

NATIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE FORUM

Australia's Cultural Heritage: Important Needs & Proposed Responses



Updated Version – August 2008

Executive Summary

The National Cultural Heritage Forum has prepared this report as part of its dialogue with the Australian Government. It highlights the important needs and problems facing Australia's cultural heritage, and proposes a structured response and range of measures to promote a better future for our heritage.

The needs and problems are based on analyses undertaken in relation to the:

- *Australian State of the Environment Report 2006*
- Productivity Commission Inquiry into Australia's Historic Heritage, 2006
- Commonwealth Budget 2008

Major Problem Areas

- Lack of capacity and consistency – especially at the local level.
- Substantial decline in public funding for historic heritage conservation in Commonwealth Budgets.
- Grossly insufficient funding for heritage in relation to demand.
- Growing future demand due to inadequate maintenance and new threats (such as climate change impacts).
- Lack of basic data, poor economic tools to allocate limited resources effectively, insufficient incentives.

A Renewed National Approach

1. **Building Capacity** requires attention to the provision and distribution of heritage conservation skills and knowledge, and the creation of new and substantial funding mechanism and attention to the needs and resources of local government (see the proposals for a *Cultural Heritage Fund* and the *Local Government Initiatives* in this document).
2. **Enhancing Resilience** requires a clear recognition of the threats to Australia's cultural heritage, and well-timed and targeted response measures (see the proposal for a *Climate Change Response Package for Cultural Heritage* and *Local Government Initiatives* in this document).
3. **Re-establishing Community Engagement** requires the long-awaited 'National Conversation' about Australia's heritage, creating better links between heritage and culture and the arts, and initiatives to support community custodianship of local heritage (see the proposals for *Teaching Australian History* and *Heritage Care* in this document).
4. **National Leadership** by the Australian Government requires an expanded role for the Australian Heritage Council and the National Heritage List, international engagement (including support for Regional heritage initiatives in Asia and the Pacific), re-invigorated inter-governmental cooperation through the Coordinated National Heritage Agenda, and a national process for refreshing the national approach (see the proposal for *Heritage Summit for Australia* in this document).
5. **Better Tools** for Heritage Conservation requires work on financial incentives, planning and development approaches in Australian cities and historic town centres, attention to the issues of sustainability and adaptive re-use, and establishing links with cultural tourism other Australian Government programs, such as 'Caring for Country' and 'Building Australia'. (see the proposal for *Cultural Heritage & Cultural Tourism* in this document).

Problems Facing Australia's Cultural Heritage

The problems facing Australia's cultural heritage are well known within the industry and by those who own or manage heritage places. Three summary analyses are presented below to outline the problems. These are based on:

- Australian State of the Environment Report 2006
- Productivity Commission Inquiry into Australia's Historic Heritage, 2006
- Commonwealth Budget 2008 and earlier Budgets

Australian State of the Environment Report 2006

The Australian State of the Environment Report for the period 2001-06 highlights improvements as well as current and emerging problems across the range of environmental sectors.

The situation with Australia's heritage places looks particularly difficult. After 30 years of government activity across all jurisdictions, we don't have the basic data to help make informed decisions, resources are declining and the problems seem to multiply rather than become fewer.

Key problems to note from the main report and a supporting commentary include:

- lack of data to enable a comprehensive national picture of the state of Australia's environment, especially for heritage (including Indigenous cultural heritage)
- increasing loss of Indigenous languages
- continuing resource disparity between government provisions for natural and cultural heritage
- under-resourcing of local government in terms of capacity and skills to deliver improved environmental results
- decline of public funding for historic built heritage conservation
- decline in Commonwealth historic heritage funding compared with funding through the Natural Heritage Trust
- grossly insufficient funding for heritage in relation to the current and future demands
- loss of heritage values and integrity of former government-owned heritage properties that have been redeveloped for new uses
- diminished role of the Australian Heritage Council, especially in the realm of public education
- lack of history teaching and therefore of heritage awareness
- demonstrable decline in the independence, leverage and professional composition of specialist advisory bodies to the various ministers overseeing heritage legislatures, over the last ten years.

The *Australian State of the Environment Report* notes the need for better data, the need for governments to provide incentives for environmental stewardship, and the need to maintain and build capacity to manage the environment. All of this particularly relates to Australia's heritage places.

Key Messages in the Submissions to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Australia's Historic Heritage, 2006

The most common messages from the submissions are very clear - the heritage system:

- lacks capacity
- struggles to achieve consistency, and
- fails to provide certainty

The commonly advocated solutions suggested in the submissions are equally clear:

- increase the capacity of the heritage system to identify, conserve and manage heritage more effectively;
- which will enhance consistency; and
- improve the certainty of outcomes.

The Australian system for historic heritage conservation...

- ◆ *Lacks capacity*
- ◆ *Struggles to achieve consistency*
- ◆ *Fails to provide certainty*

It should be noted that there were significant different views and suggestions for reform in the submissions. However, the overwhelming majority of respondents would concur with the assessment of the Heritage Chairs of Australia and New Zealand (HCANZ) that the key policy prescriptions should be:

- improvement of the policy framework for historic heritage
- provision of enhanced and new incentives (economic instruments) to support historic heritage conservation.

This level of agreement across governments, professionals, and the community sector about the best policy approach provides an unparalleled opportunity to:

- build on the shared investment generated by the Productivity Commission Inquiry
- further investigate approaches to better managing the market failures identified
- work collaboratively to improve the national heritage system for the present and future benefit of all Australians.



