



Australian Government
Department of the Environment

A Strategy for Australia's Heritage

Draft for consultation



April 2014

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Cover image | The Main Penitentiary Building at the Port Arthur Historic Site
(part of the World Heritage Listed Australian Convict Sites) © the Department of the Environment

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Minister's foreword



Australia's magnificent Indigenous, natural and cultural heritage places capture the moments and stories that shape our nation.

Together they reveal the richness and diversity of Australia's extraordinary natural environment, evoke the spirituality, stories and culture of Indigenous Australians, and tell the story of our colonial history and the development of a modern nation.

The protection of this remarkable heritage is central to the Australian Government's *Plan for a Cleaner Environment* and is a fundamental pillar of our vision for Australia.

Last November I announced the Australian Government's commitment to re-start and complete the Australian Heritage Strategy.

The aim of the Australian Heritage Strategy is to ensure that the way in which we identify, preserve and protect our heritage is the best it can be. We want our nation's heritage to be managed and protected according to world's best practice and we want all Australians to celebrate and feel a renewed sense of pride in our heritage.

This draft Strategy, now open for comment, is built around a central vision of our natural and cultural heritage being valued by all Australians, protected for future generations and cared for by the community.

Essential elements to achieving that vision are:

- National leadership
- Partnerships
- Community engagement

From these overarching themes spring a range of commitments and proposed actions.

Consultation on this draft Strategy provides an opportunity for everyone involved with Australia's heritage to provide input into how we come together and build partnerships to strengthen our heritage from the grassroots level. I encourage all Australians to champion our heritage by reviewing the themes and priorities of this Strategy and see how you can become involved, including by identifying the contributions that can be made by the heritage sector to this Strategy.

Whether your area of interest or expertise is natural heritage, Indigenous heritage, early colonial or contemporary Australian heritage, I invite you to be part of this great national initiative to conserve and celebrate our heritage.



Welcome to Eagle Bluff

Here at Eagle Bluff a boardwalk perched high above the shallow waters of the Shark Bay Marine Park gives you spectacular views of marine life, offshore islands and the distant shores of the bay's western peninsula.

Shark Bay World Heritage

What makes it special?

The boardwalk has an excellent vantage point for viewing Shark Bay's unique

Shark Bay has the biggest seagrass in the world, a key reason for World Heritage status. The seagrass in deeper waters distinguishes it from sandy areas.

Endangered animal species are found here. It's a Heritage treasure and you may see dugongs, feeding on seagrass just

Other World Heritage Drive sites

Eagle Bluff is a site along the World Heritage Drive, a unique tourist route linking several of Shark Bay's significant sites between the highway and Monkey Mia. Be sure to check out the other sites on the drive that make Shark Bay like no other place on the planet.

and enjoy the view!

metres long with a short boardwalk. Take binoculars if you want to enjoy your visit.

Executive Summary

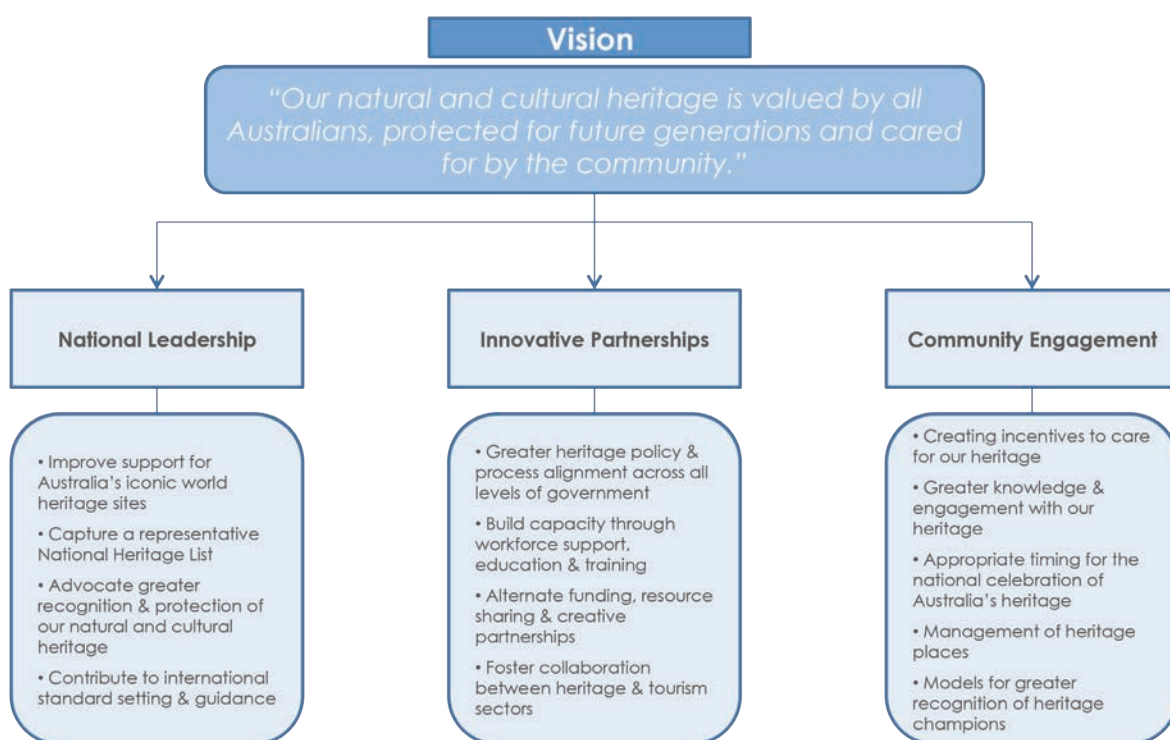
The aim of the Australian Heritage Strategy is to provide a framework for leadership, partnerships and community engagement. It will support the work of individuals, organisations, and governments by providing a common direction for the recognition and protection of Australia's heritage, and builds on the existing management arrangements for heritage.

