

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF VICTORIA **STRATEGIC PLAN 2021–25**

H HERITAGE
COUNCIL
VICTORIA



Acknowledgement of Country

As a peak heritage body, we acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Country that we call Victoria, as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, and acknowledge the importance and significance of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of Aboriginal culture and traditional practices.

For noting:

- » The statutory scope of the *Heritage Act 2017* covers places and objects of cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria, but does not apply to a place or object that is of cultural heritage significance solely on the ground of its association with Aboriginal tradition. In this Strategic Plan, the terms 'cultural heritage' and 'heritage' are used generically and interchangeably to refer to the 'heritage' to which the *Heritage Act 2017* applies, recognising that heritage places and objects may have multiple attributes and values.
- » The Heritage Council of Victoria has resolved to implement the 'Practical Improvement' and 'Promotional Program' initiatives of the State of *Heritage Review Local Heritage 2020* (© State of Victoria. The Heritage Council of Victoria 2020). This Strategy includes a number of these initiatives as actions.

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The Heritage Council

The Heritage Council of Victoria is an independent statutory authority established under the *Heritage Act 2017*.

The Council is the Victorian Government’s primary decision-making body for the identification of places and objects of cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria.

The Council includes places and objects of state-level cultural heritage significance in the Victorian Heritage register, and also conducts reviews of decisions made by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria, principally in relation to registration recommendations and permit applications.

The Council also advises the Minister for Planning on the conservation of Victoria’s cultural heritage and promotes public understanding of Victoria’s cultural heritage.

The Council consists of 10 members and 10 alternate members who represent a broad cross-section of heritage specialists and the community. Members are appointed by the Governor-in-Council on the recommendation of the Minister for Planning.

Mission Statement

**To lead in the recognition and conservation of
Victoria’s cultural heritage.**

Minister's message

The Victorian Government is committed to the conservation of the state's special heritage places and objects that are now ours to care for and manage. Our heritage makes valuable social, economic and environmental contributions to the Victorian community – contributions which are particularly important as we respond to the coronavirus and its impacts on our society. With our care and protection, heritage places and objects can be passed on to future generations.

The Heritage Council Strategic Plan for 2021–25 emphasises that heritage is a shared responsibility across multiple levels of government, industry and the community. The Council's continuing collaboration with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council, its ongoing support for local government, and its encouragement of Victorian Government agencies to be exemplary heritage managers are central to its vision.

Effective communications and sharing of stories by those involved in heritage will foster greater understanding and support for heritage conservation, while helping us to respond to emerging challenges such as the loss of traditional heritage trade skills, or the impacts of climate change.

The Victorian Heritage Register is the centrepiece of our management system for state-significant non-Aboriginal heritage. It is important to review and monitor the Register so it continues to reflect those places and objects of cultural significance to all Victorians.

The Heritage Council must continue to deliver its statutory functions related to the inclusion of places and objects in the Register, and its role of reviewing permit determinations for those places and objects.

The Heritage Council of Victoria plays a vital role in the identification, protection and promotion of our state's heritage and in providing strategic advice to government. I enthusiastically welcome this Strategic Plan which will set the direction for the Council's program over the coming five years.

The Hon. Richard Wynne MP
MINISTER FOR PLANNING

Chair's message

The Heritage Council of Victoria is proud to be responsible for identifying and contributing to the conservation of places and objects of cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria.

The Council is nevertheless mindful and appreciative that there are other participants in this process. In terms of the promotion of understanding and good management of heritage, the Council is extending its collaboration with local government in response to the findings of the *State of Heritage Review 2020*. Further, it is embarking on greater engagement with owners and managers of heritage places and objects.

Over recent years the Council has worked hard to introduce new policies and practices following major changes to the *Heritage Act in 2017* and the separation of the Council's Secretariat from Heritage Victoria. The Council now has well-established approaches in place to assist in efficiently and fairly fulfilling its statutory review and other decision-making roles, but recognises that there are further opportunities for process transparency and greater community involvement in informing decisions about heritage.