Heritage Budget Analysis 2008

Key messages

1. Overall Commonwealth Government expenditure has increased by 4.2% to \$292.5B
2. Portfolio resources are \$3.233B – given changes to the Portfolio it is difficult to calculate the change from 2007. Overall Portfolio heritage funding reduced by 5.7% (or 6.7%? – see below).
3. In an apparently tight budgetary situation, no previously approved funding was reduced, and some additional funding was made available to particular programs. Kokoda Track funding increased by 93.4%.
4. National Heritage Investment Initiative reduced to only \$200,000 in 2008-09
5. Core Departmental heritage funding reduced by 9.5%. The comparable total heritage budget in 2001 was \$57.6M – at \$45M the 2008 budget represents a reduction of 21.9%
6. Heritage rates only a few mentions in the various Budget documents. There was no media release about heritage funding, the *Environment Budget Overview* and *Environment Budget Statement* contain few mentions of heritage funding (Defence heritage programs, World Heritage, Kakadu and Kokoda are mentioned), and the *Portfolio Budget Statement* makes few references to Commonwealth and National Heritage.
7. An additional item, not reflected in the following table, is funding of \$500,000 for the Albert Hall in Canberra, being part of the Home Affairs portfolio budget

Item	2008-09 \$'000	2007-08 \$'000	Change (%)
Output Group 1.4 Conservation of natural, indigenous and historic heritage			
Administered Items:			
Appropriation Bill 1 B1	20,045	22,493	-10.9
National Trust Partnership Program	911	894	2
National Heritage Investment Initiative	200	3,450	-94.2
Indigenous Heritage Program	3,576	3,514	1.8
Point Nepean Community Trust and Rental Guarantee	11,207	12,247	-8.5
Kokoda Track - assistance to Papua New Guinea for management of the Kokoda Track and the Owen Stanley Ranges	3,651	1,888	93.4
National Cultural Heritage Special Account 5	500	500	0
Departmental Outputs			
Conservation of natural, indigenous and historic heritage	19,234	21,265	-9.5
Revenues from other sources (s.31)	5,288	3,527	50
Special Accounts			
National Cultural Heritage Special Account			
Opening balance	21	150	-86
Appropriation receipts	-	350	
Non-Appropriation receipts to Special Accounts	479	-	
Subtotal for Output Group 1.4	45,067	47,785	-5.7
Note: With the exception of the % Change column, this table is drawn from the Portfolio Budget Statement. It would appear the Statement contains an error by counting the National Cultural Heritage Special Account twice in the subtotal. Removing this error increases the % change for the subtotal to -6.7%.			

The Way Forward

The National Cultural Heritage Forum is the advisory forum to the Minister for Heritage and the Minister for the Arts (the two of which are currently combined). It has provided advice to the Ministers of the day for over a decade.

Forum members are selected by the Minister(s), and include representatives of the key government, professional and community agencies and organisations which together share responsibility for the nation's heritage.

Forum members worked actively to support the development and establishment of the National Heritage System, and to ensure the Productivity Commission Inquiry was well briefed and informed about the conservation of Australia's heritage places.

The Forum welcomes the opportunity to meet with the Minister for the Environment, Heritage & the Arts and to present ideas for his consideration. We believe that ***action is now urgently needed*** – and propose both short- and long-term actions for further discussion and cooperative implementation with the Australian Government.

Three Steps Proposed by the NCHF

- ◆ ***A Heritage Summit (or other focused process of analysis and ideas development) to develop program proposals and increase broad support***
- ◆ ***Funding of a suite of 'first steps' in each program area that can be achieved with modest funding, and can demonstrate the multiple benefits of expenditure on heritage conservation.***
- ◆ ***Development of a larger program and substantial new budget bid that can redress the problems identified for Australia's cultural heritage.***

Components of a Renewed National Heritage Program

1. ***Building Capacity*** requires attention to the provision and distribution of heritage conservation skills and knowledge, and the creation of new and substantial funding mechanism and attention to the needs and resources of local government (see the proposals for a *Cultural Heritage Fund* and *Local Government & Heritage* in this document)
2. ***Enhancing Resilience*** requires a clear recognition of the threats to Australia's cultural heritage, and well-timed and targeted response measures (see the proposal for a *Climate Change Response Package for Cultural Heritage* in this document)
3. ***Re-establishing Community Engagement*** requires the long-awaited 'National Conversation' about Australia's heritage, creating better links between heritage and culture and the arts, and initiatives to support community custodianship of local heritage (see the proposals for *Teaching Australian History* and *Heritage Care* in this document)

4. **National Leadership** by the Australian Government requires an expanded role for the Australian Heritage Council and the National Heritage List, international engagement (including support for Regional heritage initiatives in Asia and the Pacific), re-invigorated inter-governmental cooperation through the Coordinated National Heritage Agenda, and a national process for refreshing the national approach (see the proposal for *Heritage Summit for Australia* in this document)
5. **Better Tools** for Heritage Conservation requires work on financial incentives, planning and development approaches in Australian cities and historic town centres, attention to the issues of sustainability and adaptive re-use, and establishing links with cultural tourism and other Australian Government programs, such as ‘Caring for Country’ and ‘Building Australia’ . (see the proposal for *Cultural Heritage & Cultural Tourism* in this document)

Some Proposed Program Elements

The NCHF has provided summaries of several elements of its proposed program to illustrate the strength of this approach – these are provided to stimulate discussion with the Australian Government and other stakeholders:

1. A Heritage Summit for Australia
2. A Cultural Heritage Fund for Australia
3. Climate Change Response for Australia’s Cultural Heritage
4. Heritage Care & the role of Local Governments
5. Cultural Heritage & the Teaching of Australian History
6. Cultural Heritage & Cultural Tourism

These program proposals are provided as illustrations of the many ways in which the strategic directions can be advanced.

A list of low-cost and short-term (immediate) first steps are identified for each of these initiatives at the end of this document.