This Strategy is built around a central vision of our natural and cultural heritage being valued by all Australians, protected for future generations and cared for by the community. The vision is supported by three overarching themes: national leadership; innovative partnerships; and community engagement. Each of these themes is underpinned by commitments

already made by the Australian Government and proposed actions that seek to broaden community engagement in the identification, protection and celebration of our heritage.

Members of the public and heritage community are invited to comment on the draft Strategy. In particular, the Government is seeking comments on:

- **the proposed actions and relative priority that should be afforded to them; and**
- **actions that will be taken by other participants in the heritage sector that can be incorporated into the Strategy so that it is reflective of our collective efforts.**





Commitments and proposed actions

1. Improve National Leadership

a. Improved support for Australia's iconic World Heritage sites

Commitments:

- Provide support for vital Port Arthur World Heritage restoration works.
- Provide support to local environment and heritage conservation projects across Australia through the Green Army Programme.
- Complete the strategic assessment of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area which will help identify, plan for and manage the unique values of this special region.
- Establish a Reef Trust as part of the Reef 2050 plan for the long-term management and protection of the Great Barrier Reef.

Proposed action:

- Explore innovative approaches to fund the long term protection and management of Australia's heritage places.

b. Capture a representative National Heritage List

Commitment:

- Provide additional support over the next three years to the Australian Heritage Council to help assess our national heritage and advise on its protection.

Proposed actions:

- Work with the Australian Heritage Council to:
 - prioritise thematic studies
 - explore new research techniques for identifying heritage values that are poorly represented
 - commit to exploring how the listing process can be streamlined
 - encourage expert partnerships to help facilitate future assessments.

c. Pursue greater recognition and protection of our natural and cultural heritage, particularly our Indigenous cultural heritage

Commitment:

- Encourage training and capacity building in Indigenous communities through the Green Army Programme.

Proposed actions:

- Identify priority sites for assessment for potential World Heritage listing, including significant elements of Cape York Peninsula with Indigenous support and Sydney's Royal National Park.
- Work with the Victorian Government to pursue National Heritage listing of the Queen Victoria Markets in Melbourne, and then investigate the potential for World Heritage listing.
- Promote the best practice *Ask First* Indigenous consultation guidelines.
- Improve the recognition and protection of Indigenous cultural heritage.
- Promote the use of the Australia's Community Heritage web site to record the activities and achievements of the new Green Army and Community Heritage and Icons Programmes.

d. Contribute to international heritage standard setting and guidance

Proposed actions:

- Continue Australia's active contribution to World Heritage policy discussions at international forums.
- Commit to further work with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to improve and build management and governance capacity when sought by regional countries.

- Explore application of lessons learnt from Great Barrier Reef strategic assessment for improved management of other World Heritage sites.

2. Pursue innovative partnerships

a. Greater heritage policy and process alignment across all levels of government

Commitment:

- Develop one stop shop streamlining processes to make it easier to navigate heritage regulations.

Proposed actions:

- 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.
- Work towards effective complementary recognition and protection of National and World Heritage in relevant jurisdictional environmental heritage laws.
- Ensure Indigenous Australians have a central role in decision making relating to their heritage while providing protection for traditional areas, objects and languages.

b. Building heritage capacity through workforce support, education and training

Commitment:

- Establish the Green Army Programme to provide opportunities for young Australians to gain training and experience in environmental and heritage conservation by participating in projects that generate real benefits for Australia's natural and cultural heritage places.

Proposed actions:

- Explore complementary partnerships that build linkages between Green Army heritage projects and innovative education, training and mentoring opportunities and quality frameworks.
- Explore opportunities for Indigenous people to access training and career path development in heritage identification, management, promotion and celebration.





c. Innovative funding, resource sharing and creative partnerships

Commitment:

- Support the Federation of Australian Historical Societies over the next three years to strengthen engagement with and support for local community heritage groups.

