



2026 NATIONAL TRUST (ACT) HERITAGE AWARDS

Entrants Guide

The National Trust ACT Heritage Awards recognise projects and individuals that make a significant contribution to conserving, protecting or promoting the heritage of the ACT and Region. We welcome the nomination of any project that promotes the conservation of or fosters public knowledge about the ACT and Region's heritage places, objects and issues.

What is Heritage?

Heritage is the valued legacy of natural and cultural elements inherited from the past that are worth protecting for future generations. Heritage conservation encompasses 'all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance'.¹ It is a holistic approach involving maintenance, preservation, restoration, reconstruction or adaptation, aimed at managing a place to sustain its heritage value now and into the future.

Heritage Award Categories

In 2026 awards are offered in the following seven categories:

1. ***Built Heritage (public/commercial & residential)***
Projects that are sympathetic to the heritage significance of a place or complement and utilise existing built heritage, including adaptive reuse or new work in historic contexts.
2. ***First Nations Heritage***
Projects that promote and advocate for the conservation, education, appreciation and a deeper understanding and celebration of First Nations heritage.
3. ***Events, Exhibitions and Tours***
Projects that provide individuals with the opportunity to visit, learn, gain new perspectives on, or otherwise engage with, ACT's heritage. These may include events, performances, exhibitions, lectures, tours or experiential heritage tourism initiatives.
4. ***Heritage Interpretation and Education***
Projects that produce innovative, creative and/or research-based interpretations of the ACT's heritage in any media, including interpretive signs and displays, oral histories, new books, websites, guidebooks and digital media.

¹ Australia ICOMOS Incorporated, *The Burra Charter* (2013), p2

5. *Heritage Landscapes and the Natural Environment*

Projects to conserve the unique natural environment and cultural landscapes of the ACT. Eligible initiatives may include management plans, research, bushland management and regeneration, protection of waterways and forests, landscape design and conservation of significant landscapes and gardens.

6. *Heritage Management and Policy Resources*

Tools, plans, strategies, resources or other materials developed for specific projects or categories of heritage management. These could include Conservation and Heritage Management Plans, heritage reports and planning documents, new digital and technology-based resources and tools.

7. *Local Community Projects*

Community-led projects that conserve, educate or promote local heritage. These could include community celebrations, local restorations, streetscape improvements, signage and publications.

Which projects are eligible?

Projects must comply with the following assessment rules:

- Projects are to be located within and be of significance to the heritage of the ACT Region. Projects occurring outside the ACT border must demonstrate a strong relationship with the ACT's heritage
- Projects or programs of works must have been undertaken or completed within the last 3 years (i.e., no earlier than 1 July 2023)
- Projects can only be nominated with the permission of the owner of the building/object/place.

Individual Awards

There are three categories of individual awards:

1. *Emerging Heritage Professional (open for nominations)*

An individual who has demonstrated outstanding commitment to heritage excellence and innovation.

To qualify for consideration of an award, nominees must have:

- Appropriate qualifications or training (commenced or completed) in their chosen field
- No more than 8 years' experience in the heritage profession since completing their studies or training/apprenticeship
- Understanding of the articles of the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter in planning and delivery
- Demonstrated contributions and achievements in best practice conservation of a heritage place/s or item/s including, but not limited to,

built heritage, cultural collections, cultural landscapes, intangible heritage values and terrestrial or maritime archaeological sites

- Enthusiasm and eagerness for their field, as demonstrated through attitude and endeavour and as supported by their supervisor.

2. *Lifetime Achievement (selected by the National Trust ACT Council)*

Demonstrated commitment and achievement by an individual over a period of two or more decades in the conservation, promotion and protection of the ACT's heritage.

3. *Outstanding Advocacy (selected by the National Trust ACT Council)*

Demonstrated advocacy by an individual or an organisation that has had material impact on decision making or public opinion in favour of conservation of the heritage of the ACT.

Who can nominate for an award?

We invite organisations, community groups including Community Councils, Territory and Commonwealth government agencies, and passionate individuals to submit projects of all sizes and budgets for recognition.

Projects may be nominated for more than one category of award.

Community groups and individuals with limited heritage expertise requiring assistance in preparing their nomination are encouraged to contact the Trust.

The Awards Judging Process

Nominations will be considered by an independent Judging Panel established by the Trust that includes a representative from the ACT Heritage Council. Panel members have appropriate heritage knowledge and expertise and will co-opt external expert advisors where required.

The Judging Panel will apply the principles within the Burra Charter² when assessing project nominations. Heritage places nominated will likely be visited.

Judges assess the merits of each nomination against the eligibility criteria and the quality of the information provided including supporting material.

For projects that involved construction and conservation, it is important to illustrate to the judges the scope and extent of works carried out. Please ensure your submission thoroughly represents the work undertaken including where applicable:

- Architectural drawings clearly showing the extent of work undertaken for built projects, which differentiate between new and existing components
- Project scope/specifications and conservation guidance

² The Burra Charter - <http://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Burra-Charter-2013-Adopted-31.10.2013.pdf> - provides guidance for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance (cultural heritage places). The Charter sets a standard of practice for those who provide advice, make decisions about, or undertake works to places of cultural significance, including owners, managers and custodians.

- Clear and engaging photographs to properly show the project (e.g., before and after shots).

For non-construction/conservation projects, submissions may include:

- The length of an exhibition or event, its budget, purpose and visitation numbers
- The outcome or result of an advocacy campaign or education project
- Reviews of a book or exhibition, or community feedback for an event
- Photographs showing the event, exhibition or tour
- A link to, or copy of the book or resource (for publications and resources such as a new book, a copy should be submitted)
- A link to any video or website

The judges may consider a project applicable in one or more categories, or the judges may decide not to make an award in a category. The judges' decision is final.

Entry fees

A project can be entered separately or in multiple categories. The entry fee (for one or more categories) is \$50 for an individual, community group or charity, and \$100 for a business or government organisation.

When an entry is lodged, your nominated contact will be emailed with details for direct deposit or over the phone credit card payment. Entries are not submitted for judging until the entry fee is processed.

Although membership of the National Trust is *not* a requirement, we do encourage you to consider membership as a way of supporting the Awards.

Join at: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/join/>

Awards Presentation

The outcome of judging will be announced at an Awards Presentation to be held at the Hyatt Hotel Canberra in October 2026, to which short-listed entrants and their guests will be invited. Awards will be presented by the ACT Minister for Heritage.

How do I enter a project?

Please enter in one of the following ways:

- Complete the online forms at the following links:
Projects – <https://form.jotform.com/261657266555871>
Emerging Heritage Professional – <https://form.jotform.com/261657999569889> .
- Download an entry form from the Trust's website www.nationaltrustact.org.au and return it via email to info@nationaltrustact.org.au

Entries close: **Friday 14 August 2026.**

For further information email – info@nationaltrustact.org.au

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