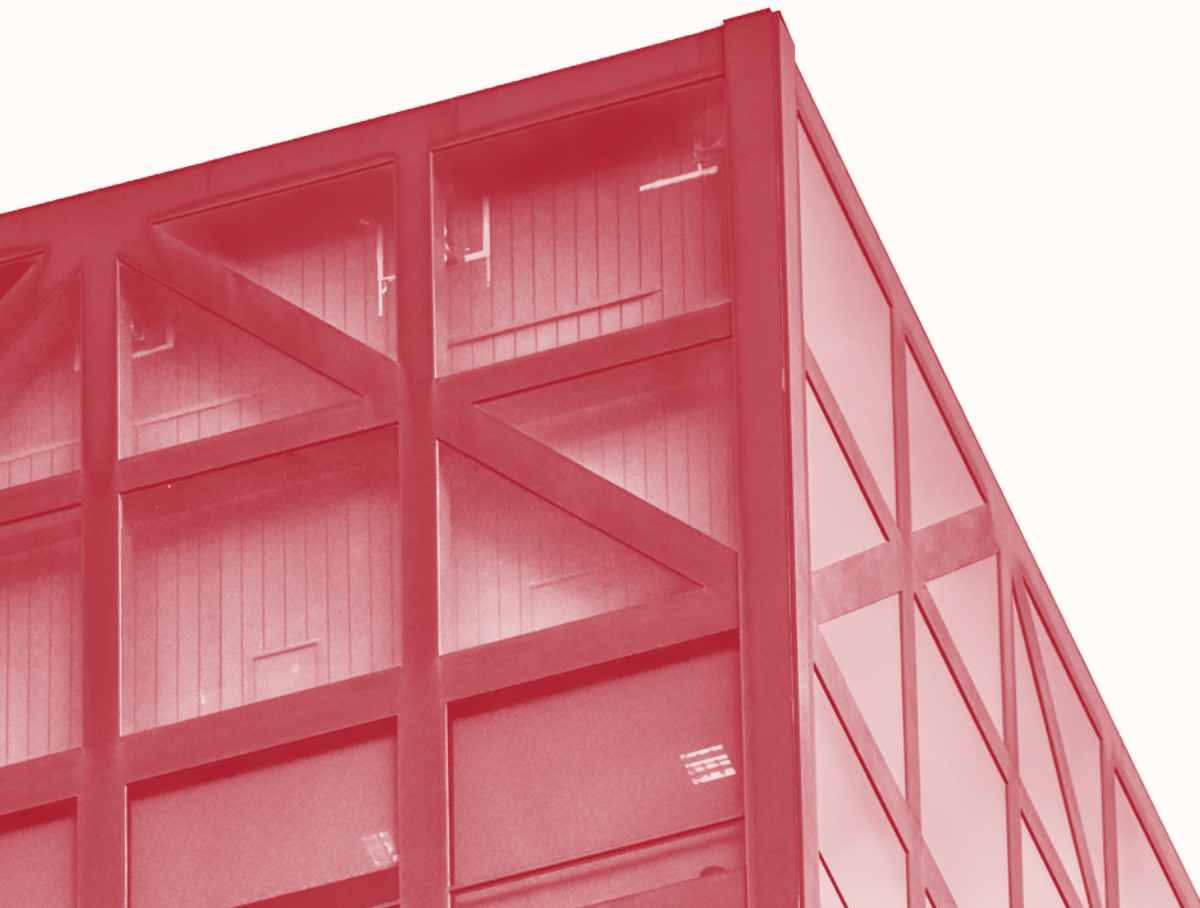
The on-going challenge for the Council is the balancing of its strategic roles of promoting cultural heritage, advising the Minister, and supporting local and state government agencies, with the Council's statutory function of offering fair review processes. This is coupled with a significantly expanding statutory workload. Additional resources will be needed for the Council to be effective as a lead agency and public advocate for Victoria's unique cultural heritage.

The Heritage Council's Strategic Plan for 2021 to 2025 sets out an ambitious but achievable program for improving the heritage system across all government and community sectors, expanding the understanding of cultural heritage and facilitating careful custodianship of important heritage places and objects.

Jenny Moles

CHAIR, HERITAGE COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

Former BHP House (H1699)
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Four values

RESPECT FOR HERITAGE

We value Victoria's heritage places and objects as assets to be enjoyed as expressions of the traditions, identities and achievements of our diverse communities and cultures.

COLLABORATION

We value the knowledge others bring to heritage conservation, and encourage the sharing of experience and information.

INNOVATION

We value exploring new approaches to ensure a more sustainable future for Victoria's cultural heritage.

SKILLED PRACTICE

We value the skills and resources that enable high-quality heritage management across the state.

