



HERITAGE
COUNCIL
VICTORIA

2020–21 CORPORATE PLAN

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

— Heritage Council of Victoria

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Chair's foreword

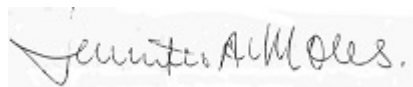
As a peak Heritage body, we are proud to acknowledge Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, and to acknowledge the importance and significance of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has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

The Heritage Council of Victoria, as an independent statutory authority, brings together experts across the state to achieve its key function of identifying and protecting places and objects of cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria. Our principal role is to ensure that Victoria's diverse cultural heritage is enjoyed, managed and protected for current and future generations.

The *Heritage Act 2017* governs the work of the Council and Clause 9 of Schedule 1 provides that the Council must prepare a corporate plan each financial year. The Heritage Council Corporate Plan 2020–21 is an important document in setting out our priorities and objectives for the coming year. The Council's overarching mission, to lead in the recognition and conservation of Victoria's cultural heritage, guides our scope of work.

We know that 2020–21 will be a difficult year as Victoria and the rest of the world struggle with the Coronavirus pandemic. The impacts of the crisis on the state and the work of the Council will be immense and far reaching. The setting of the Council's financial forecasts and performance measures for 2020–21 is consequently surrounded by uncertainty. Nevertheless, the work of the Council is essential in this challenging time as cultural heritage provides the reassurance of continuity, history and place, as well as enriching lives and providing both social and economic benefits.

The Council will continue to collaborate with the community and stakeholders to discharge its statutory responsibilities and endeavour to meet expectations in this time of upheaval. Our strategic work will also continue allowing us to improve heritage practice, engage with stakeholders and other agencies and foster a greater appreciation of cultural heritage. This plan informs you of the anticipated scope of our work and our aims for 2020–21 while acknowledging that regular checks will need to be put in place to update forecasts and expectations in a rapidly changing environment.



Jenny Moles
Acting Chair, Heritage Council of Victoria

1.0 Heritage Council of Victoria

The Council is an independent statutory authority established under the *Heritage Act 2017* (the Act) as the Victorian Government's primary decision-making body on the identification of places and objects of (non-Indigenous) cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria.

The Council lists places and objects of state-wide cultural heritage significance in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) and hears reviews and appeals, principally in relation to registration recommendations and permit decisions made by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria.

1.1 COUNCIL MEMBERS

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. The following chart outlines all of the Council's membership categories for 2020–21 and members in those positions at 30 June 2020.



