

2021–22
**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

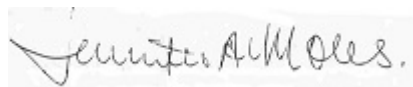
As a peak Heritage body, we are proud to acknowledge Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, and to acknowledge the importance and significance of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has 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 2021–22 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.

The past year was one of significant community upheaval caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Impacts were felt in all aspects of the Council's work. The Council had to quickly develop new practices to deal with the changed environment. While the coronavirus threat remains, it is now largely in abeyance in the state and we are looking forward to 2021–22 and further embedding positive changes from the past year.

The Council's work in 2021–22 will be guided by our new Strategic Plan 2021–25. The Strategic Plan highlights the Council's priorities for the next five years and consolidates our focus on a robust and efficient regulatory process, work to strengthen and communicate the Victorian Heritage Register, and the examination of new and emerging issues in heritage. We present our new Corporate Plan outlining the anticipated scope of work for 2021–22 and the first steps we will take towards achieving our overarching strategic goals.



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 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.

Note: 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 Corporate 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.

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.



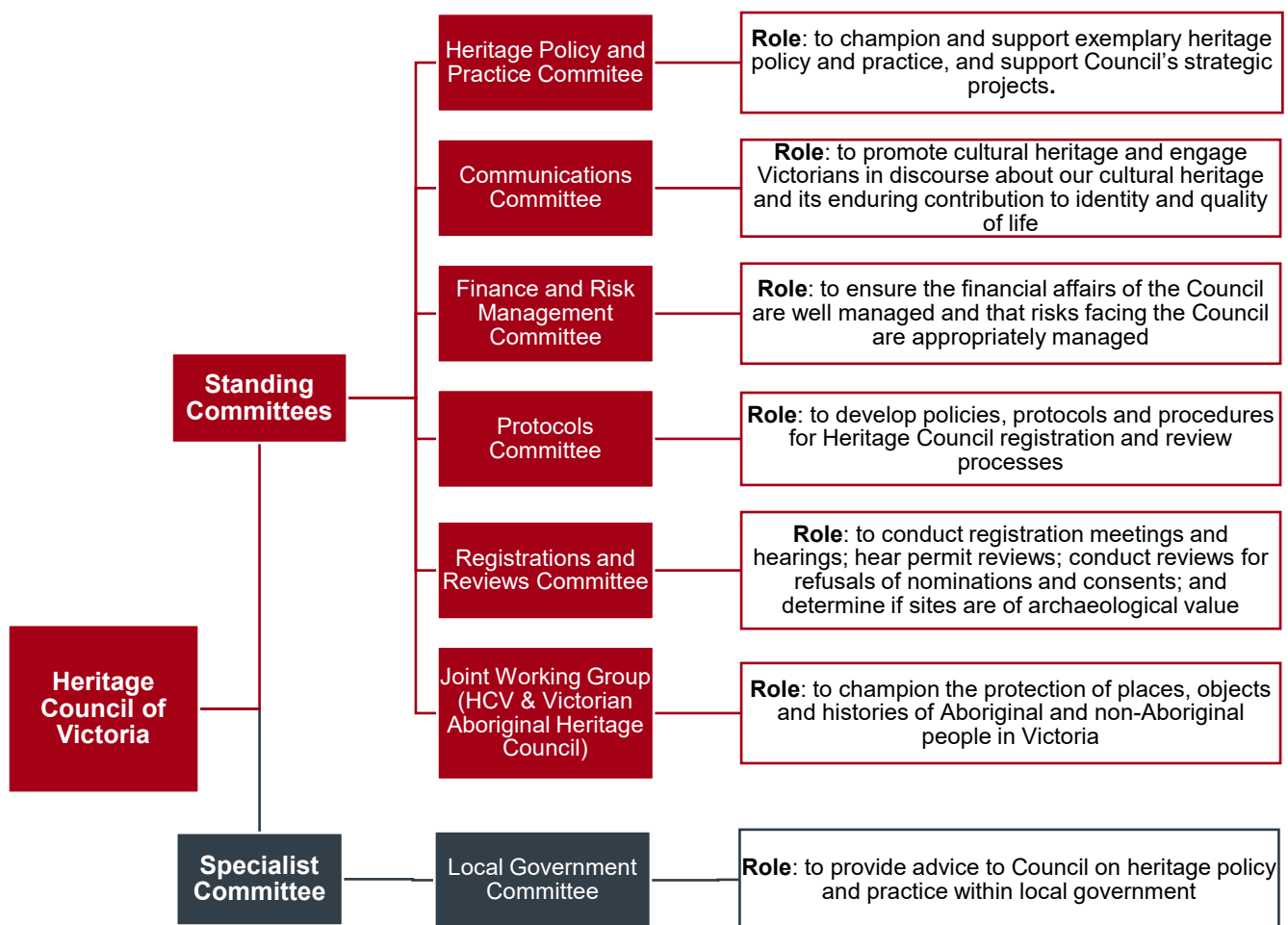
1.2 COUNCIL COMMITTEES

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.