The vision: 2021–25

Victorians connect with and value our diverse cultural heritage. We aspire to have:

- » Victorian communities, landowners and custodians understanding and valuing our heritage and its contribution to enriching culture
- » a heritage system that protects, sustains and enhances our heritage
- » coherent and integrated heritage processes across all levels of government
- » transmission of heritage values to current and future generations through effective stewardship and inspirational story telling.

Five strategies

The Heritage Council's strategies for achieving its vision over the next five years are:



O1

**Wider
understanding
of cultural
heritage**



O2

**Effective and
representative
Victorian
Heritage Register**



O3

**Innovative
and sustainable
heritage practice**



O4

**Shared
responsibility
for heritage
conservation**



O5

**Improved
Heritage Council
operations**

WIDER UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

01

CONTEXT

The Council understands that people care for and protect what they value. It is committed to sharing stories of cultural heritage and will encourage the community to appreciate Victoria's heritage and to understand how these places and objects contribute to the livability of Victoria and provide a wide range of economic, social and other benefits. It will listen to what the community has to say about its heritage.

The Council also aims to improve the ease with which owners, community members and others can engage with its processes, and ensure they understand the various roles and responsibilities of organisations involved in heritage regulation, conservation and management.

It will strive to be a public voice which promotes understanding by listening to and sharing knowledge with communities, practitioners, owners, custodians and government bodies; providing forums for debate and discussion; and working with government and heritage industry partners.

1 Spring Street (Shell House) (H2365)
© Hin Lim | HIN LIM AIPP 2018



GOALS

The goals for this strategy are that:

A More Victorians understand heritage processes, the role that cultural heritage plays in the life of our communities, and the roles and responsibilities of organisations involved in heritage management.

B The stories and narratives of our important cultural heritage places and objects are well told and widely shared.

C The Council is recognised as leading public discourse about the conservation, management and celebration of Victoria's cultural heritage.

Beaurepaire Centre (H1045)
© Hin Lim | HIN LIM AIPP 2018

People care for
and protect what
they value



STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The most important actions that the Council must take in the next five years towards its goals are to:

- » update the Heritage Council Communications Plan to focus on:
 - › establishing the Council as an authoritative voice and thought leader in cultural heritage
 - › communicating the Council's decisions clearly
 - › recognising the 'value' that the Victorian community places on its heritage
 - › developing and delivering programs and events that improve access to information about Victoria's cultural heritage, including a 'community roadshow'
 - › reaching new audiences, including students, the tourism industry, heritage place managers and planners
 - › conveying engaging stories about Victoria's cultural heritage places
- » work with the Minister, Heritage Victoria, the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council, the National Trust, local government, community heritage organisations and other stakeholders to clarify and communicate their respective roles, responsibilities and processes for heritage conservation
- » engage with Development Victoria, the Property Council (Victoria), Urban Development Institute of Australia and other property organisations to create opportunities for improved communication and better recognition of the contribution of cultural heritage to development projects
- » demonstrate the economic and social value of heritage to the community by reference to authoritative data and case studies.



Victorian Arts Centre (H1500) © Hin Lim | HIN LIM AIPP 2018



Old Lead Diggings (H2402) Heritage Victoria

When we preserve meaningful and significant places and objects, we enrich both our knowledge of the past and the civic culture of future generations of Victorians.

Prof Peter McPhee AM,
Chair History Council of Victoria

EFFECTIVE AND REPRESENTATIVE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER

02

CONTEXT

Victoria's heritage is rich and diverse. From the grandeur of Flinders Street Station to the scenic landscapes of the Great Ocean Road, the rustic craftsmanship of the Murtoa Stick Shed and the brutalist architecture of the Plumbers and Gasfitters Union Building, the Victorian Heritage Register includes more than 2,400 heritage places and objects of state-level significance.

The Victorian Heritage Register lists and provides legal protection for heritage places and objects that are significant to the history and development of Victoria. Heritage places can include buildings, trees, parks and gardens, streetscapes, archaeological sites, cemeteries, precincts, shipwrecks and other structures. Heritage objects can include furniture, relics, archaeological artefacts, equipment, transport vehicles, banners

and everyday articles that contribute to an understanding of Victoria's history.

Because the registration process has evolved over time and is reactive to nominations received, the Victorian Heritage Register may not reflect the diverse range of state-significant cultural heritage places and objects that are valued by Victorian communities.

The Victorian Heritage Register should be widely accessible to all Victorians and easily used as a valuable source of information for both place- or object-specific enquiry and comparative studies.

