

# Victorian Government Cultural Heritage Asset Management Principles

## Introduction



The following Principles were adopted by the Heritage Council of Victoria at its meeting on 6 September 2007 and endorsed by the Victorian Government in December 2009.

The cultural heritage assets owned or managed by the Victorian Government are often highly significant places that are valued by local communities and which contribute to community identity and 'sense of place'. Government heritage assets include places and objects on the Victorian Heritage Register, Aboriginal Heritage Register and local government heritage overlay, and often the furniture and collections associated with these assets.

Cultural heritage assets include all places and objects of aesthetic, cultural, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value. This includes places and objects of significance to all Victorians from the first inhabitants to recent arrivals.

The management of heritage assets is a Victorian Government responsibility, to be jointly managed with other service delivery responsibilities. The objective of managing a heritage asset is to identify, protect, conserve and present its cultural heritage significance for current and future generations.

It is recognised that the effective management of heritage assets will achieve an appropriate balance between the twin objectives of efficient provision of government services and conserving Victoria's heritage for future generations.

The actions necessary can be summarised as:

- **Have a strategy**
- **Develop an inventory**
- **Get the appropriate expertise**
- **Apply management Principles**
- **Monitor performance.**

## 1. Heritage Asset Management Strategy

Each state agency should develop a heritage asset management strategy to implement the principles outlined in this document. A heritage asset management strategy will assist an agency in the conservation of its heritage assets.

A heritage asset management strategy can also provide the basis for permit exemptions to streamline cultural heritage approvals from state and local government, for agencies managing heritage assets.

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## 2. Identification of Heritage Assets

State agencies should identify, within their heritage asset management strategy, a list of heritage places and objects included on the National Heritage List (Commonwealth), Victorian Heritage Register and Aboriginal Heritage Register (State) and heritage overlay (local government). Some agencies may want to go further than these lists; for example, furniture, archives, or collections.

## 3. Lead by example

State agencies should lead by example by adopting appropriate heritage management strategies, processes and practices. The Victorian Government should set the standard for the community in the management of heritage assets.

## 4. Maintenance of Heritage Assets

Heritage assets are to be maintained in a manner which retains heritage significance, with the objective of preventing deterioration and avoiding the need for expensive 'catch-up' maintenance and major repairs. Maintenance is the key to resilience in the time of climate change and extreme weather events.

## 5. Conservation Outcomes

Heritage assets should be conserved to retain their heritage significance to the greatest extent feasible. State agencies should aim to conserve assets for operational purposes or to adaptively reuse assets in preference to demolition. The management of heritage assets should use the best available knowledge, skills and standards for those places.

## 6. Sustainability

Conservation of heritage places should be recognised as part of a State agency's management response to environmentally sustainable development. The conservation and, where appropriate, adaptive reuse of heritage assets, has major benefits to the community in terms of promoting the wise use of resources, retaining embodied energy and minimising waste.

## 7. Monitor Condition

State agencies monitoring and reporting on the physical condition of heritage assets in their heritage and conservation registers should take appropriate action to ensure heritage significance is not eroded.

## 8. Integrated Heritage Management

Heritage assets, and their significance, should always be considered by agencies as an integrated part of their asset management policies.

Agencies should be guided by the Government Asset Management Policy Statement: *Sustaining Our Assets*, the objectives of which are:

- To provide the services required by Victorians
- To optimise the service potential of assets
- To maximise value for money
- To contribute to economic growth
- To assign responsibility and accountability
- To promote balance between development and sustainability

## 9. Appropriate Uses of Assets

Heritage assets should, where feasible, continue to be maintained in their operational role. Where they are surplus to operational requirements, State agencies should aim to ensure that items are adaptively re-used for a purpose sympathetic to their heritage significance.

## 10. Alterations to places

Alterations should be planned and executed to minimise negative impacts on heritage significance (including curtilage and setting), and appropriate mitigating measures should be identified.

## 11. Transfer of Ownership

The transfer of ownership or control of heritage assets that are surplus to the State agency's requirements needs to be planned and executed so as to conserve the item's significance into the future.

## 12. Management of Redundant Heritage Assets

Management of redundant heritage assets (orphan assets) surplus to the State agency's needs (but still in the ownership of the agency or under its control) should be planned and executed so as to conserve their heritage significance into the future.

## 13. Prudent Financial and Budgetary Management

State agencies should implement the Government Asset Management Policy in an efficient and effective manner which achieves value for money and does not unreasonably burden the community into the future. For example, the deferring of conservation and maintenance actions to heritage assets will result in additional costs in the longer term.

## 14. Staff Expertise and Compliance

State agencies need to ensure that staff are appropriately educated on the significance and role of their heritage estate including the role and significance of multicultural heritage in Victoria. Specific expertise should be available to effectively and efficiently implement these principles.

## 15. Monitor Performance

State agencies should adopt processes to monitor and report on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of heritage assets and service delivery, and take prompt action to provide for optimal heritage conservation outcomes.

## 16. Reporting

Reporting is an effective tool that is to be used as a basis for achieving continuous improvement within an agency's heritage asset management strategy and in setting budgetary priorities.

## 17. Promotion

State agencies should take every opportunity to celebrate and promote their heritage assets with all Victorian communities, including multicultural communities.

## 18. Consultation

State agencies should consult with the local, migrant and multicultural communities when making decisions that have a significant impact on heritage assets, and seek to integrate, where appropriate, any local government responsibilities. Applications should be made for any relevant permits.

Indigenous people are the primary source of information about their heritage and active participation of Indigenous people in the identification, assessment and management is integral to the effective protection of Indigenous heritage assets.

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