

POLICY FOR DETERMINING LOW ARCHAEOLOGICAL VALUE

Heritage Act 2017

Legislative Context

The *Heritage Act 2017* defines an archaeological site as a place (other than a shipwreck) which –

- (a) contains an artefact, deposit or feature which is 75 or more years old; and
- (b) provides information of past activity in the State; and
- (c) requires archaeological methods to reveal information about the settlement, development or use of the place; and
- (d) is not associated only with Aboriginal occupation of the place.

Under the Act, the Executive Director must establish the Heritage Inventory and record in it all archaeological sites other than any archaeological sites which are determined by the Executive Director to have low archaeological value (see s. 118(1a)).

For an archaeological site to have more than low archaeological value, and be approved for inclusion in the Inventory, it must address both Threshold A and Threshold B (below).

Rationale

Previously, under the Heritage Act 1995, the Heritage Inventory was a listing of all known historical archaeological sites. Under the Heritage Act 2017, the Heritage Inventory will be a listing of sites that contain (or are likely to contain) archaeological remains, where the remains demonstrate an association with a significant historical event, pattern of land use, or other activity. The new legislation moves from listing all historical archaeological sites in the Inventory, to listing only those where the archaeological remains have the capacity to make a meaningful contribution to an understanding of place history.

Threshold A (archaeology):

- the place meets the definition of archaeological site under the Act; and
- it can be demonstrated that the site contains archaeological features, associated artefacts and/or deposits; and/or
- documentary evidence and/or oral history, landscape features, visible site fabric or other information indicates a likelihood that the site contains archaeological remains; and
- the archaeological remains are, or are likely to be, in a condition that will allow information to be obtained that will contribute to an understanding of the site;

and

Threshold B (place history):

- the site evidences (or is likely to evidence) an association with a historical event, phase, period, process, function, tradition, movement, custom or way of life; and
- the site history is of significance within a state, regional, local, thematic or other relevant framework