Royal Arcade (H0023)
© Hin Lim | HIN LIM AIPP 2019



GOALS

The goals for this strategy are that:

- A** Victoria's Heritage Register recognises our state-significant places and objects.
- B** The Victorian Heritage Register reflects the diverse range of state-significant cultural heritage valued by communities throughout Victoria.
- C** The Victorian Heritage Register is accessible and easy to use as a source of information about Victoria's state-significant heritage.

ICI House (Ho786) © Hin Lim | HIN LIM AIPP 2018

The Victorian Heritage Register is the cornerstone of our state's heritage system

We manage a large number of historic places and objects. It is our responsibility to not only maintain and protect these valuable assets, but document and protect heritage values when such infrastructure is no longer used.

Melbourne Water

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The most important actions that the Council must take in the next five years towards its goals are to:

- » update the 'Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines' to reflect current legislation and contemporary best practice
- » work with Heritage Victoria to improve the functionality of the Victorian Heritage Database so that all Victorians can understand its purpose and have easy access to current information about places in the Victorian Heritage Register
- » analyse the Victorian Heritage Register to better understand current coverage and identify those types of place, demographic group (e.g. gender-related places), historic theme, or geographical area which may be underrepresented and prepare a long-term strategy to address any identified gaps
- » investigate options for benefiting from community knowledge, affection and enthusiasm as a resource for supporting and extending the Victorian Heritage Register.

