

World Heritage Steering Committee for the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens

Strategic Vision 2022-2025



Acknowledgements

Members of the World Heritage Working Group for the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens and submitters. Your feedback has helped to strengthen and improve this document.

Author

World Heritage Steering Committee for the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens

Photo credit

Cover: Royal Exhibition Building and Gardens, courtesy of Visit Victoria

Acknowledgment

We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We are committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully engage, with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.



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Introduction

This document outlines the Strategic Objectives of the World Heritage Steering Committee for the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens (Steering Committee), appointed in accordance with the *Heritage Act 2017* (Vic) (Heritage Act). The Steering Committee has developed strategic objectives to guide its activities over the next three years, including undertaking further investigation into its governance to ensure that the structure, functions and authorising environment of the Steering Committee are robust and meet the requirements of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the expectations of the community. The strategic objectives in this document will ensure that the Steering Committee is accountable, transparent and unified in its vision for managing the World Heritage site.

Mission

We protect and communicate the diverse heritage values of the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens (REB&CG), and advocate for financial investment and sustained management of the site and its surrounds for all communities, now and into the future.

Vision

The governance, financial investment, resourcing, and management of the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens delivers inclusive best practice outcomes to meet the objectives of the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, ensuring community participation is prioritised, and the diverse values significant to the community and visitors alike, are protected.

Strategic Objectives

Objective 1

Advocate for the conservation and enhancement of the property's Outstanding Universal Value.

Objective 2

Strengthen community understanding, appreciation and participation with all values at the site, including its Outstanding Universal Value and values other than World Heritage values.

Objective 3

Ensure collaborative and coherent site management, including management of the World Heritage Environs Area 'buffer zone', in accordance with the World Heritage Management Plan.

Objective 4

Ensure the Steering Committee governance and operating environment is robust, transparent, equitable and accountable.

Background

The REB&CG was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2004, as the oldest surviving nineteenth century Exhibition-era building in its original setting still operating as an exhibition hall. It is one of only two World Heritage sites in Victoria (the second is Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, inscribed in 2019), and is the only historic World Heritage site in Victoria.

As a World Heritage Listed site, the REB&CG is guided by a World Heritage Management Plan (WHMP). Preparation of a Management Plan is a national requirement under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act). Schedule 5 to the Regulations of the EPBC Act set out what a Management Plan must do and stipulates that a Management Plan must be reviewed "at intervals of not more than 7 years".

The Heritage Act also requires that a WHMP be prepared for World Heritage-listed places that are included in the Victorian Heritage Register. The WHMP for the REB&CG satisfies the requirements of both the EPBC Act and the Heritage Act in relation to Management Plans.

In accordance with the Heritage Act, a WHMP is prepared, implemented, and reported on by a Ministerial-appointed Steering Committee. The Heritage Act prescribes the membership composition of the Steering Committee and states that the functions of the Steering Committee are to prepare a WHMP for the listed place, assist in the implementation of an approved WHMP and to report on its activities as required by the Minister.

Following the inscription of the REB&CG in 2004, the newly appointed Steering Committee prepared and implemented a WHMP which was approved by the Minister for Planning in 2013. In accordance with the relevant legislation, review of the approved WHMP commenced in 2020, beginning with the review of its component documents.

The Steering Committee considers that the review of the WHMP is a timely opportunity to clarify a strategic direction for its operations and governance into the future.

Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens Criterion for World Heritage Inscription

Criterion for Inscription

Criterion (ii)

The Royal Exhibition Building and the surrounding Carlton Gardens, as the main extant survivors of a Palace of Industry and its setting, together reflect the global influence of the international exhibition movement of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The movement showcased technological innovation and change, which helped promote a rapid increase in industrialisation and international trade through the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

Legislative context of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is currently comprised of three voting members, and two non-voting members. Its current composition meets the legislative requirements of section 181(2) of the Heritage Act, which are as follows:

The Steering Committee for a listed place¹ consists of –

- 1. the Executive Director who is the Chairperson; and*
- 2. if the listed place is Crown land or land vested in a Minister or public authority, any persons who are responsible for the management of the listed place and who are appointed by the Minister; and*
- 3. in the case of any listed place on other land, any person who is the owner or occupier or is concerned in the management of the listed place and who is appointed by the Minister; and*
- 4. any other persons that the Minister considers appropriate.*

To meet the above requirements, the Steering Committee is made up of –

the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria (Chairperson); and

one representative from the City of Melbourne; and

one representative from Museums Victoria; and

one representative from the City of Yarra (non-voting Community Adviser); and

one representative from the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) (non-voting Community Adviser).