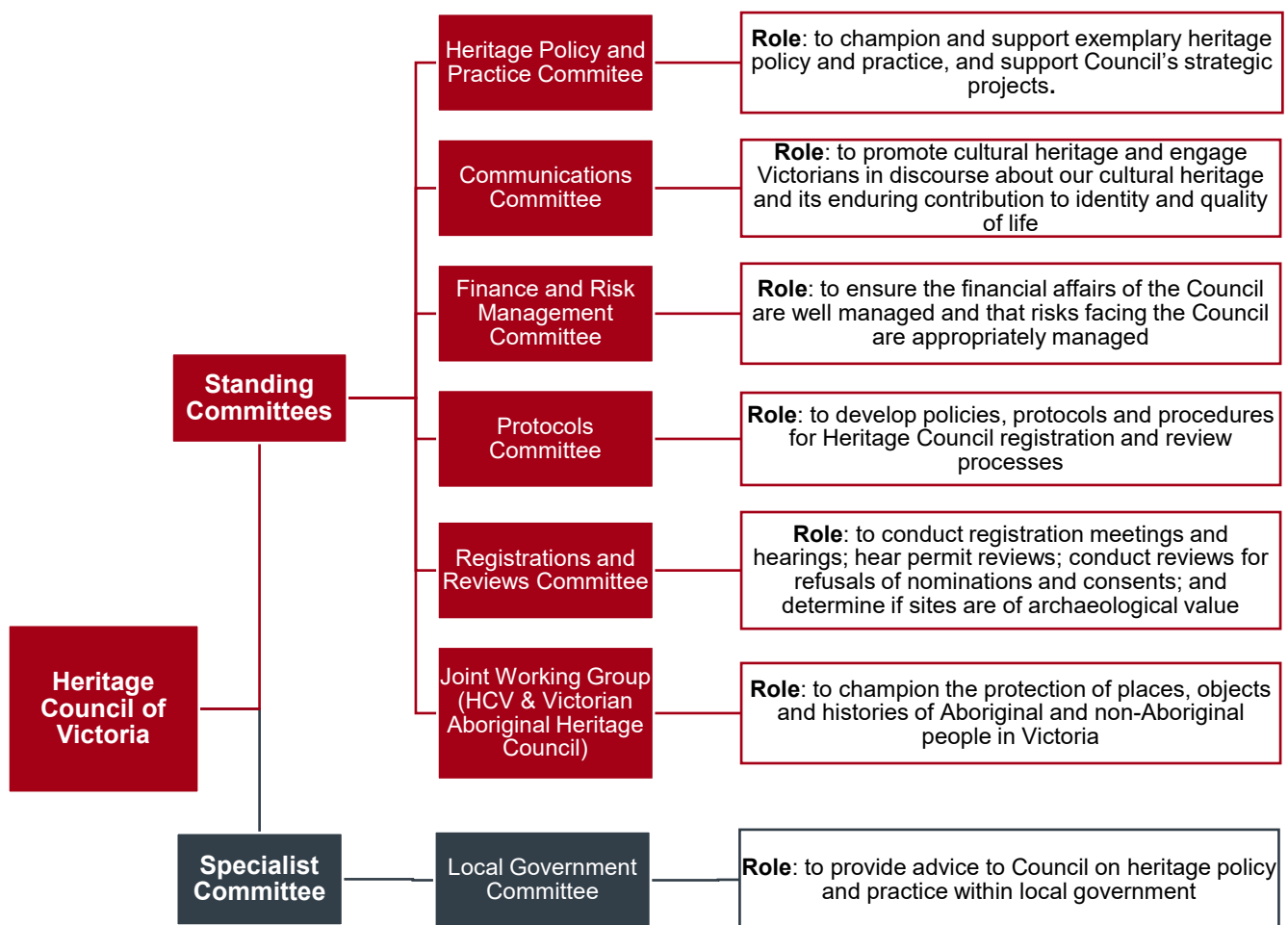
1.2 COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Under Part 2, Division 1, s.13 of the Act, the Council may establish committees to assist and advise it in fulfilling its statutory functions. There are two types of committees currently in operation:

Standing Committees – consisting of Council members only. Six standing committees have been constituted to ensure the effective operation of the Council, especially in relation to its legislative functions. The Standing Committees meet at least six times per year and, on Council's behalf, undertake some of its most critical and demanding work. This work includes: the conduct of hearings and reviews and the statutory administration of the Act; the management of the Council's finances; the oversight of strategic, educational and promotional activities; the development of heritage policy and practice; and the partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council.