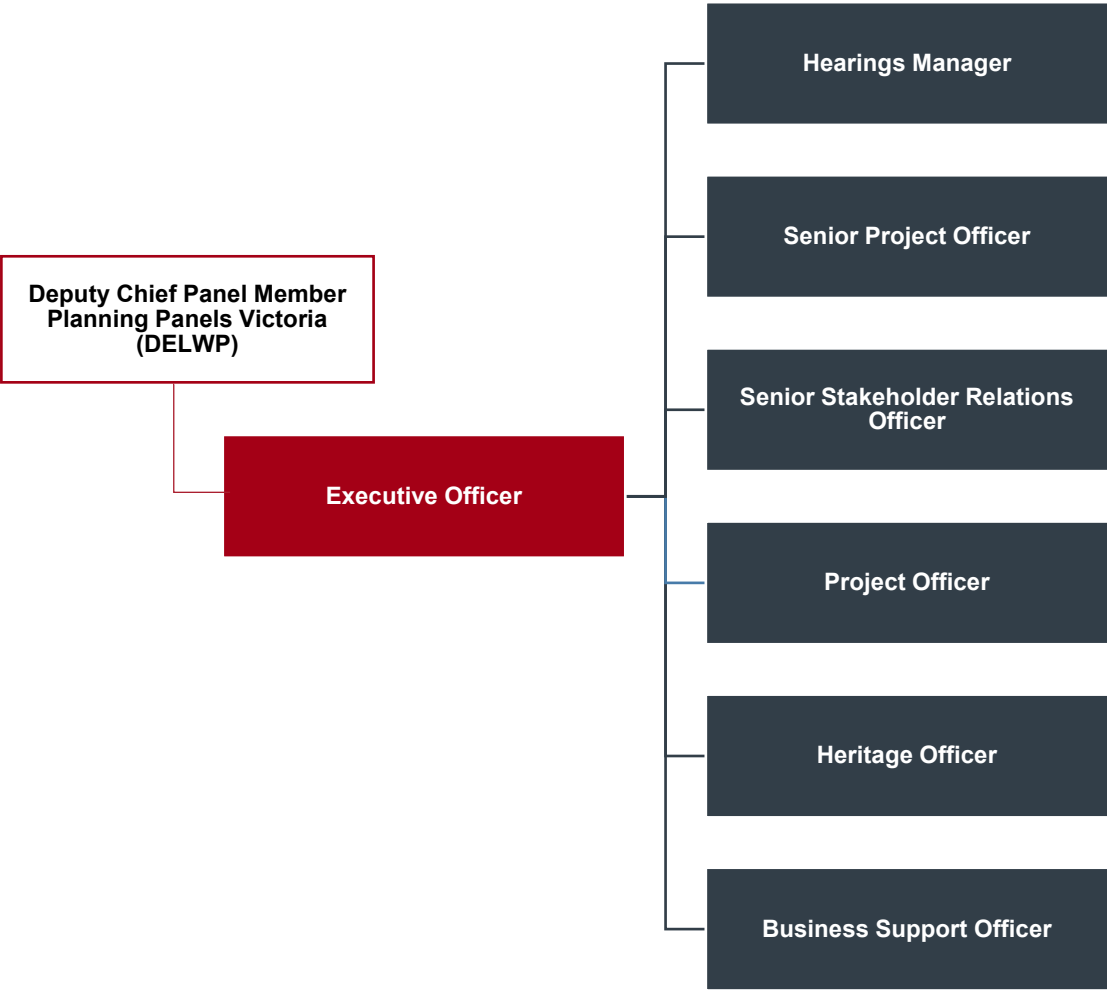
Specialist Committees – consisting of Council members and external subject-matter experts. Specialist committees advise the Council on cultural heritage matters pertaining to specific subject areas. They meet a maximum of four times per year and provide advice to the Council as needed.

The following chart outlines the committees that will be operating in 2021–22 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 2021–25, to guide its work. The Council's Strategic Plan 2021–25 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 2021–22.

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. We aspire to have:

- Victorian communities, landowners and custodians understanding and valuing our heritage and its contribution to enriching culture
- a Victorian 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.

