These guidelines have been produced by Heritage Victoria with assistance from the members of the Heritage Council’s Archaeology & Underwater Cultural Heritage Committee.

Heritage Victoria’s historical archaeology team can be contacted at: archaeology.admin@delwp.vic.gov.au

Publication date: January 2020.

These guidelines replace the previous version Guidelines for Conducting Historical Archaeological Guidelines 2008

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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These guidelines provide an overview of the requirements for conducting historical archaeological surveys and reporting historical archaeological sites in Victoria.

The Heritage Act 2017 (‘the Act’) and Heritage Regulations 2017 (‘the Regulations’), enacted on 1 November 2017, provide for the protection and management of all historical archaeological sites in Victoria.

The Act and the Regulations specify the requirements for reporting archaeological surveys and the discovery of sites.

What is a survey?
A survey is an investigation of an area for the purpose of assessing whether it contains a historical archaeological site or sites, or to reassess a known historical archaeological site.

A survey may result in the identification of archaeological sites that are suitable for inclusion on the Heritage Inventory.

There are many reasons why a survey may be undertaken, including due diligence as part of a development proposal or for research purposes.

Who can conduct a survey?
A survey should be undertaken by a heritage professional with relevant qualifications and expertise. If the survey requires the assessment of a range of different heritage values and heritage places (built heritage, historical archaeology, landscape, etc) a multi-disciplinary team is likely to be required.

Heritage Victoria maintains a Consultants’ Register on our website www.heritage.vic.gov.au. Inclusion in the register does not imply that a consultant or contractor is endorsed or approved by Heritage Victoria.

When is a survey report required?
The Act and the Regulations require that a report must be submitted following every survey undertaken for the purpose of finding historical archaeological sites, even if no sites are discovered during a survey (Regulation 31, and Schedule 9 of the Regulations).

A report is not required that results from a desktop assessment only, although any information that identifies the location of potential sites should be forwarded to Heritage Victoria to assist site protection and management.

If existing Heritage Inventory sites are reassessed the updated details should be forwarded to Heritage Victoria to improve the quality and relevance of site record data.

What is a site card and when is it required?
A site card is a prescribed form that dictates how historical archaeological sites are reported in Victoria.

The form provides details about the site including geographical location; spatial extent; description of physical characteristics; condition; an assessment of former use; background research; and historical significance.

The completion of a site card, and its submission to Heritage Victoria, is required within 30 days of the discovery of a historical archaeological site.

Intersection with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria is protected and managed under the terms of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. However, if a historical site is discovered during any works or activities approved under the Aboriginal Heritage Act, a Victorian Heritage Inventory site card must be lodged with Heritage Victoria within 30 days.

It is necessary to obtain approval from Heritage Victoria before the disturbance of historical archaeological sites, even during Cultural Heritage Management Plan testing, or works authorised under a Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

Aboriginal Victoria can be contacted at aboriginalaffairs@dpc.vic.gov.au
2. Historical Archaeological Sites

The Act 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.

What is the Heritage Inventory?

The Heritage Inventory is a listing of all known sites that have more than a low level of archaeological significance. A site will address this threshold if it meets the following:

Top: The Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park, Fryerstown
Middle: Deep Lead Diggings, Dunolly
Below: Mt Alexander Silk Farm, Harcourt
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,
- it can be demonstrated that the site contains archaeological features, associated artefacts and/or deposits; and,
- documentary evidence and/or oral history, landscape features, visible site fabric or other information indicates a likelihood that the site contains archaeological remains; and,
- 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;

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.

The Policy for Determining Low Archaeological Value can be found on the Heritage Victoria website.

The Inventory can also include sites that are less than 75 years old, subject to the approval of the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria, and the Heritage Council (section 130 of the Act).
3. Conducting a survey

The following guidelines do not specify the precise method in which an archaeological survey is to be conducted. Rather, this section identifies the key considerations and responsibilities involved in the undertaking of a survey.

Prior to the commencement of a survey:
An appropriate Field Methodology should be established to direct the investigation. The methodology should outline the recording principals, rationale of the survey and context of the site – as informed by thorough background research.

During a survey:
Information including the geographical location, spatial extent, physical characteristics, site condition and visibility should be recorded and considered. Other relevant information including perceived or actual threats to the physical fabric of the survey area or a specific site should also be documented.

A survey is a non-invasive assessment and does not include the disturbance of a site. Disturbance of archaeological sites requires a consent under the Act.

At the completion of a survey:
A site card must be completed for each new identified archaeological site that is likely to meet the Act’s definition. The site card must be submitted to Heritage Victoria for review.

The Executive Director, Heritage Victoria, determines if a site is suitable for inclusion in the Heritage Inventory, and issues Heritage Inventory site numbers for new sites.

A survey report outlining the results of the assessment is also required by Heritage Victoria.

Background research
Background research is essential to inform any survey and survey methodology. The survey should not aim to duplicate previous studies but should enhance, expand and contribute to the existing body of information that is available.

The following sources must be consulted prior to fieldwork:

- statutory and non-statutory cultural heritage lists (including the Victorian Heritage Inventory and the Victorian Heritage Register);
- online interactive mapping tools;
- previous reports and studies (including historical archaeological reports); and
- other relevant sources (heritage studies, historic plans and images, local or thematic histories, etc).

