

## Guiding principles for changes proposed to places in the Victorian Heritage Register

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### The *Burra Charter* (the Australian ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance) was endorsed by Heritage Victoria in 2010 and by the Heritage Council of Victoria in 2013 as a key document for guiding best-practice cultural heritage management in Victoria

Heritage Victoria uses the matters set out at section 101 of the *Heritage Act 2017* and the underlying principles of the *Burra Charter* — as well as other relevant policy and guidance — to make decisions in relation to works to heritage places in the Victorian Heritage Register.

In accordance with the *Burra Charter*, Heritage Victoria advocates a cautious approach to changes to heritage places: *do as much as necessary to care for a place to make it useable, but otherwise change it as little as possible so that its significance is retained.*

While every place is different, there are a number of best practice principles consistent with the *Burra Charter* that should be followed when first considering changes to heritage places.

#### **Principle 1. Understand why the place is significant**

It is necessary to understand the heritage significance of a place before proposing changes.

The statement of significance is a useful starting point for understanding the heritage values associated with a place and why it is included in the Victorian Heritage Register. It is noted that the consideration of a place's significance can be broader than what is outlined in a statement of significance and more thorough analysis of the place is often required.

#### **Principle 2. Changes to a place should be sympathetic to its significance**

When change is being considered, a range of options should be explored to identify an approach which minimises any adverse impact to a place's heritage significance.

Changes should not harm the heritage significance of the place. Alterations, new structures, landscaping or other changes that remove, screen, dominate or impact on a place's significance should be avoided. New work should respect the significance of the place through consideration of its siting, bulk, form, scale, character, colour, texture and material.

If changes which will compromise the heritage significance of a place can't be avoided, they should be carried out in a manner which is reversible. The demolition of significant fabric and changes to highly intact areas is not considered reversible. This is generally not acceptable and should be avoided.

#### **Principle 3. Protect significant settings and views**

Many heritage places cannot be separated from their setting. It is therefore important to consider the visual connection of a place to its setting, the spaces between buildings and structures and any relationships to other significant elements. Consideration must also be given to the historic context of views and vistas from outside and within a place. Overdevelopment, including tower proposals and projection of any part of a new building into the airspace above a heritage place, is highly impactful and generally not acceptable.

## **Principle 4. Provide for upkeep**

Maintaining a heritage place is essential to conserving its significance. In many cases maintaining and conserving a place can only occur by ensuring that it has a relevant use. This is taken into consideration when proposed works to a place are considered by Heritage Victoria.