reconciliation Action Plan 2016-2019*
- National Biodiversity Strategy Review Task Group 2010, *Australian Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030*