Capitol House (Ho471) © Hin Lim | HIN LIM AIPP 2019



INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE PRACTICE

03

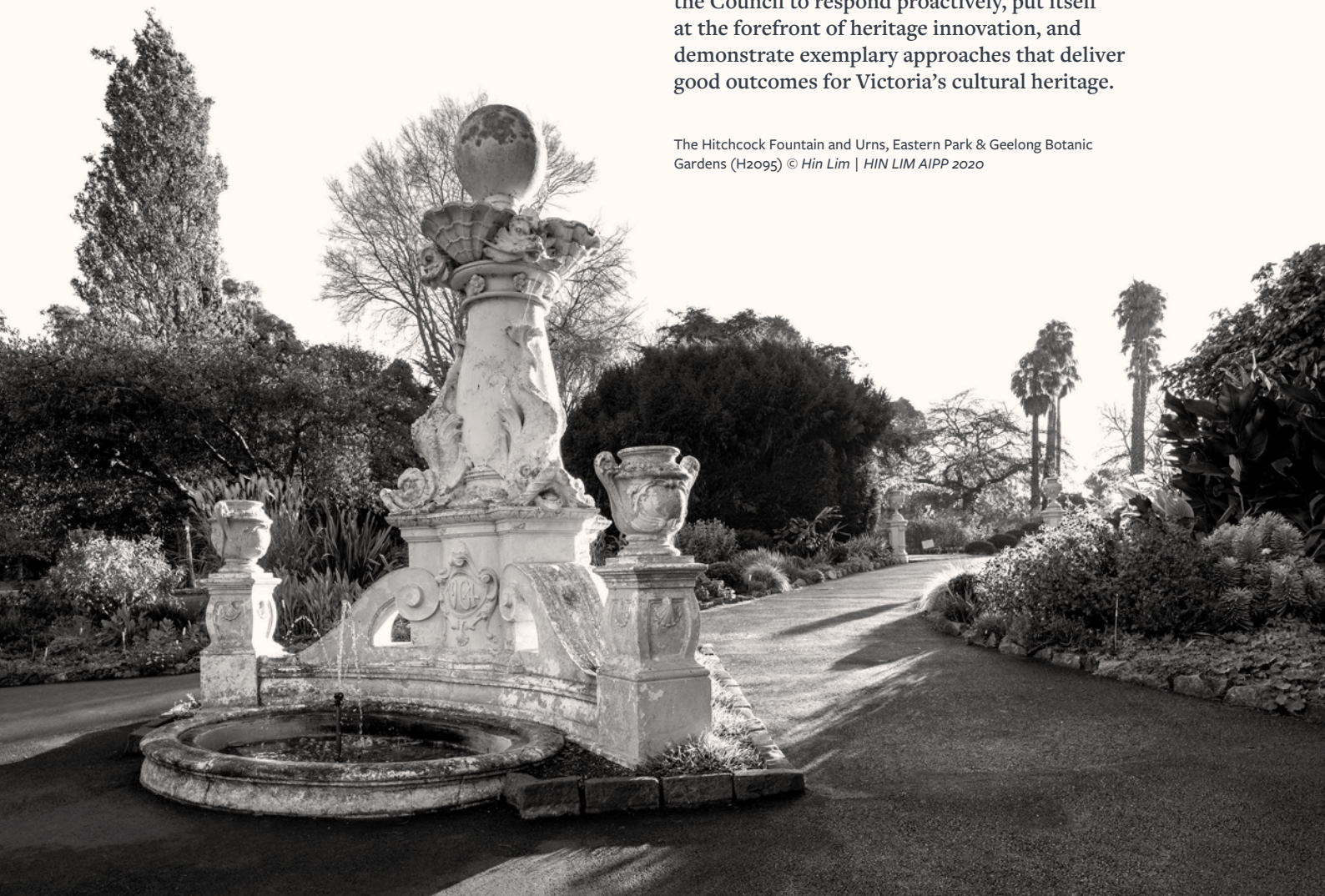
CONTEXT

As communities grow and change, so does the related physical, social and economic context for cultural heritage. The Council recognises that heritage policy and practice must respond to evolving community needs and values, changing circumstances and emerging threats.

Heritage conservation must be viewed as part of a broader agenda for sustainable development and wise use of resources. Our approach to protecting and conserving heritage requires a forward-looking perspective that is responsive to evolving knowledge about the impacts of climate change, and to the recent decline in available skilled heritage practitioners and technicians.

Community expectations, local and international research, evolving technologies and ways to manage and interpret heritage, all affect how the Council conducts its business. Initiating or supporting innovative projects will allow the Council to respond proactively, put itself at the forefront of heritage innovation, and demonstrate exemplary approaches that deliver good outcomes for Victoria's cultural heritage.

The Hitchcock Fountain and Urns, Eastern Park & Geelong Botanic Gardens (H2095) © Hin Lim | HIN LIM AIPP 2020



GOALS

The goals for this strategy are that:

- A** Cultural heritage conservation contributes to sustainable practices and addresses challenges arising from climate change.
- B** Victoria has a more highly skilled heritage workforce – professional and trade – to support custodians and policy makers.
- C** The Council identifies, instigates, undertakes or supports projects which develop or demonstrate exemplary heritage practice and/or showcase Victoria’s cultural heritage.

Amazon shipwreck site (S23)
Heritage Victoria

Heritage conservation
practice evolves
and adapts in
response to changing
circumstances



STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The most important actions that the Council must take in the next five years towards its goals are to:

- » instigate a project to highlight and promote the intergenerational value of heritage in the context of the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- » complete a 'Cultural Heritage and Climate Change Project' focused on the effects of climate change on Victoria's cultural heritage places and objects and the development of principles, tools and resources to enable their conservation
- » pro-actively support a national strategic approach to the growing shortage of specialist heritage trade skills, in the context of post-pandemic economic recovery, through the Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand (HCOANZ)
- » engage with tertiary, training and professional institutions to facilitate collaborative partnerships that will enable the development of best-practice cultural heritage knowledge and guidance.



Block Arcade (H0032) © Hin Lim | HIN LIM AIPP 2019

Grant funding for works on heritage buildings and places [should be] conditional on use of professionals and tradespeople with relevant specialist qualifications and/or experience.

Heritage Trades and Professional Training report to the Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand

The Brighton Bathing Boxes and Dendy Street Beach (H2369)
© Hin Lim | HIN LIM AIPP 2018



SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION

O4

CONTEXT

Our cultural heritage contributes to our identity, our sense of place and our economy. Heritage conservation is therefore a shared responsibility in which government, industry, other organisations and the community all have a part to play. In Victoria, an important role for the Heritage Council is to lead and inspire a shared approach to recognising and conserving Victoria's cultural heritage.

Our understanding of the interconnected nature of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage continues to evolve. The Council is committed to ongoing collaboration with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council and to contributing to improved local and national approaches through the Dhawura Ngilan Vision and Standards (2020).

The Council recognises that government at all levels identifies, protects and regulates heritage by listing sites and objects, managing heritage places and collections, allocating resources, offering incentives and providing access to information. The Council will support other government agencies by providing information and resources at the local level and through encouraging state agencies to be exemplar heritage managers. It will also support local government in its vital role of protecting and conserving local heritage places.