A Heritage Summit for Australia

Why we need a Heritage Summit

The National Cultural Heritage Forum welcomed the *Australia 2020* initiative of the Prime Minister. Although cultural heritage was not part of the framing and questions considered by the Summit in April 2008, the Forum has already undertaken some analysis of the opportunities and issues for cultural heritage and is progressively incorporating these into its proposals for the Australian Government.

There is widespread agreement that Australia's national cultural heritage agenda need reinvigorating and renewed focus. A process to focus new work and bring knowledgeable people together to work on specific aspects of the heritage system is needed, and should be led and supported by the Australian Government and the Australian Heritage Council. The NCHF proposes that a well organised national process of analysis and generation of well-crafted ideas is needed. This could be a 'Summit' or series of round tables, but needs to be well planned, targeted and involve participants well chosen for their specific expertise relevant to the topic.

The *Preserve America* model

The NCHF believes that the *Preserve America* program offers a number of elements that could be usefully adapted for use in Australia. One component of that program has been the 2006 *Preserve America Summit* held in New Orleans under the patronage of the US First Lady, Mrs Laura Bush.

The process involved a wide range of stakeholder organisations and government officials, working in 11 Panels on key topic areas, a youth forum, associated programming by the *History Channel*, the 2006 Summit itself and a 'post-summit' follow up process.

Participants – selected for their knowledge and diversity - were expected to do some real work in the lead-up to the Summit. The work was taken to the Summit for discussion, and is now the subject of post-Summit strategy development. This element – of having the 'Summit' in the middle of the process, rather than at the beginning or the end – is seen by the NCHF as very desirable.

The 11 Panels were:

- Building a Preservation Ethic & Public Appreciation for History
- Coordinating the Stewardship & Use of our Cultural Property
- Determining What's Important
- Protecting Places that Matter
- Improving the Preservation Program Infrastructure
- Dealing with the Unexpected
- Addressing Security
- Using Historic Properties as Economic Assets
- Involving All Cultures
- Fostering Innovation
- Participating in the Global Preservation Community

Each Panel had Government and a non-Government co-chairs and was asked to decide on five key ideas to make American ‘preservation’ thrive in coming decades. Following the Summit in 2006, the Panels have continued to work on finalising their work – this is expected for completion next year.

Adapting the Model

It is easy to see that some of the US Panel topics might form the basis of a round-table process in Australia – such as *Fostering Innovation*, *Risk Preparedness* and *Global Participation*. Others seem too broad to serve us well, and might be better replaced by other, more specifically focused topics, such as the *Economics of Heritage Conservation*, *Heritage Skills & Training*, *Responding to Climate Change*, *Historical & Cultural Literacy in Australia and in the Region*, *Intangible Cultural Heritage*, *21st Century Infrastructure & Cultural Heritage* and so on.

The potential benefits of developing a Summit-style program are:

- Genuine renewal of the national heritage agenda, building on the past 30 years of experience and evolution of community perceptions
- Allows focus on specific issues and problems
- Ability to bring together a range of experts and analysts to work on a concise number of focused topics
- Outcomes that can feed equally well into various future government process – programs, budget bids, government strategies, Ministerial Council discussions
- Possible opportunities for public event(s) to be added to the model
- Makes a start!

Other Elements of *Preserve America* program

The *Preserve America* program focuses primarily on encouraging and supporting community action for heritage. The Honorary Chair of the program is the American First Lady, Mrs Laura Bush.

The program has a number of other components which have been effective in re-energising the US national heritage program at the national level.

- ***Preserve America Presidential Awards*** - presented to four winners at the White House each year
- ***Preserve America Communities*** – designates communities/neighbourhoods for excellence in caring for local heritage, use of heritage in economic development and community revitalization, etc. More than 500 Preserve America Communities have been designated. These communities have access to a grants program, and a variety of ‘badged’ elements to promote their town/neighbourhood.
- ***Preserve America Grants*** – \$5 million was awarded in 2007 to support community efforts for preservation, promotion and sustainable use of heritage assets. This is distinct from other grant sources for conservation works (**Save America’s Treasures Grants**) – these are for the development of management strategies and business practices.
- ***Preserve America History Teacher of the Year Award***
- ***Educational Outreach*** – oriented toward students, including ongoing work with the *History Channel*.
- ***Executive Order 13287 ‘Preserve America’*** – signed by the President in 2003, this order establishes federal policy and leadership. Amongst other commitments, the Order deals with the protection and use of Federally owned properties.

A Cultural Heritage Fund for Australia

The key issue reducing the capacity of the community to care for its heritage is inadequate funding. In Australia, this is a responsibility shared by all levels of Government.

Commonwealth cultural heritage funding has declined steadily over the past decade, resulting in decreasing capacity to care for Australia's heritage. This is in stark contrast to the increased funding provided to the natural environment, and the resulting rise in community awareness of environmental issues and increased willingness to take responsibility to ameliorate individual and communal impacts on the environment.

It is critical to the capacity of the heritage system nationwide, and to the capability of communities caring for the nation's heritage, that this decline in cultural heritage funding be arrested and reversed.

National leadership is needed to ensure that equitable access to and capacity to care for heritage places is provided across the nation.

The Commonwealth should establish a Cultural Heritage Fund (CHF) to provide for the development of a variety of program initiatives to strengthen the capacity of the heritage system nationwide.

Such a fund would enable the Commonwealth to strengthen its current commitment to the identification, conservation and presentation of the nation's heritage, through provision of targeted programs to support community education and understanding of the nation's heritage.

The Cultural Heritage Fund would provide the Commonwealth with the flexibility to more readily respond to identified government priorities, to build more immediately on the momentum of existing programs, and to more effectively connect cultural heritage with program initiatives across government.