Proposed actions:

- Explore the development of new incentives and resource gathering partnerships.
- Explore setting up a specific heritage platform for crowd-funding.
- Encourage increased grassroots investment and local business participation through new philanthropic and creative business partnerships.

d. Foster greater collaboration between heritage and tourism sectors

Commitment:

- Through the new Community Heritage and Icons Programme, encourage local and regional communities to promote and tell the stories of their local heritage and to explore linkages with local tourism bodies to further promote these heritage experiences.

Proposed actions:

- Encourage greater visitation to National Heritage places by enhancing the Australian Government web site to better tell the stories of these places and investigate ways of further promoting these places with tourism bodies.
- Encourage new ways in which innovative tourism experiences can be developed to encourage greater engagement with the cultural aspects of our heritage places.
- Pursue improved linkages between the heritage, National Landscapes and tourism sectors to explore better promotion of Australia's special places.

3. Encourage communities to understand and care for their heritage

a. Creating incentives to care for our heritage

Commitments:

- Deliver benefits for heritage and for the community through Community Heritage and Icons Programme funding to support local historical or heritage groups for the conservation, development and exhibition of our local cultural heritage.
- Through the Green Army Programme, bring young people together with heritage managers to learn about heritage conservation and restoration projects.

Proposed actions:

- Encourage additional support from other government agencies and private heritage organisations to add value to worthwhile conservation projects.

b. Promoting greater knowledge and engagement with our heritage

Commitment:

- Work cooperatively with the United Kingdom Government to secure on long term loan Matthews Flinders' original 1804 map of Australia, the first complete map of our continent.

Proposed actions:

- Explore partnerships to establish a single entry point information portal for access to heritage information at all levels (world, national, state and territory and local).
- Improve public access to heritage information through new technologies, social media and plain English government online nomination/ application forms.
- Enhance Australia's Community Heritage web site to allow greater public interaction, allowing them to share their heritage stories.

- Encourage grant recipients to publish their project success stories on the Australia's Community Heritage web site.
- Enhance the National Heritage web site to include a competition that allows people to nominate their best loved Australian heritage place or icon.

c. Appropriate timing for the national celebration of Australia's heritage

Proposed action:

- To increase community engagement with Heritage Week, investigate whether the date should be shifted to enable greater local engagement in heritage activities.

d. Management of heritage places

Proposed actions:

- Explore the further development of national standards and best practice guidelines for conservation and management of heritage places.
- Work with the Australian Heritage Council to provide appropriate monitoring and evaluation methods to:
 - help managers develop practical arrangements for protecting the values of heritage listed places, and
 - build a more comprehensive understanding of the condition of our collective national heritage.

e. Models for recognition of Australian heritage champions

Proposed action:

- Explore the best approaches for the recognition of Australian heritage champions.

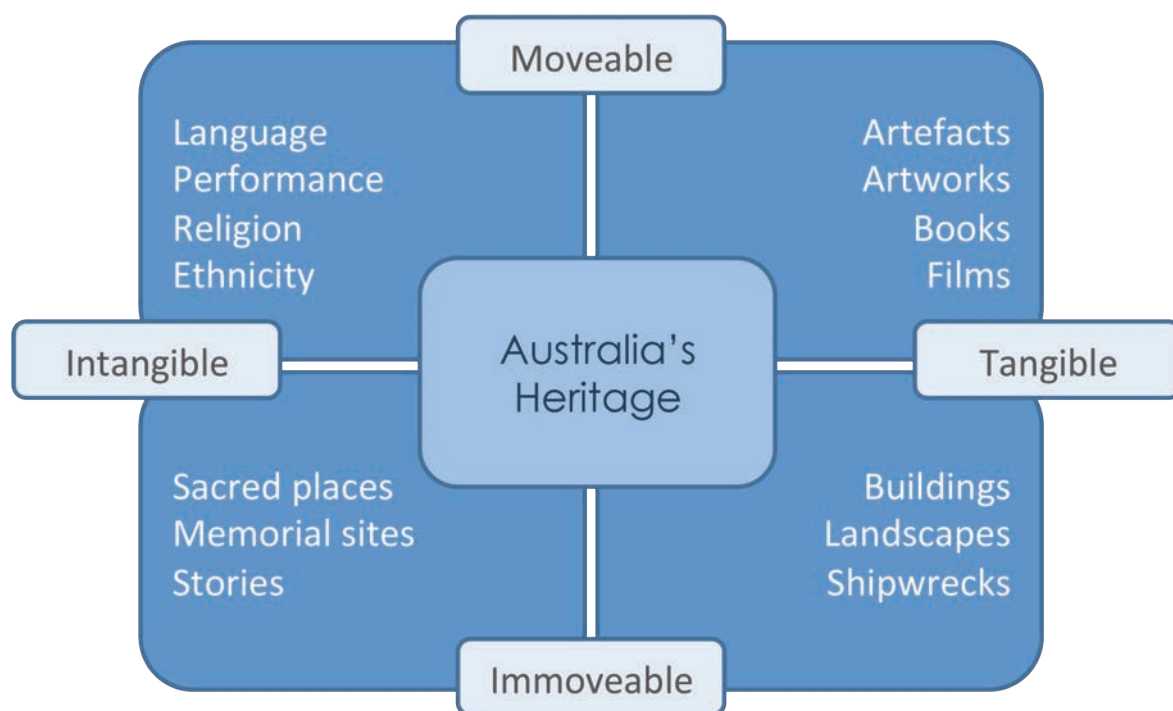


What is heritage?