Resources
Information regarding existing archaeological sites listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory and heritage places listed on the Victorian Heritage Register can be accessed online via the interactive map VicPlan and on the Victorian Heritage Database.

Copies of Historical Archaeological Reports lodged with Heritage Victoria are available on request.
To request a report, contact Heritage Victoria at archaeology.admin@delwp.vic.gov.au
4. Completing a survey report

A survey report is required by Heritage Victoria at the completion of a survey assessment and must include the content listed in this section.

The report must include Heritage Inventory numbers for sites identified during the survey. Site cards must be submitted to Heritage Victoria prior to the completion of the survey report to allow site numbers to be included.

Survey report content

Project information
General information which outlines:
• date of survey;
• reason for survey;
• location of survey; and
• key stakeholders.

Desktop assessment
Background project information including:
• historical research;
• environmental history;
• reference to prior studies; and
• summary of places with current heritage listings within the study area.

Maps
• location of the survey area;
• location and extent of known or discovered sites; and
• existing heritage listings within or in direct proximity to the survey area.

All spatial data collected must be recorded in Heritage Victoria’s preferred coordinate system format (GDA94 or WGS84). Any shapefiles submitted to Heritage Victoria must be provided in the preferred format (.sph).

Survey methodology
The methodology including the:
• survey rationale;
• survey method; and
• limitations of the methodology.

Survey results
Findings of the survey including:
• details of sites identified during the survey. Copies of relevant site cards can be included in the report;
• photographs – with a photographic scale;
• perceived or actual threats to the physical fabric of site(s), if known; and
• other relevant details and information.

Limitations:
• including but not limited to, issues arising from the execution of the methodology, including constraints and/or limitations, access restrictions or poor visibility, etc.

Recommendations:
• additional investigations;
• project outcomes and options;
• urgent site management or protection requirements.

Bibliography
• a list of relevant studies, reports and other sources.

Submission of the survey report
A survey report must be lodged with Heritage Victoria within 12 months of the completion of the survey assessment. The report must be emailed to archaeology.admin@delwp.vic.gov.au.

Heritage Victoria will not accept Cultural Heritage Management Plans or any reports that solely relate to Aboriginal cultural heritage as these are managed under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.
5. Completing a site card

There are several mandatory fields within a site card. The following information provides guidance on how to complete key sections of a Heritage Inventory site card. A template of the site card is available on the Heritage Victoria website.

Current description of site

This section provides a clear description of current site conditions and any visible archaeological fabric. The date of the survey should be noted in this section, as well as any factors that may limit the ability to accurately describe or assess the site.

Place history

This section should contain a brief history of the site, including the historic occupation and land use, as well as phases of construction and demolition. Any significant events, people, phases and historic associations with the site should be included.

Analysis of site (interpretation)

This section should synthesise all relevant site information including place history, current site condition, archaeological potential, the results of comparative analysis and significance assessments, and other relevant information to provide an interpretation or summary of the place.

Questions to consider as part of the interpretation of the site include:

• What sort of place was it?
• What activities have taken place here?

This section should also provide an evaluation of the site’s potential to contain archaeological features and/or deposits.

An example of a completed Analysis of site (interpretation) entry is included below.

Statement of significance

The statement of significance must clearly address the thresholds identified in the Policy for Determining Low Archaeological Value.

The significance must be evaluated and described within a state, regional, local, thematic or other relevant framework. Useful resources include:

• Framework of Historical Themes (Heritage Council of Victoria)
• Local thematic histories or heritage studies

There may be other reasons that the place is of significance other than those that are outlined in Thresholds A and B.

This section can be used to articulate those values, which may include cultural, social or aesthetic values.

Submission of site cards

Completed Heritage Inventory Site Cards must be emailed to archaeology.admin@delwp.vic.gov.au for assessment.

Incomplete site cards not completed in the prescribed form will be returned for additional information.

Below: Magpie Creek Gold Mining Diversion Sluice, Wooragee
Example of Analysis of site (Section 8 of site card):

The Guildford Mill Cottage Ruin

This site consists of the remains of a rectangular building, with dimensions of approximately 7m x 4m. Only bluestone foundations (visible at ground or surface level) remain of the main structure. A remnant brick hearth and chimney base is visible at the northern end, and there are traces of a collapsed brick chimney. The remains of a brick veranda surface are visible adjacent to the western side of the building. Five fruit trees grow in a cluster 15-20 metres to the north of the ruin.

At the intersection of the northern and eastern wall foundations it is possible to see that at least three courses of the bluestone footing, or foundation, survive below-ground and in situ. The site is likely to contain an intact archaeological deposit within the building footprint and shows no signs of extensive sub-surface disturbance.

Scattered fragments of ceramic and glass (and smaller amounts of bone and metal) are visible within the building footprint and within approximately 5m of the ruin. The broad character of the visible artefact assemblage (based on an assessment of ceramic patterns, bottle forms and finishes) suggests a main phase of site occupation in the mid-late 19th century.

The site is likely to be the remains of a small residence or cottage that was constructed as part of the establishment of the Guildford Flour Mill, which was owned and operated by Thomas Long from 1856-1878. Following the closure of the mill, the land on the Loddon River was acquired by the Renard family who established a large pastoral estate in the area.

The site has the potential to contain archaeological features, deposits and artefacts that relate to the establishment and use of a cottage associated with mid-late 19th century flour milling, and possible later uses as part of farming/pastoral activities from the late 19th century onwards.

Resources