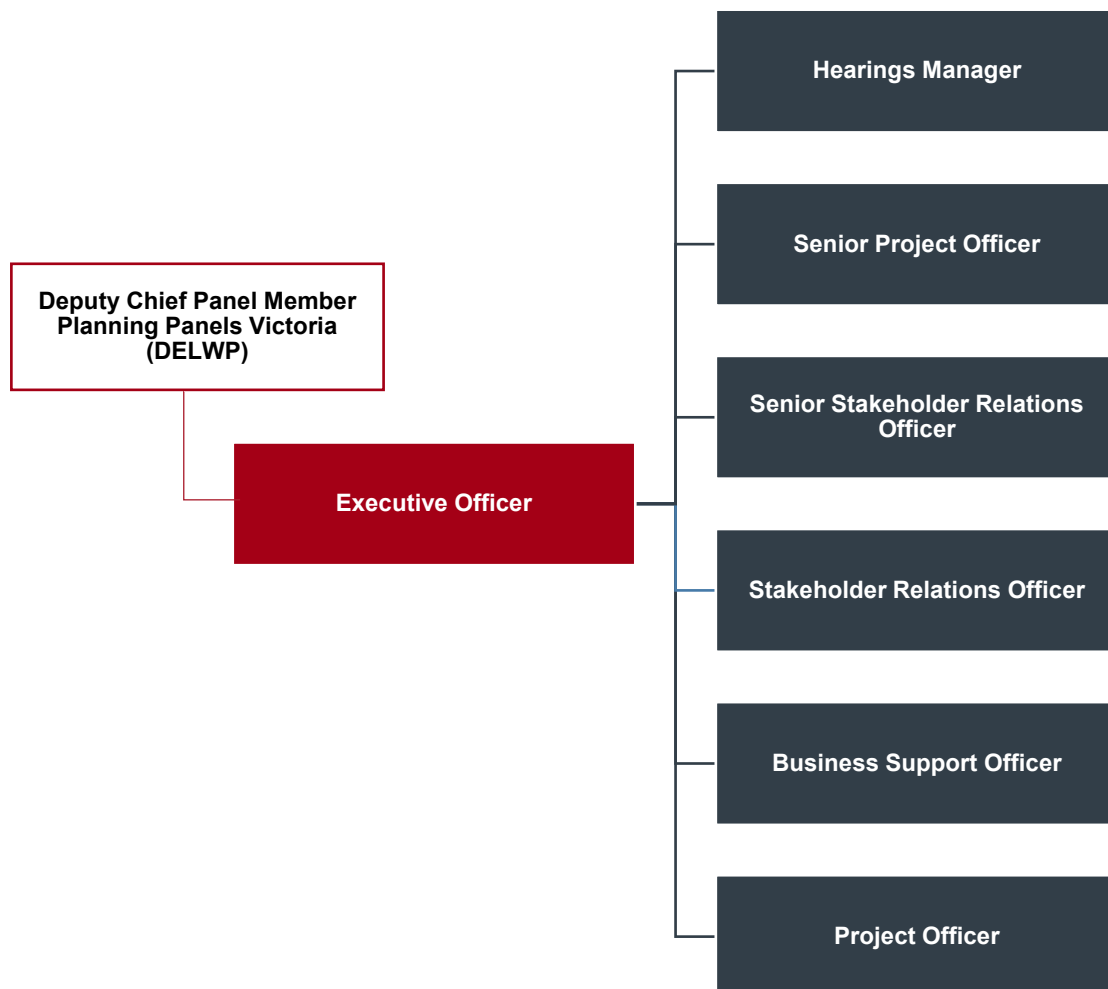
Specialist Committees – consisting of Council members and external subject-matter experts. Specialist committees advise the Council on cultural heritage matters pertaining to specific subject areas. They meet a maximum of four times per year and provide advice to the Council as needed.

The following chart outlines the committees that will be operating in 2020–21 and their different roles:



1.3 SECRETARIAT

The Council does not employ any staff but is supported by a small Secretariat consisting of Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) employees. It is led by an Executive Officer who is the Council's Accountable Officer and is responsible for day-to-day matters. The Executive Officer reports to the Deputy Chief Panel Member, Planning Panels Victoria, DELWP.



02 Mission, vision and values

The Council uses the following strategic statements, taken from its Strategic Plan 2016–2020, to guide its work. The Council's Strategic Plan 2016–2020 and its stated mission, vision and values guide and inform the Council's objectives, priorities, main undertakings and activities as set out in the following sections of the Council's Corporate Plan 2020–21.

2.1 MISSION

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

2.2 VISION

Victorians connect with and value our diverse cultural heritage, acting as custodians for the stories of the past, present and future. Within this vision we aspire to have:

- Victorian communities, government, landowners and custodians understand the value of heritage and its contribution to enriched places and culture
- a world-class Victorian heritage system that protects and enhances heritage.