Heritage can be simply defined as the special places or things that tell important stories about us and our world. Heritage is present everywhere – it is in household objects, in machinery and technology, and in buildings and landscapes. It is what we value from the past and wish to pass on to future generations. It includes stories, traditions, languages, events and experiences, architectural wonders, and our unique natural, historic and Indigenous environment. Heritage is an integral part of life today. It is constantly evolving and is shaped by all Australians.

Places are also important repositories of heritage. They tell the story of landscape change and the evolution of species, mark a historical event, or provide a tangible reminder of the events and experiences of our forebears. They may be a source of identity, inspiration or memory to the community. Our heritage is also captured in photographs, music, oral stories, languages, traditions, archival records, and in literature and film.

There are many different heritage and cultural activities, places and objects which the following diagram attempts to simplify:



The Australian Heritage Strategy is largely focused on heritage places, how they are identified and managed, and the way the Australian community shares and celebrates the stories these places represent. It also considers how government and community leadership and collaborative partnerships can help Australians better engage in these activities.

More than a legacy from our past, heritage is also a living, integral part of life today that is constantly refreshed. It continuously influences our quality of life. Our heritage underpins our sense of place and

identity. Shaped by nature and history, it gives context to where we are now and where we are headed as a community.

By protecting heritage places and the stories and events they represent, we conserve the things that help shape our nation and community and ensure that our stories, traditions and places can continue to be experienced and enjoyed by future generations.



Australia's heritage community

This Australian Heritage Strategy is a strategy for all Australians. Across Australia community groups commit their time, energy and often finances to caring for their local heritage. Such efforts, largely unheralded, are undertaken by individual Australians for common benefit. This Strategy recognises the important role these groups play and values their experience and ideas on how Australians can best benefit from our heritage.

Many people may not immediately identify themselves as heritage experts, or even as involved in heritage activities. One of the strengths and challenges of heritage is that there is no single or simply identified group that undertakes heritage activities. Many different groups in society are involved in caring for heritage:

- private and public owners of listed heritage places.
- volunteers, tourists and visitors.

- tradespeople, professional and academic disciplines including anthropology, archaeology, architecture, communications and public relations, forestry, film making, history, park management.
- the National Trusts and many other historic societies and groups who care for and manage heritage assets.
- Indigenous people as Traditional Owners and custodians working on country, employed in parks and other roles.
- agencies across local, state and Australian governments who care for heritage assets as part of their wider role, as well as those who provide specific advice and services.





A strategy for Australia's Heritage

Australia has a rich natural and cultural heritage that underpins our sense of place and national identity. Heritage brings important benefits to communities through a greater sense of belonging. Cultural and natural heritage contributes significantly to our national story and sense of who we are. It plays a major role in domestic and international tourism, and brings other economic benefits to our cities and communities. Our heritage is also an important component in the Australian Government's *Plan for a Cleaner Environment*, through the protection of World Heritage and National Heritage places and its support for local action to conserve and promote heritage.

The aim of the Australian Heritage Strategy is to provide a framework for leadership, partnerships and

community engagement. It will support the work of individuals, organisations, and governments by providing a common direction for the recognition and protection of Australia's heritage, and builds on the existing management arrangements for heritage.

The Australian Government's administrative roles and responsibilities for heritage are defined in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and other Australian Government legislation and in various intergovernmental agreements with the states and territories. The states and territories and local government have their own heritage policies and legislation. Indigenous heritage is often managed under special legislation or as part of native title law.

Why Australia's heritage is important

Our national heritage is important because it:

- underpins our national character
- reflects our diverse history, natural landscapes and rich Indigenous culture
- weaves together places, and stories into a rich tapestry that builds community pride and belonging, creates cultural enrichment and enhances well being

1. Improve national leadership

Heritage leadership comes in many forms. The Australian, state and territory and local governments all have legislative responsibilities for the identification and protection of heritage, and a role in building community understanding and celebration of its place in our society. Similarly, the heritage community, comprising organisations such as local historical societies and groups, the National Trusts and other organisations, and private owners of heritage places, are leaders of our collective heritage efforts.

What are the most important things the Australian Government should be doing to offer leadership, to encourage and to provide guidance and support for our national heritage?

We would welcome views about which of the following should be priorities for the Australian Government and potential practical actions to improve national heritage leadership.

How can the leadership roles played by other parties in the heritage sector be enhanced and what actions can they take in this regard?

Priorities

a. Improved support for Australia's iconic World Heritage sites

There are currently nineteen Australian properties on the World Heritage List. Australian Government legislation provides for the protection of a diverse collection of outstanding universal values represented by these properties. Research and operational funding has been provided, over recent years, with focus on the biodiversity heritage of World Heritage properties. Funding for significant cultural sites has come from other sources on a needs basis.

