



Australia ICOMOS Secretariat
Faculty of Arts & Education
Deakin University
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood VIC 3125
ph: +61 3 9251 7131
e: austicomos@deakin.edu.au
w: www.icomos.org/australia

2022 Federal Election Policy – Cultural Heritage Proposals

Introduction

In the lead-up to the 2022 federal election, Australia ICOMOS has developed the following cultural heritage proposals for consideration by all parties and independents. Australia ICOMOS is available to provide further details and/or in-person briefings.

Commonwealth Leadership and 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 Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013).

The Commonwealth should demonstrate leadership in the '**shared responsibility**' for Australia's heritage between all governments, the community, and the private and business sectors:

- This may be expressed through a simple policy statement on the shared responsibility for heritage, including intergovernmental coordination at Ministerial level.
- This leadership includes re-establishing regular consultative mechanisms with peak cultural heritage bodies, including Australia ICOMOS and the National Trusts of 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).

The Commonwealth should prepare a well-conceived and consultatively-prepared **World Heritage Tentative List**, which accords with the requirements of UNESCO's *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 pro-actively address the major threat posed to cultural heritage by **climate change**, including the adequacy of knowledge about direct and indirect current and future impacts, the adequacy of response measures, and recommended improvements. Major programs should be instigated and funded to improve understanding of direct and indirect climate change impacts on cultural heritage, mitigative strategies and possible adaptations.

The Commonwealth should lead and work with the States and Territories to collect **common heritage data** to support coordinated/inter-jurisdictional policy development, programs and resourcing decisions. This work is vital to underpin statutory Commonwealth State of the Environment reporting.

The Commonwealth should support the development of an Indigenous-led discussion paper on **issues and future directions for Indigenous heritage** in Australia, based on an inclusive consultative process.

The Commonwealth should promote greater coordination, integration and access to information about Australia's heritage places, taking account of available technology. As part of this, the Commonwealth should instigate and facilitate a review of the **future of heritage registers** 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 (as foreshadowed in the Australian Heritage Strategy).

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 cultural heritage at the local level.

National Initiatives for Australia's Cultural Heritage

The Commonwealth should provide substantial additional resourcing for the **Australian Heritage Council**, including Departmental support, to enhance its role as an independent, pro-active, expert, public advocate for Australia's heritage, and to support its full statutory role. The Commonwealth should encourage the Australian Heritage Council to become an active champion and public voice for Australia's heritage.

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 cultural heritage, in particular to ensure the availability of high-level expertise.

The Commonwealth should instigate and lead a process to achieve **consistent Indigenous heritage legislation** across all Australian jurisdictions which provides for free, prior and informed consent, inter-jurisdictional co-operation and recognition of a broader range of values.

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 immediately release the updated **Australian Heritage Strategy** (<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/publications/australian-heritage-strategy>), allocate resources to support its implementation, and commit to periodic reviews of progress.

The Commonwealth should adequately fund **Commonwealth State of the Environment Reporting**, address the findings of the 2021 State of the Environment Report, and review the effectiveness of its influence on cultural heritage policy.

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 related processes such as State of the Environment Reporting and World Heritage Periodic Reporting.

Australia's International Role and Profile in Cultural Heritage

The Commonwealth should ratify **international cultural heritage conventions for underwater and intangible heritage**.

In consultation with the States and Territories, the Commonwealth should prepare a comprehensive and ambitious national **'World Heritage Policy'** which addresses Australia's role in and commitment to the World Heritage system, including compliance with the *Operational Guidelines*, contributions to the World Heritage Fund and periodic offers to serve on the World Heritage Committee and its various working groups.

The Commonwealth should continue its already committed support for the international **ICOMOS General Assembly** to be hosted in Sydney in 2023.

Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act

The Commonwealth should prioritise the following minor but important improvements to the EPBC Act:

- Simplify the process of adding to the existing values of a National Heritage or Commonwealth Heritage place, on the recommendation of the Australian Heritage Council, instead of the complex process currently required in the Act.
- Enable modification of the existing values of a National Heritage or Commonwealth Heritage place when a management plan which includes updated values is approved under the EPBC Act. (As management plans involve public consultation and AHC review, if plans are approved then the values in those plans should be a basis for quickly and easily updating existing listings.)
- Enable expansion of the area of a National Heritage or Commonwealth Heritage place, on the recommendation of the Australian Heritage Council.
- Allow for serial National Heritage or Commonwealth Heritage places. Serial places involve a single listing for a number of thematically-linked places in different geographic locations. While the World Heritage List allows for serial places, the EPBC Act does not allow for serial National Heritage or Commonwealth Heritage places.

The Commonwealth should substantially amend and improve the ***Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*** (EPBC Act) and associated processes, based on principles and provisions which will be effective for Australia's heritage (ie. not the quantitative standards recommended in the independent review by Professor Graeme Samuel, AC (the 'Samuel Review') which are inappropriate for heritage places). In particular, the Commonwealth should commit to preparation of thorough merits-based qualitative standards and the establishment of an appropriate 'watchdog' agency in accordance with the recommendations of the Samuel Review.

If the EPBC Act is replaced, the Commonwealth should enact **separate heritage legislation**.

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

Specific Issues

The Commonwealth should accept the advice of IUCN and announce that it opposes, and will not approve, the proposed raising of the **Warragamba Dam wall**, so as to protect the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and cultural places that would be impacted.

The Commonwealth should commit to protection of the **Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout National Heritage Place** from potential threats which may arise from the SA Riverbank Precinct Code Amendment 2021.

The Commonwealth should commit to immediate implementation of the recommendations of the report of the Commonwealth Parliament Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia Inquiry into the destruction of 46,000 year old caves at the Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara region of Western Australia (the '**Juukan Gorge Inquiry**')

The Commonwealth should review and update ***Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act***, in light of the findings of the Juukan Gorge Inquiry.

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

The Commonwealth should instigate a project to support training and intergenerational knowledge transmission in heritage trades and related Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural heritage practices.

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

The Commonwealth should promote mechanisms for the management of ***abandoned minesites***, implementing the aims of the Strategic Framework for Managing Abandoned Mines in the Mineral Industry (2010).