The Steering Committee has comprised the above representatives since 2013 when the World Heritage Management Plan was approved. The Approved World Heritage Management Plan empowered the Steering Committee to appoint two Community Advisers, to participate fully in the operation of the Steering Committee, without voting. This means that today the Steering Committee members with voting rights are those who have been appointed specifically as required by sections 181(2)(a)-(c) of the Heritage Act. The role of Steering Committee members is outlined below.

Heritage Victoria

The REB&CG is protected by the provisions of the Heritage Act which sets out the statutory requirements for managing the World Heritage values of places that have been included in the World Heritage List and recorded in the Victorian Heritage Register. Such requirements include the preparation of a World Heritage Management Plan for the World Heritage-listed place, in addition to a World Heritage Strategy Plan to guide the management of the World Heritage Environs Area (WHEA), which acts as a 'buffer zone' to the World Heritage site and protects the World Heritage values of the place. The Heritage Act requires the consideration of a WHEA in the vicinity of the World Heritage Listed place, and if a WHEA is declared, the preparation of a World Heritage Strategy Plan.

Section 181(2)(a) of the Heritage Act requires the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria to Chair the Steering Committee for a listed place.

The City of Melbourne

The REB&CG is included in the City of Melbourne Planning Scheme under a heritage overlay, and under *Public Park and Recreation Zone* and *Other Public Use Zone*. The site is additionally split into three parcels of Crown Land. These parcels comprise the North and South Gardens, and the Royal Exhibition Building and Exhibition Reserve. The City of Melbourne has a statutory responsibility under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic) to manage the site in accordance with its Planning Scheme. It should be noted that as the site falls within a

1. A listed place is defined by the *Heritage Act 2017* (Vic) as a place in the State which is included in the World Heritage List and is recorded in the Heritage Register.

heritage overlay and is included in the Victorian Heritage Register, the provisions of the Heritage Act override the planning requirements of the heritage overlay.

The City of Melbourne is represented on the Steering Committee in accordance with Section 181(2)(b) of the Heritage Act which states that any person who is responsible for land that is Crown Land or vested in a public authority and appointed by the Minister will sit on the Steering Committee for a listed place.

Museums Victoria

The parcel of Crown Land that includes the Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne Museum and the area directly surrounding these is known as the Exhibition Reserve. In 1996 the *Museums Act 1983* (Vic) saw the general control, administration and management of the Exhibition Reserve entrusted to the Museums Board of Victoria. Additionally, following inscription of the site on the UNESCO World Heritage list, a Memorandum of Understanding was established between the Museums Board of Victoria and the City of Melbourne to ensure a joint and co-ordinated approach to the management of the site.

Museums Victoria is represented on the Steering Committee in accordance with Section 181(2)(b) of the Heritage Act which states that any person who is responsible for land that is Crown Land or vested in a public authority and appointed by the Minister will sit on the Steering Committee for a listed place.

The City of Yarra

The City of Yarra does not have a direct legislative responsibility for the management of the REB&CG site as defined by the boundaries of Rathdowne, Carlton, Nicholson and Victoria Streets. It does, however, have a role in conserving locally significant places within the WHEA.

A section of the WHEA to the east of the REB&CG is included within the City of Yarra Heritage Overlay precinct known as the 'South Fitzroy Precinct' (HO 334). The City of Yarra is responsible for implementing planning controls within the precinct which include requirements for new works (including additions) to be respectful of context in terms of height, scale, setbacks, and discourages the visibility of additions and the visual dominance of new works. The City of Yarra representative is a non-voting member of the Steering Committee.

The City of Yarra is represented on the Steering Committee with a member appointed by the Minister, pursuant to section 181(2)(d).