2.3 VALUES

Respect for heritage

We value Victoria's heritage as an asset to be enjoyed and appreciated by all as an expression of our history, places and culture.

Collaboration

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

Innovation

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

Skilled practice

We value the skills and resources that enable best-practice heritage management across the state to ensure the continuation of our precious heritage resources.

03 Objectives, main undertakings and scope of activities

3.1 CURRENT OPERATING CONTEXT – OVERVIEW

As an independent statutory authority, the Council is very mindful of its obligations to the state, the community and Victoria's cultural heritage in all of its activities. The Council strives to meet community expectations in compliance, transparency and good governance. As part of its responsibilities, the Council must prepare and present an annual report, in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards and the *Financial Management Act 1994*.

Performance reporting in relation to the objectives and priorities set out in the Heritage Council's corporate plan is now required to be included in its annual report. The Heritage Council's financial statements are audited by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office in accordance with the *Audit Act 1994*.

The main challenge in the current operating environment, and for preparing the Council's Corporate Plan for 2020–21, is the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic. The effects of the crisis and the efforts to contain it are creating an unpredictable operating context for public and private organisations alike. The uncertainty around the broader economic impact make planning for the next financial year difficult. This is illustrated by the decision of the State and Federal government to hold back their budgets until October 2020.

The impact of the crisis on the work of the Council is already being felt with staff working remotely and the suspension of face-to-face meetings and public hearings. This evolving situation requires the Council to regularly review its position and expectations and explore new ways of doing business to allow for the continuation of decision-making where possible. Despite these challenges the Council remains committed to best-practice decision-making and the efficient and effective conduct of its strategic work. The Council's prudent financial management in recent years has put it in a good position to meet its obligations for 2020–21 and to continue to provide leadership in cultural heritage management.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives listed below are related to the Council's priority activities and performance targets (see Section 5 of this corporate plan) and generally correspond to certain strategic goals listed in the Council's Strategic Plan 2016–2020. The Council's 2020–21 objectives are that:

- More Victorians understand the role that heritage plays in the life of our communities.
- The Council completes at least three widely used projects to champion and support exemplary heritage practice.
- The Council works effectively with managers of natural, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage to encourage a greater understanding of cultural heritage.
- The Council has capacity to provide robust and effective advice to the Minister.
- The Council has capacity to make and communicate high-quality decisions that are consistent and well-informed.

3.3 MAIN UNDERTAKINGS

The Council's identified objectives have been informed by the following main undertakings:

Provision of advice

One of the Council's key roles is to advise the Minister for Planning on the State of Victoria's cultural (non-Indigenous) heritage resources and any steps necessary to protect and conserve them.

The Council also has a role in advising and liaising with other bodies and individuals that have responsibilities in heritage protection and conservation in Victoria, including local government, community organisations and heritage owners/managers.

Determination of state-level significance and archaeological value

The Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) provides the state's highest level of legal protection for our cultural (non-Indigenous) heritage. The Council determines which places and objects are of state-level heritage significance and are included in the VHR.

The Council also determines if sites under 75 years of age have archaeological value and should therefore be included in the Heritage Inventory of Victorian archaeological sites.

Hearings and reviews

As prescribed by the Act, the Council conducts hearings or reviews in relation to requests for a review of: the Executive Director's recommendations for inclusion or non-inclusion in the VHR; determinations of permit applications; refusals of nominations for the VHR; and, consents for certain activities at archaeological sites.

Promotion of cultural heritage

The Council works to promote public understanding of Victoria's cultural heritage.

Undertaking research

The Council initiates and undertakes research to identify Victoria's heritage and assist in its conservation and interpretation. The Council may do this itself or in partnership with other government or community bodies.

Governance and compliance

As an independent statutory authority with its own financial management responsibilities, the Council has multiple governance and compliance obligations and reporting requirements. Please refer to the Heritage Council's Annual Report 2019–20 for further detailed information.