The NCHF is aware that proposals and ideas for a Cultural Heritage Fund have also been reviewed by the Heritage Chairs & Officials of Australia and New Zealand, which demonstrate the possibilities for inter-governmental support and cooperation.

These different but common proposals all address:

- Various forms of support for communities and for owners and managers of heritage places, especially where there is a substantial community benefit to their long term conservation.
- Resourcing for community heritage programs, and enhanced outcomes from the immense volunteer contribution to Australia's cultural heritage places and collections.
- Support to address the continuing knowledge gaps through targeted research (on agreed priority themes, areas or place types) projects and programs.
- Improved training capacity within Australia to ensure that relevant trades, technical approaches, and management tools are consistent with best practice.

The member organisations of the National Cultural Heritage Forum are ready to assist the Commonwealth to develop a detailed proposal for a Cultural Heritage Fund. Some

examples of the kinds of constructive programs which could be supported by the Cultural Heritage Fund are described in this document.

These have been prepared by member organisations of the National Cultural Heritage Forum and represent and illustrate a larger suite of the national initiatives which could be developed through the operation of the Cultural Heritage Fund.

The National Cultural Heritage Forum also considers that a range of important initiatives identified by the Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments through the Coordinated National Heritage Agenda by the Environment Protection and Heritage Council could be advanced through the additional support of the Cultural Heritage Fund. These include the establishment of a coordinated national system of monitoring and data collection about Australia's cultural heritage places and objects and improved 'portal' for widespread community access to heritage information.

Most importantly, the NCHF is aware of the current consideration by Governments about how to respond to the key finding of the Productivity Commission Inquiry concerning the protection of cultural heritage places at the local level, and believes that the Cultural Heritage Fund could enable the Commonwealth to effectively participate in reform measures in that sector.



Conserving Cultural Heritage in the face of Climate Change

Climate change will have a profound impact on Australia – on its people, economy, environment, landscape and heritage.

The Ministry for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts is effectively in charge of Australia's cultural identity. The heritage aspects of that identity have been progressively eroded through inaction of the last decade, and unless swift action is taken the effects of climate change will greatly accelerate the losses. Once cultural heritage is lost, it cannot be replaced.

Identifying the relevant issues

In 2007 the NCHF pointed out that there was '*almost no research being conducted into either the assessment or identification of the potential impacts of projected Climate Change on Cultural heritage in Australia*'. Over a year later, despite world focus and national discussion on this issue¹ there is still no leadership on this issue from the Australian Government and no significant investment by Federal or State and Territory governments. It is now urgent that the Australian Government take a leadership role.

From a recent national survey of heritage departments, academics and heritage professionals carried out by Australia ICOMOS it is clear that there is almost no research investment in this area. Of the 32 initial formal responses to the survey, only 9 respondents indicated that they had any involvement in research and/or consultancy projects related to the issue of climate change as it relates to cultural heritage sites and places. After follow up of other leads, only 13 active or recent projects have been identified. In all cases the academic projects were self funded and not funded by major research bodies such as the Australian Research Council. The average investment in each of the projects was less than \$5,000 per project.

Issues identified in Australia ICOMOS Survey (2007)

- The loss of *coastal heritage sites* and other impacts due to sea level rise including damage due to combinations of factors such as higher sea level, storm surges, boat wash and high tides.
- *Site adaptation* and conservation in the face of unknown and quantified impacts including: retrofitting heritage buildings with energy efficient measures, recognition of embodied energy in heritage buildings and increased weathering and erosion due to climate induced changes in soil chemistry and hydrology.
- Climate effects on *heritage gardens* including sustainable replacement of plants in heritage gardens and increased water efficiency and water supply for heritage gardens
- The need to *salvage information* that will be lost and to identify sites that may be conserved.
- Impacts to sites caused by *increasing salinity*, increased *severity of storms and tropical cyclones*
- Impacts on *intangible values* such as cultural identity.
- Better understanding of the nature of impacts of climate change on heritage places/values; and the need to *co-ordinate research and salvage* efforts.
- *Baseline survey/audit* of sites and places that will be affected

¹ See for example the ICOMOS Scientific Council's Workshop on this issue in Pretoria South Africa in October 2007; the Australia ICOMOS Extreme Heritage Conference held in July 2007 which included a public Forum and symposium on this issue; The World Archaeological Congress held in Dublin July 2008; the UNESCO World Heritage Committee Meeting held in Quebec June 2008.

In all of these responses and issues, there is an urgent need identified to collect and analyse baseline data which will allow us to:

- Predict which cultural heritage places and values will be most affected.
- Strategically determine where to invest conservation effort and resources, and where to initiate salvage programs for places and values that cannot ultimately be conserved.
- Understand the impact of the potential future loss of sites on the cultural identity of local communities and on Australia as a whole.
- Develop strategies to enhance the resilience of cultural heritage sites and places in the face of climate change, including enhanced focus on maintenance.
- Develop technical conservation methodologies and products more suited to future climatic conditions.
- Understand the economic impacts on communities associated with changes to and impacts on cultural heritage sites and places as a result of climate change.