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

The National Trust does not have a legislative role or any statutory authority in relation to the management of the REB&CG or the WHEA. As Victoria's premier heritage and conservation organisation, the National Trust has an interest in ensuring that the wide range of natural, cultural, social and Indigenous heritage values of the REB&CG are protected and respected, contributing to strong, vibrant, and prosperous communities. Following recommendations made during public advertising of the WHMP approved in 2013, the National Trust was appointed to the Steering Committee as Community Advisors. The National Trust representative is a non-voting member of the Steering Committee.

The National Trust is represented on the Steering Committee with a member appointed by the Minister, pursuant to section 181(2)(d).

World and National Heritage values and the role of the Commonwealth

In addition to State and local heritage listing, the REB&CG is included in the World Heritage List and Australia's National Heritage List. World Heritage sites are places that are important to and belong to everyone, no matter where they are located. They have universal value that transcends the importance they hold for one particular nation. The National Heritage List is Australia's list of natural, historic and Indigenous places of outstanding significance to the nation.

Places on the World and National Heritage Lists are protected by the EPBC Act. One of the objectives of the EPBC Act is to provide for the protection and conservation of heritage, by ensuring regulation of certain actions impacting World and National Heritage values and ensuring control of actions that are likely to have a significant

impact on the protected place. Any action likely to significantly impact the listed World or National Heritage values of a place must be referred to the Commonwealth Government under the EPBC Act and undergo assessment before a decision is made by the Minister for the Environment whether or not the action is approved. Under the EPBC Act an action will require approval from the Minister if the action has, will have, or is likely to have, a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance such as a World and/or National Heritage listed place. In making a decision whether or not to approve an action that is likely to significantly impact the REB&CG, the Commonwealth Minister must not act inconsistently with relevant heritage management plans, and the World and National Heritage Principles (Schedules 5 and 5A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000*).

In accordance with the EPBC Act, the Minister responsible for implementing the EPBC Act may enter into an agreement between the Commonwealth and State which accredits certain impact assessment processes as meeting EPBC Act standards for the purposes of managing the place. These agreements are known as bilateral agreements, and the REB&CG is subject to a bilateral agreement in relation to its World and National Heritage values. Under this bilateral agreement, any action that is deemed by the Commonwealth to have a significant impact on the World or National heritage values of the place may be assessed by the State for the purposes of the EPBC Act, if the State is also carrying out an assessment of the proposal through a process accredited under the bilateral agreement. In these circumstances, Heritage Victoria on behalf of the State Government is required to prepare an Assessment Report for the Commonwealth Minister's consideration and subsequent decision about whether the action is approved, and if so, what conditions are applied.

The EPBC Act, and the Victorian Heritage Act provide for the protection and conservation of the World and National Heritage values of the place and in certain circumstances ensure communication and collaboration between the State and Commonwealth Governments on matters which have the potential to affect those values which are protected for all Australians.

Aboriginal cultural values and the World Heritage Management Plan

In the past, the WHMP has failed to adequately include consultation with Traditional Owners and First Peoples and has not included sufficient management mechanisms to ensure ongoing community engagement.

When the WHMP review process commenced in 2020, the Steering Committee made a commitment to introduce a new report which, through consultation with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal communities, would present and interpret First Peoples cultural heritage significance of the site. The report will form part of the WHMP and inform the content of the WHMP. The report will be subject to review every seven years as a statutory component of the WHMP. The 'Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens Traditional Custodians and First Peoples Cultural Values Report' will form an essential and previously missing component of the WHMP, ensuring all values of the site are recognised, understood and safeguarded for future generations.

All Aboriginal objects and places are protected in Victoria by the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*. The Act and associated *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018* provide a framework for the protection of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage values within the state of Victoria. These values include all physical evidence of Aboriginal culture, often referred to as places and objects, as well as intangible manifestations of culture. Many places and objects are registered on what is known as the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Registry Information System (ACHRIS). This database is managed by First Peoples – State Relations within the Department of Premier and Cabinet and serves as tool for managing the risks associated with any proposed activity in Victoria. This database is an ever-growing source of information and a digital representation of culture for Traditional Owners. Access to ACHRIS is strictly monitored and managed by the department.