3.4 NATURE AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES

The Council's Strategic Plan 2016–2020 sets out the strategic goals and activities that inform its objectives and main undertakings. The Council's core functions (as outlined in the Act, Part 2, Division 1, s.11) can be found at Appendix A. The Council's core functions and objectives will determine its activities and their scope, as set out in further detail in Section 5. The nature and scope of activities include:

- attending to core statutory functions (making determinations, conducting hearings and reviews) in relation to the VHR, the Heritage Inventory, nominations, permits and consents
- managing the Heritage Fund and publication of the corporate plan and annual report
- reporting annually on the state of Victoria's cultural heritage
- developing guidelines and research in relation to the protection and conservation of cultural heritage
- promoting public understanding of the state's cultural heritage – including by conducting public forums, industry workshops and developing strategic partnerships such as those with Open House, Design Week and the Australian Heritage Festival
- conducting internal reviews, training and analysis in relation to the Council's core functions.

04 Financial Projections

For 2020–23

4.1 ESTIMATES OF 2020-23 REVENUE, EXPENDITURE AND OVERALL FINANCIAL POSITION FOR THE HERITAGE FUND, MANAGED BY THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO s.11(1)(o) AND PART 11 OF THE ACT

	Budget 2019–20 \$'000	2020–21 \$'000	2021–22 \$'000	2022–23 \$'000
Revenue				
DELWP Contribution	250	-	-	250
Fees Revenue	1,600	1,260	1,344	1,428
CBS Interest	40	20	20	20
Total	1,890	1,280	1,364	1,698
Expenditure				
Admin and Remuneration	1,254	1,337	1,404	1,474
Communications	100	100	100	100
Strategic Projects	200	222	100	100
Partnership Projects	60	15	15	15
Grant to Heritage Victoria	300	150	150	150
Legacy Grants and Studies	167	167	-	-
Projects	49	49	-	-
Total	2,130	2,040	1,769	1,839
Overall Position	(240)	(760)	(405)	(141)

HCV	Budget 2019–20 \$'000	2020–21 \$'000	Forecast 2021–22 \$'000	2022–23 \$'000
Revenue	1,890	1,280	1,364	1,698
Expenditure	2,130	2,040	1,769	1,839
Overall Position	(240)	(760)	(405)	(141)

Heritage Council of Victoria has access to funds of \$2.59 million in investments.

Notes on 2020-21 projected budget deficit

- The projected \$760,812 budget deficit in 2020–21 is due to an expected decrease in revenue following the far-reaching effects of the Coronavirus on the economy. In addition, during 2019–20 the Council scoped some large and significant strategic projects and has chosen to draw on its reserves to complete some of this work in 2020–21.
- The Heritage Fund holds investments of \$2.59 million and approximately \$500,000 cash on hand which can be drawn down as required.

Notes on the Council's Financial Projections 2020–23

- It is difficult for the Council to calculate anticipated revenue over the next three years with any certainty due to the unknown impact of the Coronavirus on the economy.
- The Council has assumed a 25% drop in revenue into the Heritage Fund in 2020–21 and 2021–22 with revenue starting to improve in 2022–23. However, this is speculative because, as noted above, there is no reliable evidence available to predict the impact of the Coronavirus on revenue.
- Given the unpredictability of forecasting in the current environment the Council will be reviewing its budgets and forecasts regularly throughout the 2020–21 financial year.
- Previously the Council has adopted a 'balanced-budget' approach to the Heritage Fund. This approach is not considered appropriate in the current circumstances as the anticipated drop in revenue will not be reflected in a decrease in the costs associated with the administration of the *Heritage Act 2017*. In the event of a major drop in revenue the Council will need to reconsider its expenditure.

05 Objectives, priority activities and performance targets

For 2020–21

The Council's objectives listed below include those which generally correspond to certain strategic goals listed in the Council's Strategic Plan 2016–2020.