Issues/Opportunities

The heritage sector has over several years called for more sustainable and equitable funding approaches to support the management of Australia's World Heritage estate. It is also important to note that while the Australian Government is the Australian 'State party' for World Heritage Convention purposes, most World Heritage properties are in state and territory jurisdictions. For ongoing effective management of these properties, cooperation across jurisdictions and the community is essential.

Commitments:

- As an immediate action, provide support for vital Port Arthur World Heritage restoration works; this is in addition to the existing \$40 million committed over five years (2013-2018) from the World Heritage Grants Programme to support World Heritage priorities and obligations.
- Provide support to local environment and heritage conservation projects across Australia through the Green Army Programme.
- Complete the strategic assessment of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area which will help identify, plan for and manage the unique values of this special region.
- Establish a Reef Trust as part of the Reef 2050 plan for the long-term management and protection of the Great Barrier Reef.

Proposed action:

- Explore innovative approaches to fund the long term protection and management of Australia's heritage places (see page 20).

b. Capture a representative National Heritage List

There are currently 100 places on the National Heritage List. Australian Government legislation provides for the protection of the natural, historic and Indigenous values of national heritage significance found within these places.

Issues/Opportunities

Commentators have suggested that some important categories of heritage assets are not well represented on formal heritage lists — and as a result are not provided with adequate legislative recognition or protection. For example, the arid zone and benevolent and care institutions are two categories of places currently poorly represented on the National Heritage List.

Commitment:

- Provide additional support over the next three years to the Australian Heritage Council to help assess our national heritage and advise on its protection.

Proposed actions:

- Work with the Australian Heritage Council to:
 - prioritise thematic studies
 - explore new research techniques for identifying heritage values that are poorly represented
 - commit to exploring how the listing process can be streamlined
 - encourage expert partnerships to help facilitate future assessments.

c. Pursue greater recognition and protection of our natural and cultural heritage, particularly our Indigenous cultural heritage

The *2011 State of the Environment* report provided insight into the current and potential future condition of the environment. For heritage, the report showed that conditions were generally good, though some deterioration had been evident in recent years. The report identified a range of pressures that can impact upon the condition of our natural and cultural heritage places. The need for protection against threats such as bushfires, weeds and feral animals in our natural environments and the changing use and economic contribution of historic places in our urban environments is recognised in the State of the Environment report as needing action.

The *Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage* strategy recognises that Indigenous communities can be empowered by building upon the strengths of Indigenous cultures and identities. This can help community leaders in their efforts to achieve more quickly improved outcomes for Indigenous recognition, health and employment.

Issues/Opportunities

Despite the recognition highlighted in these reports that conditions for our heritage are generally good, there is always room for improvement.

Commitment:

- Encourage training and capacity building in Indigenous communities through the Green Army Programme.

Proposed actions:

- Identify priority sites for assessment for potential World Heritage listing, including significant elements of Cape York Peninsula with Indigenous support and Sydney's Royal National Park.
- Work with the Victorian Government to pursue National Heritage listing of the Queen Victoria Markets in Melbourne, and then investigate the potential for World Heritage listing.

- Promote the best practice Ask First Indigenous consultation guidelines.
- Improve the recognition and protection of Indigenous cultural heritage.
- Promote the use of the Australia's Community Heritage web site to record the activities and achievements of the Green Army and Community Heritage and Icons Programmes.

d. Contribute to international heritage standard setting and guidance

Australia has played a significant role in a range of international heritage matters, including: serving on the World Heritage Committee four times; playing a leadership role in strengthening the integrity of the World Heritage Convention; contributing expertise to improve the policies that conserve World Heritage; and supporting our region to engage with, and share in the cultural, economic and social benefits of World Heritage recognition and protection.

Issues/Opportunities

UNESCO and its key cultural and natural heritage evaluators (ICOMOS and the IUCN) recognise the Australian Government can continue to play an important role in international heritage and with regional neighbours, especially in the South East Asian and Pacific regions.

Proposed actions:

- Continue Australia's active contribution to World Heritage policy discussions at international forums.
- Commit to further work with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to improve and build management and governance capacity when sought by regional countries.
- Explore application of lessons learnt from Great Barrier Reef strategic assessment for improved management of other World Heritage sites.
- Further promote Australia's standing internationally as a world leader in heritage management.



2. Pursue innovative partnerships

Australia's heritage places are owned and managed by governments, organisations and individuals. Cooperative partnerships are an important way to efficiently and effectively manage these places. While partnerships to support heritage are not new (such as the *Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment*, 1992 and the *National Heritage Protocol*, 2003), there is a growing interest across the heritage sector in exploring practical and long term collaboration on heritage matters. The priorities identified below for action explore a range of innovative partnership opportunities.

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?

We would welcome views on which of the following partnership approaches should be the focus of the Australian Government and other heritage sector stakeholders.

