Minutes

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

pDate:	14 May 2026
Time:	9.00 – 10.30 am
Location:	MS Teams
Chair:	Steven Avery
Steering Committee members:	**Steven Avery**, Executive Director, Heritage Victoria (**Chair**) **Lynley Crosswell**, Chief Executive Officer, Museums Victoria **(LC)** **Julian Edwards**, Director Planning and Building, Strategy, Planning and Climate Change, City of Melbourne **(JE)** **Richa Swarup**, Senior Adviser, City Heritage, City of Yarra **(RS)** **Samantha Westbrooke**, Executive Manager, Conservation & Advocacy, National Trust of Australia (Victoria) **(SW)**
Attending	Working Group Members: Michelle Stevenson, Museums Victoria **(MS)** Madeleine Moore, National Trust **(MM)** Tim Burt, City of Melbourne **(TB)** Amanda Bacon, Heritage Victoria **(AB)** Jenny Dickens, Heritage Victoria **(JD)**
Invited Guests:	Leanne Burrows, Director, Cultural Heritage Section, World and National Heritage Branch, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
Apologies:	None
Minutes:	JD

Item	Topic		Presenter
1.	**Standing items**		
1.1.	Welcome	-	Chair
–	Welcome to members of the Steering Committee and Working Group and guest - LB		
–	Acknowledgement of Country		
–	Agreement to recording of meeting for the purposes of capturing minutes was obtained		
1.2.	Quorum	-	Chair
–	All five committee members were present, and a quorum was confirmed.		

Item	Topic		Presenter
1.3.	Declaration of conflicts of interest	-	Chair
	No conflicts were declared.		
1.4.	Confirmation of minutes of the last meeting	-	Chair
	Resolution: Adopt draft minutes of meeting held 19 March 2026 Moved: RS Second: SW Carried: All		
1.5.	Outstanding actions arising	-	Chair
	No outstanding actions arising from the last meeting other than the updates to the Implementation Plan which will be presented at item 2.1		
1.6.	Steering Committee membership	-	Chair
	Heritage Victoria is waiting on final confirmation from Uncle John Terrick that he is able to be the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung representative on the World Heritage Steering Committee. Heritage Victoria will advise the Steering Committee of progress.		
1.7.	Report from Museums Victoria	-	Chair MS

125th Anniversary event

The chair congratulated LC and MS for the event held on Saturday 9 May celebrating the 125th anniversary of the first sitting of Federal Parliament at the REB.

MS reported that the building was open at no charge on Saturday 9 May and Sunday 10 May, and that the event was very successful:

- 22 thousand people in total attended both open afternoons
- Considerable positive feedback on the open day with visitors enjoying being in the building and learning about its history and significance

Activation plan

- The new vision for the Activation Plan for the REB was presented informally to the Steering Committee on 24 April, and a printed version was available at the anniversary event on 9 May.
- MS reported positive feedback to this document and MV will start to work on it with the Steering Committee and Commonwealth. The 24 April presentation and a digital version of the Vision document will be circulated to the Committee for comment in the near future.

Other activities

- The focus of works at the REB remains on the key urgent conservation works which were funded under the State Budget. Works are well underway.
- MV is working with their conservation architects to get their feedback on the temporary events management plan which will be submitted for a permit exemption in the coming weeks.

Item	Topic		Presenter
1.8.	Report from the City of Melbourne	-	Chair JE and TB

- JE reported that the City of Melbourne is about to embark a review of the planning scheme which has arisen from actions from the World Heritage Strategy Plan (**WHSP**) that sit outside the actions for the Steering Committee.
- TB reported that the implementation of the Carlton Gardens Master Plan continues, particularly the tree and garden bed study. Preliminary site investigations are being done prior to the engagement of a heritage landscape architect for the planning design of the garden beds
- Replacement trees that will be contract grown for 2-15 years before being installed have now been ordered.