Australia's World and National Heritage Places

There are direct implications for the management of Australia's World Heritage and National Heritage places. Potential impacts on both the physical and intangible cultural heritage values of such places include:

- flooding, erosion or burial by silt of cultural heritage sites in estuarine and coastal zones of Kakadu
- disruption and displacement of Aboriginal occupation in the Kakadu wetlands, eroding or extinguishing cultural caretaking of significant sites
- major changes to the ecosystems of the Great Barrier Reef impacting dramatically on Indigenous traditional hunting and on cultural associations with sites
- potential accelerated erosion of the archaeological deposits at the Willandra Lakes leading to uncontrolled exposure, potentially to the base of the deposits
- lower rainfall and increased temperatures posing a risk to the Carlton Gardens component of the Royal Exhibition Building & Carlton Gardens site
- sea level rises could result in coastal erosion and loss of Aboriginal and historic sites in the Tasmanian Wilderness, other impacts from increased run-off and changes in soil chemistry
- the 200+ Aboriginal shell middens on Fraser Island are particularly vulnerable to sea level change and storm activity
- the series of sites related to the convict history of Australia includes buildings and archaeological sites that may be impacted by rising sea levels, changes in rainfall and soil moisture and chemistry, dry land salination issues, and extreme climatic events
- any retreat in the Antarctic ice cap could dramatically impact on the survival of Mawson's Huts at Commonwealth Bay.

Australia's Cultural Heritage as a Whole

While the Commonwealth Government has a responsibility to contribute directly to the management and conservation of items on world, Commonwealth and national heritage lists there are many other sites of significance to the Australian people.

The analysis can readily be extended to the many other cultural sites of State and local significance. For example:

- Most of Australia's population lives on the coastal fringe and this zone is also a rich one for many significant cultural heritage places and values – it is also an area likely to be dramatically affected by climate change impacts.

- While rural and regional Australia may be remote from coastal impacts, predictions of large-scale landscape changes because of weather impacts will put pressure on the heritage sites and landscapes of inland Australia (such as the pastoral and farming heritage of the Murray-Darling Basin).

It is important to keep in mind, that the vast bulk of heritage sites in Australia have not been adequately surveyed mapped or assessed. It is estimated for example that thousands of Aboriginal archaeological sites will be destroyed or compromised by sea level rise alone. Many of these sites have never been surveyed or investigated. Future generations of Australians – including Indigenous custodians - will look back at a period of relative economic prosperity and see a period characterised by neglect of cultural heritage places and values. These impacts are not necessarily in the distant future. Loss of Aboriginal coastal sites due to combinations of storm surges, high tides and sea level rises is already occurring in areas such as Sydney Harbour.

Predictions of large-scale landscape changes because of weather impacts will also put pressure on the heritage sites and landscapes of inland Australia. Increasingly stressed water resources coupled with salinity issues threaten rural industries, landscapes and the survival of towns. A key part of these industries, landscapes and towns are cultural heritage places – the woolsheds, the paddocks, and the town halls and churches of rural Australia.

It is vital that any response to climate change addresses all levels of heritage, from local to World Heritage. For cultural heritage places, many of the threats are potentially able to be managed and adaptation strategies are feasible if work begins at an early stage.

Recommendations

Urgent, substantial and sustained action must begin now to address climate change impacts on Australia's cultural heritage. This must extend beyond a consideration of the impacts of climate change on the small, albeit important, subset of cultural heritage represented by Australia's World Heritage Sites.

Many of the priorities listed below are consistent with or extend the COAG National Climate Change Adaptation Framework.

1. The Australian Government must provide national leadership in a climate change response program for cultural heritage. It should provide lead-funding, and otherwise coordinate the development of relevant methodologies in partnership with State, Territory and Local Governments. Every effort should be made to support Local Government in the actual delivery of response mechanisms. Such leadership is a key part of the COAG Framework.
2. To establish this co-ordinated approach it is recommended that relevant site managers and government officers are brought together with Australian and international researchers working on climate change and cultural heritage issues to share information and develop a co-ordinated approach. The heritage summit proposed by the NCHF would be an appropriate venue for this activity.
3. Detailed analysis of the projected regional and, if possible, local impacts of climate change on Australia's cultural heritage should be undertaken, so that the nature and scale of the threats can be identified, and the likely vulnerability of cultural places and landscapes assessed. This is likely to require:

- good climate modelling at a regional and, ideally, local scale (presumably available from other sources);
 - improvements to/updating and coordination of cultural heritage data sets, including good geo-spatial data providing a baseline for threat/vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning to minimise the impact; and
 - modelling predictive scenarios for impacts and adaptation.
4. Consolidated and detailed monitoring of recent and ongoing effects related to climate change and climatic events at cultural sites should be undertaken, perhaps employing a variety of monitoring methodologies. This should include enhanced baseline and periodic monitoring coordinated with Commonwealth State of the Environment reporting and similar State-level programs.
 5. A major site recording program should be initiated in the case of those sites at risk of loss or major damage, and for which no adaptation will be possible.
 6. Enhanced information exchange on observed and potential climate change impacts on cultural sites between jurisdictions and with the private sector.
 7. Existing disaster preparation and response resources (tools, techniques, mechanisms and organisations) should be used or adapted in developing a climate change response package for cultural heritage.
 8. Guidelines should be developed and periodically updated for adaptation approaches to protect the range of cultural sites from climate change impacts, including case studies.
 9. Disaster adaptation plans should be prepared for all cultural sites at risk, as a component of management planning for sites.
 10. Technical assistance should be provided with site specific risk and impact assessment, as well as the development of adaptation options.
 11. The Australian Government should fund exemplar projects across the range of cultural heritage site types demonstrating appropriate responses to climate change risks. The collection of National Trust properties could be considered in the selection of sites given their range, geographic spread, accessibility and promotional benefits.
 12. In addition, the Australian Government should demonstrate exemplary responses to climate change risks through the management of its own cultural heritage properties.
 13. The Australian Government should establish a major program to help fund response measures, and should seek shared funding arrangements with State and Territory Governments.
 14. Target Departmental money by funding an exemplar project that focuses on identifying coastal sites that will be affected by climate change and developing a program for future research priorities and actions.
 15. Augment Australia's environment and heritage programs in the Asia Pacific region to address climate change impacts. This should include support for *pro bono* and exchange programs of relevant professional organisations to assist in capacity building programs in the Region.
 16. Encourage high quality research on this subject and ensure that cultural heritage and climate is a targeted national research priority by building links with:
 - Australian Research Council
 - Commonwealth Environmental Research Fund (CERF)
 - AUSAID.