"A truly integrated system of managing Australia's unique cultural landscape with its layers of heritage, histories and values has the potential to emerge from a reconciliation of the multiplicity of approaches, legislative frameworks, strategic policies and funding programs. An inclusive approach drawing on the strengths of each rather than continuing the siloed approach that is the heritage legacy is what is required to support communities to maintain their particular connection and build their capacity as they manage and protect 'our' heritage" (Bell & Elley 2012).

Priorities

a. Greater heritage policy and process alignment across all levels of government

The legislative environment for the management of heritage places in Australia is complex and inconsistent. Legislative reforms, particularly in the area of Indigenous heritage, are being pursued by a number of jurisdictions and it is recognised that more can be done.

In late 2013, the Australian and state governments began working in partnership to deliver 'one stop shops' by accrediting state planning systems to manage environmental assessment and approval processes for nationally protected matters under the EPBC Act. The goal of this approach is to simplify the approvals process for businesses, lead to swifter decisions and improves cooperation while maintaining high environmental standards.

Another regulation reform that will be considered is in relation to the energy efficiency green star schemes. Currently the embodied energy of existing buildings - which includes the energy required to extract, manufacture, and transport building materials if the building is demolished - is not recognised as contributing to the green star rating of a building. As a consequence older heritage assets have been demolished in favour of newer higher green star rated buildings. This process has contributed to a lack of recognition of the adaptive reuse value and energy savings of heritage buildings.

Issues/Opportunities

Government laws, regulations and policies need to be taken into account by managers of heritage places. In some cases this can include interpreting multiple layers of overlapping government legislation.

One of the common criticisms of this system is that it results in much complexity, confusion and inconsistency. There is great potential for benefits to be experienced through similar government 'one stop shop' alignments across the heritage sector. On the other end of the spectrum, there is recognition that important heritage matters are not being appropriately considered in some government policies and decisions. Partnership led actions should aim to strike the right balance of recognising the benefits of heritage whilst minimising any unnecessary burden upon those who are responsible for managing heritage assets.

Commitment:

- Develop one stop shop streamlining of processes to make it easier to navigate heritage regulations.

Proposed actions:

- 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.
- Work towards effective complementary recognition and protection of National and World Heritage in relevant jurisdictional environmental heritage laws.
- Ensure Indigenous Australians have a central role in decision making relating to their heritage while providing protection for traditional areas, objects and languages.

Partnerships will be encouraged between government, heritage peak bodies and the construction industry to develop appropriate reforms to green star building schemes for existing heritage buildings.

b. Building heritage capacity through workforce support, education and training

Heritage skills play an important role in communities and in the wider economy. The construction industry has an important role in maintaining heritage buildings, and skills in interpreting and sharing heritage contribute to the digital and creative economy. Heritage projects require a combination of practical trades and experience guided by specialist skills and knowledge.

Issues/Opportunities

Motivated volunteers go a long way to helping with the daily management of Australia's natural, Indigenous and historic sites but more help is always welcome. Tradespeople with the traditional skills needed for built heritage conservation work are also becoming harder to find. Establishing new partnerships to improve conservators' access to skills and labour is critical to ensure future conservation work is possible. There are opportunities for the heritage sector to work closely with trades training and other tertiary institutions. There are also opportunities to encourage industry and others to recognise the added value of good heritage skills.

Commitment:

- Establish the Green Army Programme to provide opportunities for young Australians to gain training and experience in environmental and heritage conservation by participating in projects that generate real benefits for Australia's natural and cultural heritage places.

Proposed actions:

- Explore complementary partnerships that build linkages between Green Army heritage projects and innovative education, training and mentoring opportunities and quality frameworks.
- Explore opportunities for Indigenous people to access training and career path development in heritage identification, management, promotion and celebration.

c. Innovative funding, resource sharing and creative partnerships

The heritage sector has long faced the challenge of finding the resources and incentives needed to conserve and manage Australia's cultural and natural heritage. As direct government funding across all sectors has shifted in recent years, innovative place managers look for alternative resourcing solutions. Private sector Foundations and Trusts as well as the Australian Government's *Protecting National Historic Sites* and state government programmes go a long



way to support heritage conservation; however there is a need to identify new sources of funding for the heritage sector.

Issues/Opportunities

Opportunities for alternate funding range from established practices such as philanthropic support to social media led crowd-funding approaches. Existing models include State Lottery funding in Western Australia and the Sydney Opera House's recent sale of virtual tiles. These and other approaches can better be explored and implemented through cooperative partnerships.

Commitment:

Support the Federation of Australian Historical Societies over the next three years to strengthen engagement with and support for local community heritage groups.

Proposed actions:

- Explore the development of new incentives and resource gathering partnerships.
- Explore setting up a specific heritage platform for crowd-funding.
- Encourage increased grassroots investment and local business participation through new philanthropic and creative business partnerships.

d. Foster greater collaboration between heritage and tourism sectors

As well as providing a sense of place and providing context and continuity to our daily lives, heritage places and stories are increasingly recognised as an important driver of national and regional economies. Australia has many heritage listed destinations that both domestic and international tourists travel long distances to see. While many places draw crowds because of spectacular and iconic landscapes, tourists increasingly want a richer experience.

