Introduction

In the lead-up to the 2019 federal election, Australia ICOMOS has developed a range of key cultural heritage proposals for consideration by all parties and independents. These proposals are below. The proposals are an outline only, and Australia ICOMOS is available to provide further details if requested.

Shared Responsibility for Australia’s Heritage

The Commonwealth should issue a high level statement supportive of Australia’s cultural heritage, regarding both Indigenous and historic heritage, linked to the Australian Heritage Strategy, and including international recognition of best practice conservation through the Burra Charter.

The Commonwealth should demonstrate leadership in the ‘shared responsibility’ for Australia’s heritage between all governments, the community, private and business sectors.

- This may be expressed through a simple policy statement on the shared responsibility for heritage, including coordination, adopted through the Council of Australian Governments.
- This leadership includes re-establishing regular consultative mechanisms with peak cultural heritage bodies, including Australia ICOMOS and National Trusts Australia.
- The Commonwealth should provide additional resources and support to facilitate regular meetings of the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC) and Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network (AWHIN).
- This leadership also includes support already committed for the international ICOMOS General Assembly in 2020 on the theme of Shared Cultures – Shared Heritage – Shared Responsibility.

The Commonwealth should prepare a well-conceived and consultatively-prepared World Heritage Tentative List, which accords with the requirements of the Operational Guidelines to the World Heritage Convention, including development and dissemination of information about what a Tentative List is for and what it means.

The Commonwealth should review the current situation with climate change and cultural heritage including the adequacy of knowledge about current and future impacts, the adequacy of response measures, and recommended improvements.

The Commonwealth should lead and work with States and the Territories to collect common heritage data to support policy development, programs and resourcing decisions.
The Commonwealth should support the development of an Indigenous-led discussion paper on *issues and future directions for Indigenous heritage* in Australia, based on a consultative process.

The Commonwealth should promote greater coordination, integration and access to information about Australia’s heritage places, taking account of improved technologies. As part of this, the Commonwealth should instigate and facilitate a review of the *future of heritage registers* in Australia.

The Commonwealth should develop a discussion paper on the appropriate level and mechanisms of future public, private and shared *support for heritage conservation* in Australia, including consideration of the different levels of government in Australia.

The Commonwealth should develop innovative *funding, incentives, resource sharing and creative partnerships* for all levels and types of cultural heritage, including serious consideration of a National Heritage Lottery.

The Commonwealth should develop and implement a *capacity-building initiative for local government*, in conjunction with State, Territory and local governments, to better address the protection, conservation, management and presentation of heritage at the local level.

The Commonwealth should promote inclusion of the conservation of heritage values as a *sustainability measure in the building industry* and development ratings tools.

The Commonwealth should develop a discussion paper about the principles relevant to *retaining or divesting public heritage assets*.


**Implementing National Initiatives for Australia’s Heritage**

The Commonwealth should enhance resourcing for the *Australian Heritage Council*, including Departmental support, to enhance its role as an independent, pro-active, expert, public champion for Australia’s heritage, and to support its full statutory role. The AHC should be the vehicle to achieve many of these proposed initiatives.

The Commonwealth should prepare and release for comment a discussion paper on the purpose, nature and scope of the *National Heritage List*, led by the Australian Heritage Council, including an identification of impediments to the development of the List and possible solutions.

The Commonwealth should allocate the necessary resources to enable the timely assessment of the places which are currently on the *Priority Assessment List* for consideration of potential National Heritage values and inclusion in the National Heritage List.

The Commonwealth should review departmental resources and restore *staffing levels* for heritage, in particular to ensure the availability of high-level expertise.
The Commonwealth should increase funding and other support for non-governmental heritage organisations in recognition of the vital role they play in identifying, protecting, conserving, managing and presenting Australia’s heritage.

The Commonwealth should fully implement the Australian Heritage Strategy (http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/publications/australian-heritage-strategy), with periodic review of progress, and a commitment to update the strategy starting immediately, and then periodically over time. In particular, a focus should be the Heritage Quality Framework to improve certainty, quality and sustainability in development involving heritage conservation.

The Commonwealth should adequately fund Commonwealth State of the Environment Reporting, address its findings, and review the effectiveness of its influence on policy and program development in heritage.

The Commonwealth should extend the scope of the National Environmental Science Program to include cultural heritage.

The Commonwealth should provide policies and protocols for the effective and reportable management of National Heritage places, including consistent monitoring that correlates to other relevant processes such as State of the Environment Reporting and World Heritage Periodic Reporting.

The Commonwealth should continue its already committed support for the international ICOMOS General Assembly in 2020 in Sydney.

National Legislation and International Conventions

The Commonwealth should ratify international cultural heritage conventions for underwater and intangible heritage and update key national legislation – the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act.

The Commonwealth should undertake an audit of the effectiveness of Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act provisions regarding the actual on-ground protection, conservation, management and presentation of heritage places, given this was not undertaken by the last major review (the Hawke Review).

The Commonwealth should substantially improve the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, or replace the Act, ensuring in either case superior heritage outcomes – taking note of the issues raised during the Hawke Review and the effectiveness review recommended above. If the Act is replaced, the Commonwealth should implement a separate heritage Act.

The Commonwealth should introduce a range of new measures to enhance protection of World Heritage, National Heritage and Commonwealth Heritage, including stop-work and work orders.