The protection of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage is a significant matter for all Victorians, particularly public land managers, and is not limited to statutory compliance. The Steering Committee recognises its obligation to work closely with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, the Registered Aboriginal Party for the site. The Steering Committee will work to ensure its actions emphatically support and uphold the principles of self-determination for Victorian Traditional Owners.

The Steering Committee recognises the significant potential for the acknowledgement, expression and celebration of Aboriginal cultural values within the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens and its surroundings and is committed to prioritising recommendations made in the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens First People's Cultural Values Report.

Strategic Objectives 2022-2025

Timeframes for completion of strategic objectives

Each strategic objective has been given an indicative timeframe for completion. The timeframe parameters are defined as short-term, medium-term, long-term or ongoing, based on the composition and resourcing of the Steering Committee at the time of this publication.

It is intended that short-term goals should be completed within 12-18 months (1-1.5 years) of publication. These are actions that can be achieved with current resourcing and have a positive effect on the Steering Committee's operations and community engagement and understanding.

It is intended that medium-term goals should be completed within 18-24 months (1.5-2 years) of publication. These are goals that rely on the approval of the WHMP and concern the management of the values of the site, site interpretation, composition of the Steering Committee and collaboration with the Commonwealth.

It is intended that long-term goals should be completed within 36 months (3 years) of the publication of this Strategic Plan. Long-term goals concern management of all values of the site and resourcing and funding of the Steering Committee.

It is intended that ongoing goals exceed the timeframe of this Strategic Plan and will continue to be prioritised by the Steering Committee for the duration of the WHMP implementation period. Ongoing goals concern the Outstanding Universal Value of the site, and management actions that must accord with the *UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*.



Figure 1: Royal Exhibition Building

Credit: Visit Victoria

Objective 1. Advocate for the conservation and enhancement of the property's Outstanding Universal Value.

Goals	Strategic Actions	Indicative timeframe for completion
Financial investment in the site is secured as needed, and financial resourcing is adequate to contribute towards the conservation and enhancement of the site's Outstanding Universal Value.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure understanding of the economic value of the site. 2. Identify potential opportunities to seek financial investment in the site and advocate to Government and private stakeholders to secure financial investment when required. 3. Develop and maintain an inventory of future works and areas of concern which require additional financial investment, to ensure funding prioritises works to conserve and enhance the Outstanding Universal Value of the site. 	Ongoing
Ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value of the site is at the forefront of all decisions made in relation to the site.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Prioritise key recommendations in the WHMP which contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the site's Outstanding Universal Value. 	Long-term
As above	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Decisions made in relation to the site are consistent with Australia's obligations under the UNESCO <i>Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage</i> and do not negatively impact on the site's Outstanding Universal Value. 6. Australia's obligations as a State Party to the UNESCO <i>Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage</i> are made known to key Government agencies. 7. The Outstanding Universal Value of the site is communicated to relevant Government agencies. 	Ongoing
Conservation of the site is actively championed in line with recommendations in the WHMP.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Advocate for the implementation of conservation recommendations made in the WHMP 	Long-term

Objective 2. Strengthen community understanding, appreciation and participation with all values at the site, including its Outstanding Universal Value and values other than World Heritage values.

Goals	Strategic Actions	Indicative timeframe for completion
The Outstanding Universal Value of the site is interpreted, communicated, promoted and understood by current and future generations.	1. Facilitate the development of a communications plan for the site to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly articulate the role and responsibilities of the Steering Committee to relevant stakeholders and community members; • Support the development of a coherent brand for the site; and • Re-consider the multiple online information repositories for the site and consider creating a central repository. 	Short-term
As above	2. Facilitate the development of an interpretation plan for the site and its surrounds, ensuring recommendations for interpretation made in the WHMP are adhered to.	Long-term
The values of the site that are not World Heritage, including its National Heritage values and significance to Traditional Owners and First Peoples, are accessible and understood by all.	3. Prioritise the recommendations arising out of the 'Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens First People's Cultural Values Report'. 4. Facilitate the development of an implementation framework for recommendations made in the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens First People's Cultural Values Report. 5. Facilitate professional experience and skill sharing on National Heritage matters with the Commonwealth Government.	Long-term
As above	6. Ensure actions of the Steering Committee emphatically support and uphold the principles of self-determination for Victorian Traditional Owners. 7. Be aware of areas of particular cultural heritage sensitivity at the site. 8. Work closely with the Registered Aboriginal Party, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. 9. Ensure management of values other than the World Heritage values are identified in the WHMP and management actions are adequate to protect all identified values	Ongoing
The community are empowered to contribute to conservation of the site's Outstanding Universal Value and shared heritage values.	10. Explore the feasibility of utilising section 181(2)(d) of the Heritage Act to seek additional community representation on the Steering Committee.	Short-term