Objective	2020–21 Priority Activities	Performance Targets
More Victorians understand the role that heritage plays in the life of our communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run new and promote existing programs that improve community understanding of and connection to cultural heritage. Work with the Minister, Heritage Victoria, National Trust, local government, community heritage organisations and other stakeholders to communicate and clarify responsibilities and processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current levels of communication with heritage owners. Recommend options for future engagement and develop a plan for doing this including resources and timing. An increase in measurable social media activity in 2020–21, including all publicly advertised events and high-profile decisions. Development of a communication plan for the State of Heritage Review: Local Heritage recommendations.
The Council completes at least three widely used projects to champion and support exemplary heritage practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop resources for different stakeholders to improve their awareness of best-practice cultural heritage. Investigate ways to support owners and custodians, including technical advice and support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of at least one project that supports exemplary heritage practice. Creation of new resources as part of the communication plan in response to the State of Heritage Review: Local Heritage recommendations.
Victoria has a world-class heritage system that protects and enhances heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead the development of policy on key emerging issues in heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate a project examining the impact of climate change on heritage.
The Council works effectively with managers of natural, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage to encourage a greater understanding of cultural heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with agencies and custodians responsible for natural, Aboriginal and non-Indigenous cultural heritage to improve collaboration and understanding of cultural heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with the NSW Heritage Council and the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council on shared priorities.
The Council has capacity to provide robust and effective advice to the Minister.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake regular gap analysis to ensure the Council is well equipped with the training and skills required to fulfil our role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake at least one project which will deliver advice to the Minister. Two strategic training sessions delivered for the Council during 2020–21.
The Council has capacity to make and communicate high-quality decisions that are consistent and well informed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine ways to improve efficiency and increase resources to the Council, including advocacy for increased staff and planning for project funds. Perform our statutory functions efficiently and effectively and review processes to ensure best-practice decision making and improved procedures for hearings. Provide strategic training for members to ensure best-practice hearings practices and protocols. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HC registration decisions released within statutory timeframes – 100%. Permit review decisions released within statutory timeframes – 100%. Ongoing review and update of policies and procedures by the Protocols Committee. Undertake a budgetary and operational analysis to assess the impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) on the operations of the Council. Develop system improvements to allow for electronic submission and circulation of statutory material. Conduct at least one strategic (hearings) training session in 2020–21. Develop the Heritage Council Strategic Plan 2021–25.

05 Appendix A

The Heritage Council's core functions

The Council has the following statutory functions, as set out in Part 2, Division 1, s.11, of the *Heritage Act 2017*.

- to advise the Minister on the Status of the state's cultural heritage resources and on any steps necessary to protect and conserve them
- to make and publish guidelines in relation to the conservation of cultural heritage
- to promote public understanding of the state's cultural heritage and develop and conduct community information and education programs
- to advise government departments and agencies and municipal councils on matters relating to the protection and conservation of places and objects of cultural heritage significance
- to liaise with other bodies responsible for matters relating to the protection, conservation, management and promotion of Victoria's cultural heritage
- to initiate and undertake programs of research related to the identification, conservation or interpretation of Victoria's cultural heritage
- to include places or objects in the Heritage Register
- to remove places or objects from the Heritage Register, or to amend the registration of a place or object
- to remove sites from the Heritage Inventory
- to conduct reviews of decisions of the Executive Director in relation to nominations, permits and consents
- to develop, revise and publish the assessment criteria to be used in considering the cultural heritage significance of places and objects and determining whether those places or objects should or should not be included in the Heritage Register
- to adopt, and forward to the Minister, World Heritage Strategy Plans and amendments to World Heritage Strategy Plans
- to determine criteria for assessing whether a place has archaeological value
- to advise the Minister administering the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, on proposed amendments to planning schemes which may affect the protection or conservation of cultural heritage
- to manage the Heritage Fund
- to perform any other functions conferred on the Heritage Council under this Act or any other Act.

