Submission Coversheet

Public consultation paper on the Australian Heritage Strategy

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14 June 2012

Ms Alison Stone
First Assistant Secretary
Heritage and Wildlife Division
Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
GPO Box 787
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Stone

RE: AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE STRATEGY

Please find attached a submission from Australia ICOMOS regarding the proposed Australian Heritage Strategy. We thank you for the opportunity to contribute. The attached should be considered as a complement to the issues we have highlighted in previous discussions at the two workshops held by the Australian Heritage Council.

We would be happy to provide more information if requested. We look forward to the next stage of this important process.

Yours sincerely

DR JANE HARRINGTON
President
Australia ICOMOS strongly supports this proposed strategy and welcomes the Government’s leadership and initiative. It is an important opportunity to provide a strategic national direction for Australia’s heritage.

In responding to the public consultation paper, Australia ICOMOS has focused on a few targeted outcomes that would be appropriate for a national strategy. These outcomes are provided below.

The Australian Heritage Strategy should recognise, proclaim, promote and celebrate the importance of our natural and cultural heritage to our national well-being given the demonstrated concern and regard for it as expressed by the vast majority of Australians. The strategy should:

- stress the **national leadership** role of the Commonwealth, especially a prominent role for the Australian Heritage Council;
- promote and facilitate **national coordination and cooperation** between all jurisdictions (Commonwealth, State/Territory and local governments), including clarity about and integration of management decision-making;
- recognise and support the **important role local government** should play regarding Australia’s heritage;
- recognise that **communities have a responsibility for and a right to participate** in decisions affecting their heritage;
- reinforce the **importance of associated stories** as part of the heritage of places and landscapes;
- promote a **comprehensive and integrated view of Australia’s heritage**, including linkages with moveable heritage and intangible heritage;
- promote **links and coordination with other strategic and policy frameworks** (e.g. the proposed National Cultural Policy);
- provide a comprehensive and up to date listing of Australia's heritage places;
- provide an integrated national database of heritage places enabling a single web-based point of inquiry for the community and business. The database should also enable cross-jurisdictional research and understanding;
- provide for a **coordinated national program of research** to respond to common heritage issues facing more than a single jurisdiction, including methodological and technical conservation issues, as well as issues regarding knowledge about heritage (e.g. thematic studies);
- promote consistent and best-practice heritage legislation and administration across all jurisdictions;
• indicate that the Commonwealth will take a leading role in coordinating all of the listing and regulatory agencies dealing with Indigenous heritage, similar to the current Heritage Chairs and Officials forum, especially to respond to issues identified by the 2011 State of the Environment report (e.g. erratic identification of sites, legislation provides a recipe for destruction, intangible heritage at great risk);

• provide effective national monitoring and reporting of identification, protection, conservation and interpretation activities, with clear feedback links to government heritage policies and programs;

• provide ongoing substantial support for heritage training based on a review of existing activities and needs, and guided by a national strategic framework (e.g. to respond to the traditional heritage skills crisis);

• promote integration of Australia’s heritage into education curricula, including education strategies and materials based around heritage places, values and concepts;

• provide ongoing substantial support for heritage studies (e.g. CMPs);

• provide ongoing substantial support for physical conservation works (including technical advice and funding support) through a package of targeted measures, based on a review of the private/public benefits, costs, need and capacity;

• effectively integrate heritage into the Green Star sustainability system (eg. allowing points for heritage conservation and the embodied energy in existing structures, not just for measures of operational energy efficiency);

• provide ongoing substantial support for interpretation of Australia's heritage places, based on a review of current activities and desired outcomes, and a national strategic framework; and

• provide ongoing support for international heritage activities, especially those aimed at sharing skills and expertise, and helping other countries with their needs.

AUSTRALIA ICOMOS
14 June 2012