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11. Ensure that the timing and purpose of the WHMP review is clearly articulated to stakeholders and community members.
 12. Ensure the community has access to a transparent and clear description of how the WHMP functions to protect the site.
 13. Facilitate the development of a community engagement plan, ensuring community values are recognised and the community can meaningfully contribute to the review of the WHMP.
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Objective 3. Ensure collaborative and coherent site management, including management of the World Heritage Environs Area ‘buffer zone’, in accordance with the World Heritage Management Plan.

Goals	Strategic Actions	Indicative timeframe for completion
Support unified management of the site in areas that affect or have the potential to affect the site’s Outstanding Universal Value.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify opportunities for collaborative and streamlined approaches to site management by sharing expertise, advice, and resources. 2. At the beginning of each calendar year confirm dates of in-session meetings to ensure full attendance. 	Short-term
As above	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Where required, hold out-of-session meetings to determine matters that affect or have the potential to affect the site’s Outstanding Universal Value. 	Ongoing
As above	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Facilitate development of an implementation framework for recommendations and findings of the WHMP. 	Medium-term
Support sustained functioning of the World Heritage Environs Area to protect the World Heritage values of the site.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Take a collaborative approach to decision making if the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria assesses a matter under the EPBC Act or in accordance with the World Heritage Strategy Plan, that is considered to have potential to affect the World Heritage values of the site. 6. Support the statutory authorities responsible for decision making within the World Heritage Environs Area to make decisions in line with the recommendations of the World Heritage Strategy Plan. 	Ongoing
The Steering Committee has adequate representation and support to fulfil its statutory functions under the <i>Heritage Act 2017</i> .	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Examine ways to improve efficiency of site management and compliance with relevant legislation, including collating legislative requirements and undertaking an annual audit and update of strategic actions. 	Medium-term
As above	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Where required work collaboratively to seek funding for priority actions identified in the WHMP. 	Long-term

Objective 4. The Steering Committee governance and operating environment is robust, equitable and accountable.

Goals	Strategic Actions	Indicative timeframe for completion
Decisions are collaborative, informed and consistent with World, National and State legislative responsibilities.	1. Explore the feasibility of enabling all members appointed in accordance with the Heritage Act to vote on Steering Committee matters.	Short-term
	2. Develop and maintain a skills matrix to inform the filling of vacancies and to assist succession planning and potential expansion of membership.	
As above	3. Provide for continued monitoring and reporting on the state of the World Heritage values of the site and report as required by the Minister on the carrying out of Steering Committee activities.	Ongoing
Ensure the First Peoples for the lands comprising the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens have an ongoing and meaningful voice in the management of their traditional estate.	4. Invite Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to identify a member to represent the Corporation on the Steering Committee and progress the appointment of the member.	Short term
Remain transparent and accountable for all operations.	5. Re-instate the publication of Steering Committee meeting minutes on the website of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), including all meetings held in relation to the 2020 WHMP review.	Short-term
	6. Review Terms of Reference, update where needed and subsequently publish on the website of DELWP.	
Ensure governance arrangements align with best- practice World Heritage Management governance.	7. Review current governance arrangements and identify any opportunities for improvement and alignment with the governance of other World Heritage sites.	Long-term
	8. Continue to seek out resourcing for site management, advocating to State and Commonwealth Governments for funding.	
Foster strong and effective partnerships with stakeholders in the public and private sector, and with the Commonwealth Government.	9. Establish and maintain regular communication with the Commonwealth Government on matters concerning the World Heritage listing of the site.	Medium-term
	10. Utilise community engagement and/or a community representative on the Steering Committee to strengthen relationships with local stakeholders.	