In all these initiatives it is important to recognise the potential for matching funding through successive levels of government, so as to maximise the effect of any Commonwealth expenditure. The multiplier effect has produced excellent results in the part for a modest outlay at Commonwealth level.

Linkages

- Commonwealth Government agencies (in the lead role)
- State and Territory governments
- The Australian Research Council
- Local Governments
- AUSAID
- Australian Universities particularly where these involve partnerships with relevant international research and academic institutions (eg. the Getty)
- Peak cultural heritage NGOS relevant to the areas of research
- Site managers and custodians

References

McIntyre-Tamwoy, S (ed) 2008 Global Climate Change and Cultural Heritage Special edition of *Historic Environment* Vol 21 number 1.

Currie, J., S. Garnett, J. Ingram and K. Sniekers 2007 Modelling the impacts of potential sea level rise on Aboriginal heritage sites along the foreshore of Middle Harbour. Unpub ELS301 Environmental management project, Environmental and Life Sciences Macquarie University



Heritage Care and the Role of Local Governments

Local heritage is highly valued by communities, and is strongly linked to regional distinctiveness and to strong and vibrant community identity. Local cultural heritage is the least well protected through the existing framework of statutory protection and government programs.

For most Australians, heritage is not just the grand buildings but the character of the suburb or location where we live and the buildings and places that help to define that character. The passion to protect local and regional icons is generally directed at the elected local government, which has the power under local planning and heritage controls to act decisively in the determination of the future of these places.

The many submissions from local government to the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into the Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage Places demonstrate that local government is largely under-resourced to handle many of the significant responsibilities associated with conserving items of local heritage significance.

Progress on two aspects of this problem is needed:

- ◆ ***Build the capacity and capability of local government to play a more active role in the heritage arena.***
- ◆ ***Make more effective use of local community knowledge and concern for local heritage places and collections.***

Understanding and accessing cultural heritage places and collections is fundamental to community well being. The Australian Government has a leadership role in the protection of national heritage places – of 'natural' or 'cultural' heritage values - through the National Heritage System.

The Australian Government has also encouraged and enabled communities to care for their local natural heritage through programs funded from the Natural Heritage Trust (eg, Landcare, Coastcare), and now, the Rudd Government's new initiative *Caring for Country*.

However, conservation of cultural heritage was specifically excluded from the provisions of the Natural Heritage Trust and is not a focus for the *Caring for Country* program. Without a complementary and well integrated program for cultural heritage, community access to funds for the conservation of cultural heritage is very limited, and artificial distinctions between natural and cultural heritage will continue. Communities do not necessarily distinguish between places of 'natural' and 'cultural' heritage – they are each equally part of that community's heritage.

At the same time, local governments need practical guidance to ensure that local cultural heritage is appropriately assessed, protected, conserved and interpreted. A cost effective solution may be to develop a set of comprehensive 'best practice' guidelines for the identification and protection of heritage at the local and regional levels. This could also

encompass resource requirements at the local level to put best practice into action.

Recommendations

1. Working with the Australian Local Government Association and its members – the State and Territory local government associations – develop a set of best practice guidelines/ISO Standards/models for local government covering a range of heritage matters.
2. Establish a community heritage program (*Heritage Care*), funded through the proposed Cultural Heritage Fund to assist community groups to care for local heritage places.

This ‘umbrella’ Heritage Care Program could include:

- A community *hands-on-heritage* program, with funding for volunteer training and support²
- Other specifically targeted initiatives (as appropriate) modeled on the successful *Historic Hotels* program – targeting rural heritage sites for example

Program Benefits include:

- Recognition that Australia’s national heritage is made up of many local places, objects, experiences and events
- Benefits for regional tourism industries and operators
- Active response to the clearest messages arising from the Productivity Commission Inquiry
- Better support to local government to take part in the national heritage system
- Sharing and modeling of best practice experiences at the local level
- Cost effective conservation outcomes, utilising the knowledge gained from environmental programs at the local level about what works and what doesn’t
- Increases community capacity and sustainability
- Connects people and place at a local and community level
- Facilitates holistic approach supporting both natural and cultural heritage care

Linkages

- Australian Local Government Association
- Environment and Heritage Ministerial Council
- Australian Council of National Trusts
- Australia ICOMOS
- Australian Standards

² This program is already well established in Victoria, and is being considered for national implementation through the Heritage Chairs & Officials of Australia and New Zealand.

Cultural Heritage and the Teaching of Australian History

Recent national initiatives to strengthen the teaching of Australian history nationwide provide a welcome and important opportunity for cultural heritage. Heritage places and their associated documentary and museum collections provide an essential, but largely unrealised, primary resource for the teaching of history.

A new and enhanced national history curriculum is needed that ensures that Australia's heritage places and collections can contribute to improved educational outcomes and the survival of our cultural heritage for future generations.

- ◆ *Local Historical Societies in Australia (approximately): 1,000*
- ◆ *Number of schools in Australia: 9,581*
- ◆ *Number of students in full time education – K-12: 3,416,523*

In the medium term the NCHF recognises that implementation of this proposal will require funds to facilitate access to resources currently held and managed by volunteer based organisations. This should form part of the proposed Cultural Heritage Fund.

The establishment of a national foundation (or endowment fund) - along the lines of the National Endowment for the Humanities in the USA - to provide a framework and financial support for all aspects of history teaching, history and heritage in Australia is therefore proposed. Such a foundation would ensure that Australia's heritage is accessible for students and teachers and would also provide appropriate professional development for teachers.