ICI House (Ho786) © Hin Lim | HIN LIM AIPP 2018



GOALS

The goals for this strategy are that:

- A** The Council leads a shared approach to recognising and conserving Victoria's cultural heritage.
- B** The shared heritage of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is recognised, understood and respected.
- C** Local government is supported in managing local heritage.
- D** Victorian state government agencies demonstrate high-quality conservation and management of public heritage assets.

Heritage conservation
relies on collaboration
and partnership
between government
and the community

HM Prison Pentridge, Panopticon, A Division (H1551)
© Hin Lim | HIN LIM AIPP 2014





Former Aboriginal Church of Christ (H2393) © Hin Lim | HIN LIM AIPP 2021

For tens of thousands of years, we have been carers, custodians and owners of Country and Culture in this place now known as Victoria. As Traditional Owners it is our responsibility to continue this care and, in doing so, also care for the new Cultural Heritage on our Country. We walk on this journey with the Heritage Council of Victoria, working together to ensure our heritage systems better reflect a holistic view of Victoria’s history.

Rodney Carter, Chair
Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The most important actions that the Council must take in the next five years towards its goals are to:

- » collaborate with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council through a joint working group to facilitate a common approach which appropriately recognises places where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal histories coincide or coexist, and which further promotes a broader understanding of Australia’s colonial and contemporary history
- » contribute to delivering Dhawura Ngilan Vision and Standards in collaboration with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council and Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand (HCOANZ)
- » facilitate best-practice local heritage management, guidance and knowledge sharing through forums, workshops, the updated Heritage Council Communications Plan, and the work of the Local Government Specialist Committee
- » encourage Victorian Government agencies to become exemplary heritage stewards and to make heritage conservation part of their core business
- » support local government through creation of relevant information packs and delivery of information sessions.



Brighton Municipal Offices (H1292) © Hin Lim | HIN LIM AIPP 2018

IMPROVED COUNCIL OPERATIONS

05

CONTEXT

The Council's functions prescribed by the Act include advising the Minister on cultural heritage matters; developing and publishing criteria for assessing cultural heritage; deciding on proposed place registrations; approving changes to listed places and objects in the Victorian Heritage Register; and reviewing Executive Director determinations in relation to nominations, permits and consents.

The statutory workload of the Council continues to grow. Registration hearings and permit reviews are increasing, particularly those related to development of registered buildings, with consequential demands on Council resources.

The Council has a broad range of experience within its membership. There are opportunities to share skills and to improve operations.

The Council will focus on continuing to improve governance so that its statutory functions are fulfilled effectively and efficiently, and resources are allocated to ensure that the Minister continues to receive sound advice; local government, industry and the community are supported in their conservation efforts; and our state's diverse cultural heritage is widely promoted.

Police Headquarters Complex (H0913)
© Hin Lim | HIN LIM AIPP 2018



GOALS

The goals for this strategy are that:

- A** The Council will have adequate resources and will manage its workload to address strategic programs while managing statutory functions effectively.
- B** Council processes will become more accessible.
- C** The Council will continue to provide robust and timely advice to the Minister.