2.3 VALUES

Respect for heritage

We value Victoria's heritage places and objects as an 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.

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*.

As in 2020–21, the main challenge in the current operating environment is the ongoing impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The effects of the crisis and the efforts to contain it continue to create an unpredictable operating context and while there is some sign of a return to normal, with staff returning to the office and the resumption of face-to-face meetings, there will be permanent change as a result. The Council must continue to meet its responsibilities while being flexible and positioned to take advantage of opportunities that arise from this rapid change.

The quick transition to virtual work and hearings has increased attention to technology and new ways of working. The use of videoconference for hearings and events creates both challenges and opportunities in the operational environment. The Council is in a good financial position allowing it to continue work to strengthen decision making and maintain a strategic focus.

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 2021–25. The Council's 2021–25 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 2021–25 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 2021–24

4.1 ESTIMATES OF 2021-24 REVENUE, EXPENDITURE AND OVERALL FINANCIAL POSITION FOR THE HERITAGE FUND, MANAGED BY THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO s11(1)(o) AND PART 11 OF THE ACT

	Budget 2020–21 \$'000	2021–22 \$'000	2022–23 \$'000	2023–24 \$'000
Revenue				
DELWP Contribution	-	-	-	-
Fees Revenue	1,260	1,625	1,664	1,703
CBS Interest	20	10	10	11
Total	1,280	1,635	1,674	1,714
Expenditure				
Admin and Remuneration	1,337	1,582	1,533	1,580
Communications	100	100	100	100
Strategic Projects	222	218	100	100
Partnership Projects	15	15	15	15
Grant to Heritage Victoria	150	300	150	150
Legacy Grants and Studies	167	167	-	-
Projects	49	-	-	-
Total	2,040	2,382	1,898	1,945
Overall Position	(760)	(747)	(224)	(231)

HCV	Budget 2020–21 \$'000	Forecast 2021–22 \$'000	2022–23 \$'000	2023–24 \$'000
Revenue	1,280	1,635	1,674	1,714
Expenditure	2,040	2,382	1,898	1,945
Overall Position	(760)	(747)	(224)	(231)

Heritage Council of Victoria has access to funds of \$2.56 million in investments.

Notes on 2021–22 projected budget deficit

- The projected \$747,000 budget deficit in 2021–22 is due to an increase in grants and funding for strategic and operational projects. This spending includes an investment in IT and staffing.
- The Heritage Fund holds investments of \$2.56 million and approximately \$1.22 million cash on hand which can be drawn down as required.

Notes on the Council's Financial Projections 2021–24

- It is difficult to calculate anticipated revenue over the next three years due to the unknown impact of the coronavirus on the economy. The Council assumed a 25% drop in revenue into the Heritage Fund in 2020–21 but this decrease did not eventuate, and revenue remained consistent with previous years.
- The Council has projected revenue to remain steady over the next three years, but due to the unpredictability of forecasting in the current environment the Council will be reviewing its budgets and forecasts regularly throughout the 2021–22 financial year.
- Previously, the Council has adopted a 'balanced-budget' approach to the Heritage Fund. Over the next three years the Council is forecasting increased expenditure on strategic projects, drawing down on reserves, with an eventual return to a 'balanced-budget' approach.
- The Council has not forecast the need to request additional funding from DELWP over the next three years. However, forecasting is imprecise and this line has been retained in case the council's financial position changes.

05 Objectives, priority activities and performance targets

For 2021–22

The Council's objectives listed below include those which generally correspond to strategic goals listed in the Council's Strategic Plan 2021–25.

Strategy 1	WIDER UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURAL HERITAGE		
Goals	<p>a. More Victorians understand the role that cultural heritage plays in the life of our communities, heritage processes, and the roles and responsibilities of organisations involved in heritage management.</p> <p>b. The stories and narratives of our important cultural heritage places and objects are well told and widely shared.</p> <p>c. The Council is recognised as leading public discourse about the conservation, management and celebration of Victoria's cultural heritage.</p>		
	Goal(s)	SOHR	Target Outcomes (ie: 'Measures of Success')
Update the Heritage Council communications plan	1(b)		Communications Plan updated to reflect revised focus and adopted by HCV
Support local government through creation of relevant information packs and delivery of information sessions	1(a)	PI 2 PI 3	'Heritage 101' information pack created for councils and the public 'Heritage 101' induction pack created for new councillors
Work with the Minister, Heritage Victoria, National Trust, local government, community heritage organisations and other stakeholders to clarify and communicate roles, responsibilities and processes for heritage	1(a)		Chair to meet with Minister bi-annually At least one annual formal engagement session (meeting / workshop) with Heritage Victoria, National Trust, and local government
Engage with Development Victoria, the Property Council (Victoria), UDIA, and other property organisations to create opportunities for improved communication, and better recognition of the contribution of cultural heritage to the Victorian economy and development projects	1(c)		Engagement approach with Development Victoria, the Property Council (Victoria), UDIA, and other property organisations agreed