Issues

The strengths of this proposal are:

- Revitalisation of the teaching of history in the nation's schools.
- Use of the resources of local historical societies/museums and local historical buildings, including National Trust properties.
- Ability to better use the enthusiasm and expertise of history teachers and professional organisations such as the History Teachers Association of Australia.
- Demonstrated success of bodies such as the USA's National Foundation for the Humanities.
- Affordable and accessible professional opportunities for teachers.
- Strengthening of rural/regional communities through better understanding of their distinctive history.

The barriers include:

- Affordable, accessible and sustainable professional development is not currently available for teachers, often leading to poor quality history teaching.

- Historical societies/museums and the National Trusts are heavily dependent on a declining voluntary work force and on diminishing government financial assistance.
- There is no national body to provide funding and coordination for history teaching, history or heritage

A national endowment would provide the opportunity for local historical societies and museums to provide students and teachers with access to collections, knowledge of local historical environment, speakers for classes and affordable and accessible professional development programs for teachers. Historical societies and similar bodies could offer these first hand or online.

Recommendations

1. Identify a range of cultural heritage places that can be linked to the school history curriculum and to link the relevant resources of Local Historical Societies, National Trust properties and Museums.
2. Establish a forum/working group led by the Department of the Environment, Heritage, Water and the Arts and the National Curriculum Board and comprising the relevant stakeholders (Federation of Australian Historical Societies, Museums Australia, Australian Council of National Trusts) to work on the identification of needs and priorities, including securing the necessary financial resources to support the effective involvement of local voluntary organisations.
3. Consider the establishment of a Heritage Education Council, similar in responsibility to the current National Environment Education Council, and linked to the Australian Heritage Council.
4. Develop and issue a supplementary Ministerial Education Statement expanding the scope of sustainable environmental education to include the valuing of cultural heritage.
5. Provide quality education programs at community museums and heritage sites through the development of 'model' and 'template' heritage education programs and training programs for volunteers.

Linkages:

- National Foundation for the Humanities (USA): www.neh.gov
- Department of Environment, Heritage, Water and the Arts
- History Teachers Association of Australia: www.historyteacher.org.au
- National Curriculum Board: www.ncb.org.au
- Federation of Australian Historical Societies
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations: www.dewr.gov.au
- Museums Association Australia
- Australian Council of National Trusts



Cultural Heritage & Cultural Tourism

Australia's cultural inheritance has been under increasing threat as economic restructuring, and social and technological changes have dramatically altered neighbourhoods, pressured urban centres, and emptied the countryside. Australia's cultural heritage is an important element in sustaining communities, and in local and regional economic opportunities.

A resilient and vibrant cultural heritage tourism industry, provides new economic opportunities – particularly for regional and rural communities – while supporting regional distinctiveness, social cohesion and community identity.

The economic contribution of heritage tourism at Australia's World Heritage sites can be readily calculated but the bulk of Australia's cultural heritage places lie outside the boundaries of World Heritage sites. However, such places play a significant role in both domestic and international tourism and make important contributions to the National and regional tourism economy.

Recognising the Social and Economic Value of Australia's Cultural Heritage

While the linkages between cultural heritage and community well-being are generally understood, methods for measuring these values are not well established in Australia. Recognising these inter-relationships is an important step in achieving better political support and community engagement in cultural heritage conservation.

Recognition of the social, economic and cultural value of Australia's heritage places and collections needs to be embedded in government policy and decision making.

Making the best use of heritage tourism

Tourism can and should become a vehicle for enabling the sustainability and promotion of some of Australia's most important cultural heritage places and collections. However it is important to recognise that cultural tourism needs to be planned and managed, and realistically assessed. Otherwise, like any other industry tourism can have severe negative impacts on an irreplaceable resource. It is also common for cultural tourism ventures to fail because of poor articulation with the wider tourism industry.

The significant contribution of Indigenous cultural heritage to the Australian Tourism Industry

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a unique status as the traditional owners and custodians of their heritage and country, and have consequent obligations to sustain and maintain their heritage. Their living culture and the evidence of their presence in Australia immensely enhances and enriches Australia's cultural heritage.

Indigenous cultural heritage is heavily marketed to domestic and overseas tourists. Importantly cultural heritage tourism as it pertains to Aboriginal heritage is NOT limited to Australia's World Heritage sites but is important across Australia.

The role that local tourism can play to building community resilience

Communities will only conserve resources if they understand their value, and believe they will be valued by future generations. Heritage places and objects resonate with stories of Australia's past and their conservation enables the community to respond to change.

It is only through education and interpretation that the value and meanings of heritage places and collections can be understood, maintained, enjoyed, and transmitted to future generations. Interpretation is the cornerstone of tourist experiences at heritage places. Interpretation is therefore an integral element of cultural heritage conservation. Research, good management of places and collections and community engagement all underpin interpretation.

All heritage places and collections should be interpreted, and their value as educational resources realised. Interpretation of heritage places should always recognise their Indigenous association with country.

Recommendations

Information can be easily compiled on the economic value of heritage in relation to tourism at World Heritage sites. However this is only a part of the picture. Local and regional cultural heritage sites and places are important contributors to regional and rural economies as well as providing other non-monetary benefits such as contributing to strong local community identities and providing for community well being.