**The Council will
continue to improve
its governance and
operations**

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

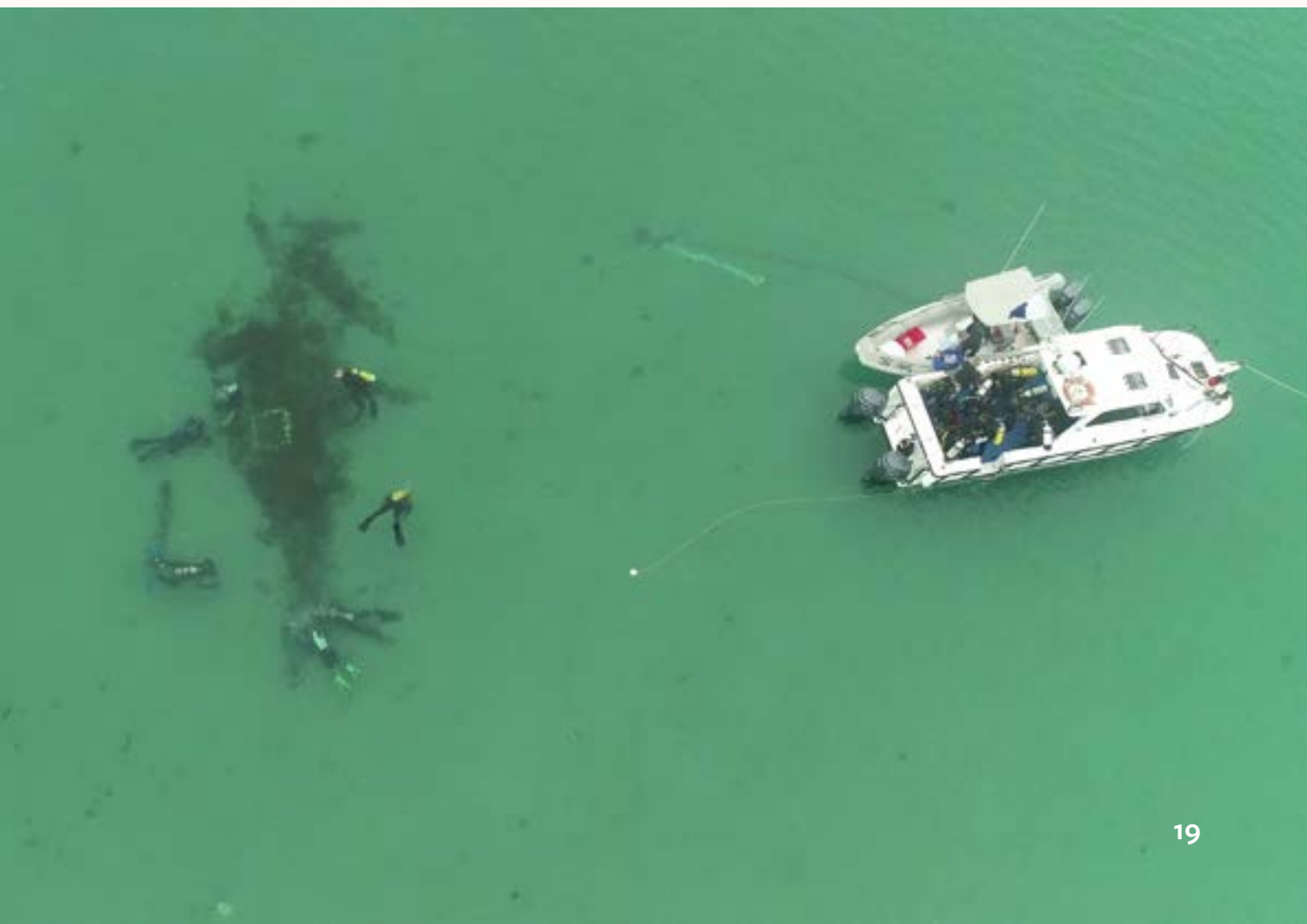
The most important actions that the Council must take in the next five years towards its goals are to:

- » examine ways to improve efficiency and to increase available resources, including appropriate staff allocation, greater support for Members and specific project funding
- » review processes to improve decision making and procedures for hearings and facilitate greater public access
- » implement a systematic annual program for training and capacity-building for Council members
- » develop a user-friendly, publicly accessible, online system for management of documentation associated with hearings and other statutory processes.

Balancing the parallel obligations of promoting public appreciation of Victoria’s rich cultural heritage with the need to conduct impartial statutory hearings is an unusual challenge for a statutory body. It is a challenge which the Council is managing with ever greater capability.

Jenny Moles, Chair, Heritage Council of Victoria

Barbara shipwreck site (S68) *Heritage Victoria*



Implementing the strategy



Harold Holt Memorial Swimming Centre (H0069) © Hin Lim | HIN LIM AIPP 2016

PROGRAM AND PRIORITIES

The Council will implement this Strategic Plan progressively over the next five years (2021 to 2025).

The Council has adopted a program, including implementation of every action and achievement of every goal from this Strategic Plan, but recognises that this program will necessarily adapt to changing circumstances.

The annual implementation program for the Strategic Plan will be determined as part of the Council's annual Corporate Plan and will have regard to available resources, the constraints of the Council's statutory workload, relevant government priorities and opportunities that arise through other agencies or circumstances.

EVALUATING AND REPORTING

The Council has prepared a matrix of the strategic goals and actions in this Strategic Plan, incorporating defined outcomes as the 'measure of success' for each action.

The Heritage Council Finance and Risk Management Committee will have responsibility for oversight of the implementation of this Strategic Plan and will provide a bi-annual report to the Council, based on the implementation matrix.

The Council will report progress on implementation of the Strategic Plan, including specific achievement of the goals and actions and the proposed forward program, as part of its published Annual Report.



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