

Guiding principles for changes proposed to places on 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 on 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 significance of a place and why it is included on the Victorian Heritage Register, but is not definitive.

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 must 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 works should respect the significance of the place through consideration of its siting, bulk, form, scale, character, colour, texture and material.

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

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, and any relationships to other significant elements. Consideration must also be given to views and vistas from outside and within a place.

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.