The following range of initiatives is proposed by the NCHF:

1. Undertake a *Power of Place* study to better understand the ways cultural heritage contributes to economic and social wellbeing and the implications of continuing to under-resource our heritage system in the future [This would be an ideal partnership project with the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government]
2. Develop a framework for integrating cultural heritage and tourism initiatives and products.
3. Commission a study that analyses the economic contribution of Indigenous cultural heritage to the Tourism Industry.
4. Undertake a study of the contribution of local and regional heritage places to local and state economies. There is a range of existing data to support this work such as the work for Broken Hill Council (NSW), the Port Arthur Historic Site (Tas) and the submissions made to the Productivity Commission Inquiry, and Tourism White Paper process.
5. Ensure heritage management is well integrated in current strategic land-use planning by States/Territories in response to demographic change, rural decline and aging populations.
6. Ensure an appropriate level of resourcing and support for Indigenous communities in caring for their heritage, which adequately reflects the significance, richness and widespread nature of the manifestations of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Australia, and which provides for its presentation to others through interpretation, education and tourism.
7. Ensure that the membership of Tourism Boards in all jurisdictions includes at least one person with substantial and recognised heritage expertise.
8. Commission the Bureau of Tourism Research to conduct a national study to collate the statistics of visitation to cultural heritage places. This is urgently required to more

efficiently assess issues of demand and the contribution that cultural heritage places and institutions make to local, regional and state economies.

9. Consider a range of incentives and policy tools to allow increased corporate and philanthropic contributions to cultural heritage conservation. Such measures are considered to provide the best opportunity for supporting the ongoing care of cultural heritage places promoted as tourism destinations.
10. On the basis of the contribution of heritage to local regional, state and national tourism- develop a funding bid to ensure that cultural heritage is appropriately conserved.

Linkages

- Department of the Environment, Heritage Water and the Arts
- Commonwealth & State agencies for Tourism and Regional Development
- Site managers and custodians
- Federation of Australian Historical Societies
- Australian Council of National Trusts and National Trusts in each State
- Australia ICOMOS
- Museums Australia



Some Short-Term Actions arising from the NCHF Proposals

A Heritage Summit for Australia

The Summit-style process is itself intended as a short-term proposal, needed to ‘kick-start’ the important work needed to generate new programs and approaches.

1. In the very short-term, work could be done to decide on the ten topics, and their definition and constituencies.
2. Because the NCHF believes that the *Preserve America* model is very attractive for Australia’s current circumstances, it would be very useful to invite the Director of the American Council for Historic Preservation to visit Australia and outline the elements of the program and the costs/benefits, etc.

Climate Change Response for Australia’s Cultural Heritage

Tens of thousands of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites will be irrevocably lost either through actual destruction through sea level rise or through secondary effects. While clearly serious action will require sustained funding over a number of years there are things that can be done immediately with limited funds.

1. Establish National Leadership. Develop a co-ordinated approach by bringing relevant site managers, government officers together with Australian and international researchers working on climate change and cultural heritage issues to share information and develop a co-ordinated approach to tackling this issue. The proposed heritage summit would be an appropriate venue for this activity, although it could be run as a separate initiative by the DEWHA.
2. Foster Research:
 - a. Target Departmental money by funding an exemplar project that focuses on identifying coastal sites that will be affected by climate change and developing a program for future research priorities and actions.
 - b. Build links with research funds and ensure that cultural heritage and climate change is a targeted priority.
 - i. Australian Research Council
 - ii. Commonwealth Environmental Research Fund (CERF)
 - iii. AUSAID

Heritage Care & the Role of Local Government

1. It is proposed that short-term work on the development of a viable Heritage Care model could occur, using the knowledge of such programs available within the DEWHA and other Commonwealth and State/Territory agencies. A pilot program could be devised to test the effectiveness of this approach.

2. The Productivity Commission Inquiry into the Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage highlighted the struggle faced by local government in meeting cultural heritage responsibilities. While clearly in the long term a significant injection of funds is required in the short term there are a number of low cost initiative that would assist.

As a first step it is recommended that a set of comprehensive "best practice" guidelines/ISO accredited standards be developed for local government as to how heritage places can best be identified and protected at the local and regional level.

Cultural Heritage & Teaching of Australian History

The History Summit held under the previous government identified that the Australian community perceived a failure in national education in relation to Australian History. The amazing resource of cultural heritage places and collections throughout Australia provide a unique opportunity to enliven the teaching of history.

1. Identify a range of cultural heritage places that can be linked to the school history curriculum and to link the relevant resources of Local Historical Societies, National Trust properties and Museums.
2. Ensure that current work on the new national curriculum includes these elements.

Cultural Heritage & Cultural Tourism

Funding for cultural heritage conservation is at an all time low - this despite our economy's reliance on a thriving natural and cultural heritage tourism industry. Although many of the benefits of cultural heritage are intangible and relate to community and national identity and well being, the economic benefit of cultural heritage is significant.

1. Undertake a study of the contribution of local and regional heritage places to local and state economies. There is a range of existing data to support this work such as the work for Broken Hill Council (NSW), the Port Arthur Historic Site (Tas) and the submissions made to the Productivity Commission Inquiry, and Tourism White Paper process.
2. On the basis of the contribution of heritage to local regional, state and national tourism, develop a funding bid to ensure that cultural heritage is appropriately conserved.
3. Commission a study that analyses the economic contribution of Indigenous cultural heritage to the Tourism Industry. Indigenous cultural heritage is marketed heavily in Australia's international tourism sector. Importantly it goes well beyond our World Heritage sites to encompass many parts of regional and urban Australia.

A Cultural Heritage Fund for Australia

By its nature, this is a substantial proposal, with long-lasting benefits and applications. If there is a desire to begin some work on a proposed fund immediately, this could involve the collation and analysis of the various proposals that have been made – such as those discussed previously by the Heritage Chairs & Officials of Australia and New Zealand,

and the Australian Heritage Council - and consultation with key stakeholders regarding the possible models for a Cultural Heritage Fund.