Tourism research suggests that cultural visitors stay longer and spend more than other visitors. Culture and heritage play a critical role in global cities, and make an important contribution to regional and state economies. Recently it has been estimated that the Sydney Opera House, a World Heritage site, is worth over \$4bn to the Australian economy. However growth in cultural tourism has shown that travellers want more, including greater understanding of our Indigenous cultural heritage.

Issues/Opportunities

There is a great opportunity to strengthen the role of tourism in supporting natural and cultural heritage. For much of Australia's natural and cultural heritage a viable tourism market exists and can be further developed particularly in regional communities. Communicating the fascinating stories of our local community heritage can create powerful experiences. Improved linkages between the heritage and tourism sectors should create tourism business opportunities and ways of increasing natural and cultural awareness through the development of networks and partnerships, especially at the regional and local level.

Lessons can also be learnt from the National Landscapes Program, which has effectively developed tourism business opportunities and ways of increasing natural and cultural awareness through the development of networks and partnerships; especially at the regional and local level. Many of the 16 national landscapes are also found on the National and World Heritage Lists (e.g. Ningaloo Coast, Greater Blue Mountains).

Increased tourist visitation can impact on heritage values. Cooperative partnerships and quality frameworks for the tourism and heritage sectors help provide tourists with both an enjoyable and sustainable heritage experience.

Commitment:

Through the new Community Heritage and Icons Programme, encourage local and regional communities to promote and tell the stories of their local heritage and to explore linkages with local tourism bodies to further promote these heritage experiences.

Proposed actions:

- Encourage greater visitation to National Heritage places by enhancing the Australian Government web site to better tell the stories of these places and investigate ways of further promoting these places with tourism bodies.
- Encourage new ways in which innovative tourism experiences can be developed to encourage greater engagement with the cultural aspects of our heritage places, such as can be currently experienced at Uluru-Kata Tjuta and Kakadu National Parks.
- Pursue improved linkages between the heritage, National Landscapes and tourism sectors to explore better promotion of Australia's special places.



3. Encourage communities to understand and care for their heritage

All Australians should be able to access, commemorate, celebrate, and engage in their heritage. While many of our heritage assets belong to a local community, such as a historic building or sacred site, many have values that resonate widely and have significance to many people. Other places are significant to the entire nation.

Large parts of the Australian community do have their say, speaking volumes by their actions:

“There are of course the many passionate private individuals who care for heritage assets such as historic vessels, cars and machinery, or the owners who cherish their historic buildings and landscapes. There are the members of local history and heritage societies, the thousands of volunteers who give the time and the hundreds of ‘friends’ groups who band together to support museums, national parks, and other sites. There are also individuals with special skills and knowledge—the speakers of Indigenous languages, the holders of cultural knowledge and traditions, and the craftsmen who pass on the skills needed to repair old buildings or recreate Aboriginal technology” (Clark 2012).

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?

We would welcome views about which of the following should be priorities for the heritage sector to pursue in its efforts to help the community better engage with our heritage places and stories.

Priorities

a. Creating incentives to care for our heritage

The time and effort invested by businesses, owners and volunteers in caring for heritage clearly demonstrates their understanding that the preservation of our national heritage is important for future generations.

Issues/Opportunities

In many cases, private owners or community groups manage and protect very significant parts of our built heritage, often with few incentives to do so. Peak heritage groups and community organisations regularly approach governments of all levels to help share this cost burden.

Commitments:

- Deliver benefits for heritage and for the community through Community Heritage and Icons Programme funding to support local historical or heritage groups for the conservation, development and exhibition of our local cultural heritage.
- Through the Green Army Programme, bring young people together with heritage managers to learn about heritage conservation and restoration projects.

Proposed action:

- Encourage additional support from other government agencies and private heritage organisations to add value to worthwhile conservation projects.

b. Promoting greater knowledge and engagement with our heritage

The term ‘heritage’ includes both natural and cultural environments each with tangible, intangible, movable and site-based elements. However, recent public surveys show that many people see heritage as simply ‘history’ and ‘old buildings’ (Deakin University 2010). From such surveys and other forms of stakeholder feedback, it is clear there is an opportunity to communicate more effectively about heritage issues to build greater recognition and sense of ownership within the Australian community of our national heritage in all its forms.

A fundamental requirement for effectively managing heritage places is access to the right information. All heritage places have stories that when shared, help the listener get a sense of why a place is special, of why it is valued. There are many opportunities to engage the broader community in heritage through the use of databases, web sites, blogs, social media, and other new media technologies.

Issues/Opportunities

There is a need to build a shared understanding of what Australian heritage is and how it can contribute to wider agendas, such as the economy, society, culture and the environment. A shared understanding could help build greater public appreciation and ownership of our national heritage, and in turn help reduce confusion and to improve governance. There is also a need to encourage the community to “own” our heritage and to become actively engaged in its presentation.