Strategy 2	EFFECTIVE AND REPRESENTATIVE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER		
Goals	<p>a. Victoria's Heritage Register recognises and protects our State significant cultural heritage.</p> <p>b. The Victorian Heritage Register reflects the diverse range of State significant cultural heritage valued by communities throughout Victoria.</p> <p>c. The Victorian Heritage Register is accessible and easy to use as a source of useful information about Victoria's State significant heritage.</p>		
	Goal(s)	SOHR	Target Outcomes (ie: 'Measures of Success')
Update the 'Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines' to reflect current legislation and contemporary best practice	2(a)		Work commenced on the review of the 'Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines'
Work with Heritage Victoria to improve the functionality of the Victorian Heritage Database so that users understand its purpose and have easy access to current information about places on the Victorian Heritage Register	2(c)	PI 6	Liaison with Heritage Victoria about the functionality of the Victorian Heritage Database through Hermes/VHD working group

Strategy 3	INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE PRACTICE		
Goals	<p>a. Cultural heritage conservation contributes to sustainable practices and addresses challenges arising from climate change.</p> <p>b. Victoria has a more highly skilled heritage workforce – professional and trade – to support custodians and policy makers.</p> <p>c. The Council identifies, instigates, undertakes or supports projects which develop or demonstrate exemplary heritage practice and/or showcase Victoria's cultural heritage.</p>		
	Goal(s)	SOHR	Target Outcomes (ie: 'Measures of Success')
Instigate a project to highlight and promote the intergenerational value of heritage in the context of the UN Sustainable Development Goals	3(a)		HCV working group established to consider UN SDGs and intergenerational value of heritage
Implement a 'Cultural Heritage and Climate Change Project' focused on the effects of climate change on impact Victoria's cultural heritage places and objects and the development of principles, tools and resources to enable their protection and conservation	3(c)		HCV principles on climate change and cultural heritage prepared and adopted Climate change case studies and framework developed and project results publicly communicated
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)	3(b)		Propose a review of the findings from heritage trades and training projects report by HCOANZ

Strategy 4	SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION		
Goals	<p>a. The Council leads a shared approach to recognising, protecting and conserving Victoria's cultural heritage.</p> <p>b. The shared history of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians is recognised and understood.</p> <p>c. Local government is supported in managing local heritage.</p> <p>d. Victorian state government agencies demonstrate high-quality conservation and management of public heritage assets.</p>		
	Goal(s)	SOHR	Target Outcomes (ie: 'Measures of Success')
Collaborate with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council through a joint working group to facilitate a common approach which appropriately recognises places of shared histories and promotes a broader understanding of Australia's history	4(a)		Joint working Group with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council meeting regularly
Contribute to delivering <i>Dhawura Ngilan</i> Vision and Standards in collaboration with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council and Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand (HCOANZ)	4(b)		Joint working Group with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council agrees approach to implementation of the <i>Dhawura Ngilan</i> Vision and Standards Promote/support the <i>Dhawura Ngilan</i> implementation initiatives to 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	4(c)	PI 5	Local Government Heritage Forum structure and content, including focus, structure, timing and costs, is approved by HCV

Strategy 5	IMPROVED COUNCIL OPERATIONS		
Goals	<p>a. The Council will have adequate resources and will manage its workload to address strategic programs while managing statutory functions effectively.</p> <p>b. Capacity for community participation and transparency of Council processes will be increased.</p> <p>c. The Council will continue to provide robust and effective advice to the Minister.</p>		
	Goal(s)	SOHR	Target Outcomes (ie: 'Measures of Success')
Examine ways to improve efficiency and to increase available resources, including advocacy for additional staff, greater support for Members and specific project funding	5(a)		Review of staff allocation, member costs and strategic funding and implementation of recommendations
Implement a systematic annual program for training and capacity-building for Council Members	5(c)		HCV identifies training and capacity needs and opportunities on an annual basis and implements a program to address these
Develop a user-friendly, publicly accessible, online system for management of documentation associated with hearings and other statutory processes.	5(b)		Online system for management of documentation associated with hearings and other statutory processes launched and in operation

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.

