

National Trust of Australia (WA) Heritage Policy

Heritage – our past, our present, our legacy for the future 2010

Introduction

Our heritage, enriched by its traditions and its diversity, provides a sense of pride in valuing place and identity, and includes major social, economic and environmental benefits.

Currently, the role of government in conserving heritage is divided between various departments and agencies which include the Department of Environment and Conservation, Department of Indigenous Affairs, Department for Planning and Infrastructure, Western Australian Museum, National Trust of Australia (WA), Heritage Council and Local Governments. While each brings particular expertise, experience and perspective to heritage issues, to create greater effectiveness and efficiency, processes need to be more streamlined and better coordinated.

In order to value our heritage, it is important for government to provide leadership and to establish key policies which are valued, practical, sustainable and holistic in nature, and which will allow for a more integrated whole of government approach.

To facilitate this, the Heritage Policy highlights key issues and principles and establishes a set of policies which can lay the foundation for detailed policy initiatives through the development of a Heritage Strategy.

Definition

Heritage is something that we have inherited from the past and something that is valued enough today to leave for future generations.

Heritage can incorporate both the tangible and intangible and is present in many forms including landscapes, landmarks, places, buildings, objects, languages, customs and ceremonies.

Scope of the Heritage Policy

The scope of the Heritage Policy considers a holistic approach to heritage in keeping with Commonwealth legislation and includes, but is not limited to, key areas of natural, Aboriginal and historic heritage as well as moveable and maritime heritage.

Principles

- The application of best practice as described by the Burra Charter and the Australian Natural Heritage Charter by government in the identification, conservation, promotion and management of heritage values is essential in promoting those values and the value of heritage conservation.
- Active involvement by all sectors of the community in the processes of identification, conservation and use of heritage places is integral to good conservation outcomes, community appreciation and compliance. Conservation by negotiation should be an objective.
- Active participation by Aboriginal people in the identification, conservation and management of Aboriginal heritage is essential to the well being of Aboriginal people and the achievement of good conservation outcomes.
- Heritage recognition and conservation should be fully integrated into the planning and environmental management systems, simple to operate and understand, open, transparent and accountable.
- Assessment of heritage significance should be based purely on heritage values and separated from the decision making processes to manage those values.
- Effective heritage management requires a balance of flexible regulatory requirements and a range of conservation incentives.
- Appropriate expertise should be utilized to facilitate decision making processes relating to the identification, assessment, conservation and management of heritage places.
- Heritage identification and conservation should reflect the rich diversity of our society and meet community expectations.
- An education and learning strategy is essential to promote greater understanding and support for the identification, conservation and management of heritage places.

Key Issues

- Statutory identification and conservation of heritage and its governance arrangements are fragmented;
- There is no system of statutory identification or conservation of moveable cultural heritage, or natural heritage places;
- Statutory provisions for the identification and conservation of cultural heritage values in natural landscapes including geological monuments are under utilized;
- The statutory provisions for the conservation of heritage places of local or regional significance is inconsistently applied across Local Governments or not utilized at all;
- There are no common standards or methodologies in the identification and assessment of heritage places of local or regional significance;
- There are insufficient incentives or policy tools to encourage conservation of heritage places in private ownership;
- There is insufficient education, training and support for heritage and other professionals to ensure a consistently high standard of assessment and management of heritage places;
- There is a lack of educational and learning opportunities promoting heritage values;
- There is a lack of monitoring and reporting on the condition of heritage places,
- There are no long-term management strategies for State-owned heritage places
- There are no management strategies in place for the conservation of cultural heritage values of government managed natural landscapes;
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that the condition of heritage places is in decline; and
- There is a high level of confusion regarding the operation of the various heritage regulatory systems.

Policy

The National Trust of Australia (WA) promotes the following set of policies to guide governments at all levels in conservation and interpretation of cultural heritage values.

Leadership

Policy 1 *Demonstrate the protection, conservation, promotion and management of heritage values, through leadership by example, and the application of best practice.*

Managing Change

Policy 2 *Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of statutory identification and conservation of heritage by strengthening the cooperation and collaboration between government, heritage and planning agencies, including local government.*

Sustainability

Policy 3 *Encourage a viable future for heritage assets and sustainable heritage conservation outcomes through appropriate use and adaptive re-use of heritage places.*

Relationship & Partnering

Policy 4 *Promote and celebrate the value and diversity of Western Australia's heritage through partnerships which will enhance community appreciation.*

Resourcing the Community

Policy 5 *Support the conservation of privately owned and community managed heritage places through a wide range of conservation and policy incentives.*

Education and Learning

Policy 6 *Ensure greater understanding of the value of heritage through the development of a comprehensive heritage education and learning strategy.*

Community Expectation

Policy 7 *Ensure that the regulatory processes for heritage protection are open and transparent, simple to operate and understand, able to deliver accountability to all stakeholders and reflect community expectations.*

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