Through public consultation it has been noted that finding the right heritage information can be a challenging task. Digital media transforms the interpretation of heritage from a place-based focus to a broader narrative-based structure creating opportunity for greater interaction with the community. The National Trusts of Australia and others have begun to explore the exciting potential of using social media platforms and other specialised apps. New technologies can improve the access to important information needed by place managers and help interpret heritage values to new audiences.

Commitment:

- Work cooperatively with the United Kingdom Government to secure on long term loan Matthews Flinders original 1804 map of Australia, the first complete map of our continent.

Proposed actions:

- Explore partnerships to establish a single entry point information portal for access to heritage information at all levels (world, national, state and territory and local).
- Improve public access to heritage information through new technologies, social media and plain English government online nomination/application forms.
- Enhance Australia’s Community Heritage web site to allow greater public interaction, allowing them to share their heritage stories.
- Encourage grant recipients to publish their project success stories on the Australia’s Community Heritage web site.
- Enhance the National Heritage web site to include a competition that allows people to nominate their best loved Australian heritage place or icon.

c. Appropriate timing for the national celebration of Australia’s heritage

Australians have shown a great willingness over recent years to visit heritage places, celebrate in festivals and commemorate events of national significance. Australia Day (26 January) has become an important focus for reflection of our growing national identity. Australian Heritage Week is held in conjunction with UNESCO’s *International Day for Monuments and Sites* (18 April) to bring together heritage events held across the country. This week of celebration overlaps with the well established National Trusts’ Heritage Festival which brings together up to 1,500 heritage events across Australia (National Trust 2014).

Issues/Opportunities

The question of when we should celebrate our national heritage needs to be explored carefully. UNESCO's *International Day for Monuments and Sites* is not widely known by the Australian public. Aligning Australian Heritage Week with public or school holidays may resonate better with Australians, allowing us to have the time and space to celebrate together our national heritage.

Proposed action:

To increase community engagement with Heritage Week, investigate whether the date should be shifted to enable greater local community engagement in heritage activities.

d. Management of heritage places

It is recognised that the majority of heritage conservation and management activities are undertaken by local governments, community groups and individuals. Heritage work can be a complex business that, at times, needs expert advice and guidance. The provision of good advice and guidance by the Australian, state and territory governments and professional organisations can help ensure work undertaken is effective and appropriate.

Issues/Opportunities

The release of the *Ruins* guidelines (DoE 2013) has answered the call for a best practice approach to managing this challenging part of our heritage. The development of other practical resources to help with on-ground decision making could be explored over the next few years. Another challenge facing National Heritage place managers is the difficulty of effectively monitoring the ongoing condition of identified heritage values.

Proposed actions:

- Explore the further development of national standards and best practice guidelines for conservation and management of heritage places.
- Work with the Australian Heritage Council to provide appropriate monitoring and evaluation methods to:
 - help managers develop practical arrangements for protecting the values of heritage listed places, and
 - build a more comprehensive understanding of the condition of our collective national heritage.

e. Models for recognition of Australian heritage champions

Many dedicated individuals work hard to champion the appropriate recognition, protection and celebration of Australia's heritage. This personal work is undertaken, often in difficult circumstances and with limited resources, for the benefit of all Australians.

Issues/Opportunities

Over the years some heritage practitioners have been recognised through the Queen's Honours Lists and Australia Day awards. Appropriate ways of acknowledging Australia's heritage champions will be further explored.

Proposed action:

- Explore the best approaches for the recognition of Australian heritage champions.



Public Consultation on the Draft Australian Heritage Strategy

Introduction

The Government is preparing a new strategy to identify simple and practical actions that can be taken to ensure our natural and cultural heritage is valued by all Australians and protected for future generations. The Government wants to find the best ways of sharing the stories about Australia's heritage and of inspiring Australians from all walks of life in the great national project of conserving, improving and celebrating our heritage. This consultation seeks your views on how to achieve these objectives.

Audience

This draft of the Australian Heritage Strategy is now available for public comment. You are invited to provide feedback on what themes, priorities and actions should be included in the final Strategy document.

Details of how to provide feedback are available on the Department's website <http://www.environment.gov.au/australian-heritage-strategy>

Duration

The consultation will open on Monday 14 April 2014 and close on Monday 9 June 2014.

Submissions

Where possible submissions should be sent electronically, preferably in Microsoft Word or other text-based formats to the email address listed below. Alternatively, submissions may be sent to the postal address below to arrive by close of business on Monday 9 June 2014.

Email: AusHeritageStrategy@environment.gov.au

Postal: Australian Heritage Strategy Submissions
Heritage Branch
Department of the Environment
GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601

Confidentiality statement

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and the *Privacy Act 1988*).

The Government may publish responses received from organisations. If you want other information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the *Freedom of Information Act*, there is a statutory code of practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, among other things, with obligations of confidence.

In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request

for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your computer system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data in accordance with the *Privacy Act* and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

At the end of the consultation

A summary of responses will be published in due course following the closure of the consultation. The responses will be used by the Department to inform finalisation of the Australian Heritage Strategy.