1.9.	Report from the City of Yarra	-	Chair RS

- HV noted that the recent planning scheme amendment GC287 addressed technical anomalies in the implementation of the WHSP previously raised by RS.
- RS will inform HV if any more anomalies are identified.
- RS reported that the City of Yarra intends to work with the City of Melbourne on common issues arising from actions from the WHSP that sit outside the actions for the Steering Committee

2. Implementation Plan for the World Heritage Management Plan (WHMP) and World Heritage Strategy Plan (WHSP)

2.1.	Implementation Plan update and presentation	-	Chair JD

At the previous meeting, the Committee voted to agree to the overall structure and approach of the Implementation Plan, including proposed projects, and for the Working Group to undertake further work to refine the goals and identify project leaders and priorities.

As a result, the Working Group developed a standardised approach for all projects which more clearly documents the commitments required from all organisations.

- JD presented the revised project template for the Implementation Plan which enables projects to be delivered in a standardised way

Projects A-L

- These projects will be delivered in a staged way given the level of resourcing available to the SC.
- The three types of tasks within projects are: *Preliminary, Major* and *Finalisation* tasks to reflect their scope and outputs.

Preliminary tasks

- The preliminary tasks will generally be completed using templates from UNESCO's *Enhancing our Heritage* publication plus a few other relevant templates. All the templates and other resources are listed in Attachment 2 of the Implementation Plan.

Item	Topic	Presenter

– The outputs of these projects will identify any gaps and provide background and data to the major tasks for each project.

Major tasks

– The major tasks for each project will generally be the responsibility of the agencies

– Many of the major projects will require consultants or the commitment of considerable staff time.

– Therefore, it is not possible to allocate project leaders and priorities for these projects until resources have been identified or obtained.

Finalisation Tasks

– The finalisation tasks for each project include ratification of the outputs by the Steering Committee and their adoption by the relevant management organisations.

Projects M and N

– These projects will implement planning changes recommended by the WHSP which are outside the Planning Scheme amendments. These are expected to primarily be the responsibility of the City of Melbourne and City of Yarra

Discussion

RS and SW spoke of the need for a defined role for the Working Group and the need for review of the governance and structure required to implement the WHMP.

– The chair noted that the Implementation Plan will be delivered in stages and that further resourcing will be required to fully deliver it.

– The chair thanked the Working Group for their ongoing work on the plan.

– The final plan will be circulated to the Steering Committee in coming weeks, with a view that the plan be published shortly thereafter.

3. Other business

3.1.	Two members of the Steering Committee - terms expiring	-	Chair

The reappointment process is progressing

3.2.	Public communications	-	Chair

HV has received a request from a community member regarding possible community representatives on the Steering Committee and meetings between the Steering Committee and the Friends of REB and Carlton Gardens.

ACTION: Once the implementation plan is finalised, HV will meet with the Friends of the REB and Carlton Gardens to inform them about the work of the Steering Committee and the Implementation Plan.

3.3.	Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee meeting	-	Chair MS

MS reported that no meetings of the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee have been held since the last Steering Committee meeting. She will report at the next Steering Committee meeting

Item	Topic		Presenter
3.4.	Presentation by consultant conservator on strategic graffiti management	-	Chair Caroline Kyi

As requested in action 6.5.1 at the meeting in August 2025, conservator Dr Caroline Kyi addressed the Steering Committee about Site Specific Graffiti Management and planning, which included:

- Consideration of the properties of the original historic fabric and added materials (chemical properties and condition)
- Responses are targeted to the chemical properties of the graffiti material and the vulnerabilities of the historic fabric
- Effective removal of past graffiti residues
- Documentation of the graffiti patterns and trends exhibited at the site which enables predictions about frequency and nature of graffiti
- Identification of the most effective and non-damaging preventive measures (including barriers if possible)
- Response methods and materials are specified and prepared prior to attacks

Dr Kyi was thanked for making the time to speak to the Steering Committee on this important subject.

3.5.	Other business	-	Chair

No other business was raised.

3.6.	Date of next meeting	-	Chair

The next meeting will be held on 13 August 2026

3.7.	Close and upcoming meetings	-	Chair

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

13 August 2026
12 November 2026
11 February 2027
13 May 2027
12 August 2027
11 November 2027