

# What does registration mean? Victorian Heritage Register (VHR)

The Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) is established under the *Heritage Act 2017*. It is a statutory list of places and objects which are considered to have State level cultural heritage significance.

## The VHR

### Places and objects in the VHR are:

- of State-level cultural heritage significance to Victoria.
- protected under the *Heritage Act 2017* ('the Act') for current and future generations to appreciate.
- eligible for financial assistance under heritage incentive schemes.

### What kind of places and objects are included in the VHR?

There are around 2,400 places and objects in the VHR. They are listed on the publicly accessible online Victorian Heritage Database and include:

- any heritage place of state level significance including buildings, gardens, structures, trees, archaeological sites, historic landscapes.
- any heritage object of state level significance.

### Who decides which places and objects are included in the VHR?

Registration is a process which includes the following steps:

1. The Executive Director, Heritage Victoria accepts a nomination and assesses the place or object to form a view whether it is of state level cultural significance.
2. The Executive Director makes a recommendation to the Heritage Council of Victoria to include or not include a place or object in the VHR.
3. The Heritage Council of Victoria calls for public submissions on the recommendation which is publicly advertised for 60 days.
4. The Heritage Council considers the recommendation and submissions, and makes a determination. It may do so at one of its two-monthly meetings or convene a public review.

### Who nominates place and objects for the VHR?

Any person or organisation.

### Can building works and alterations be undertaken at VHR places?

Yes. Registration by the Heritage Council does not stop places being altered or developed. Under the Act, however, all works are subject to a permits process and must be approved by Heritage Victoria. More than 95 per cent of permit applications are approved often after a process of negotiation and design refinement. Owners are encouraged to discuss proposed works with Heritage Victoria early in the planning process. Expert staff can offer building and conservation advice which balances the needs of owners with the preservation of cultural heritage values. Some minor works may be approved by means of a permit exemption (rather than a permit) because of their low impact on cultural heritage values at a place.

### Registration in the VHR does not:

- prevent the sale of a place or object.
- prevent a place or object being used for a different purpose.
- guarantee that a place or object will never be altered or developed.

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### How does VHR registration differ from National Trust classification?

The VHR provides statutory (legal) protection for VHR places and objects under the *Heritage Act 2017*. There are penalties for damaging VHR places and objects. The National Trust's classification system identifies places of significance but offers no legal protection.

## Is there any financial help for owners of registered places?

All VHR places and objects are potentially eligible for modest and conditional financial assistance which may be offered from time to time by Heritage Victoria.

## Do owners of VHR places have to provide access to the public?

No. The Heritage Council recognises the privacy rights of private property owners. The public has no special right of access to VHR places.

## Does Heritage Council registration affect the property's ownership?

No. Although registration is noted on the property title, it does not mean the Heritage Council has any proprietary interest in the property.

## Can the Heritage Council force owners to restore their place or object?

Owners of registered places are not legally required to repair or restore the property to its original condition. It is, however, in an owner's interests to carry out normal ongoing maintenance and repair work to protect the value of their property and to avoid expensive remedial work. The Act requires that an owner not allow a registered place or object fall into disrepair or fail to maintain it to the extent that its conservation is threatened.

## Is technical assistance available for owners?

Yes. Conservators, architects, planners, historians, archaeologists and horticulturists working with Heritage Victoria provide a free service to owners, advising on technical or design problems or directing owners to an appropriate specialist. However, due to time constraints, this does not extend to preparing architectural drawings and documentation.

## Will the value of the property be affected?

Probably not. Some people fear that inclusion in the VHR will reduce a property's value. Recent research suggests this is dependent on the particular type of property, its location, planning considerations and its overall condition. Because of their special character and short supply, heritage properties will sometimes attract a premium price.

## Is it harder to get insurance for a registered property?

Heritage listing alone should have no effect on the capacity to obtain insurance or its cost. Insurance premiums are calculated on the risk of claims, so the age, construction and condition of the building or object will primarily determine the premium. As Heritage Victoria is unlikely to require an owner to rebuild or restore a place or object to its original condition if it is severely damaged, items can usually be insured at no greater risk for the insurance company than for any other building or object.

## Enquires about VHR nominations

Please direct enquiries about VHR nominations to:

### Heritage Victoria

Phone: (03) 9938 6891

Email: [heritage.registrations@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:heritage.registrations@delwp.vic.gov.au)

Visit: [www.heritage.vic.gov.au](http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au)

## Enquires about permits for VHR places and objects

Please direct enquiries about VHR nominations to:

### Heritage Victoria

Phone: (03) 9938 6891

Email: [heritage.permits@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:heritage.permits@delwp.vic.gov.au)

Visit: [www.heritage.vic.gov.au](http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au)

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