**Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens**

**World Heritage Management Plan Steering Committee and Officer Working Group**

**World Heritage Governance Workshop**

**Minutes**

**Date:**  **Thursday 12th November 2020**

**Time: 10 00am – 12 00pm**

**Venue: via Zoom**

**Facilitator: Jennifer Berensen, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning**

**Attendees:**

**Steering Committee Members:**

Steven Avery (Chair) Executive Director, Heritage Victoria, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)

Emma Appleton Director, City Strategy, Strategy Planning and Climate Change, City of Melbourne

Lynley Crosswell Chief Executive Officer, Museums Victoria

Richa Swarup Senior Adviser City Heritage, City of Yarra

Felicity Watson Advocacy Manager, National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

**Officers attending**

Ronnie Fookes, Museums Victoria

Michelle Stevenson, Museums Victoria

Angela Hill, City of Melbourne

Fiona Finlayson, City of Melbourne

Freya Keam, National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

Amanda Bacon, Heritage Victoria, DELWP

Hannah Fairbridge, Heritage Victoria, DELWP

Megan Rowland, Heritage Victoria, DELWP

Sonia Rappell, Heritage Victoria, DELWP

**Introduction**

Steven Avery welcomed all attendees and guests to the workshop and acknowledged the Traditional Owners on whose land the meeting was held.

Amanda Bacon re-visited the purpose and intention behind the workshop. Amanda introduced the facilitator, Jennifer Berensen of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

**Guest presentation – *Governance insights from the Edinburgh World Heritage site*, *Kirsteen Thomson***

Guest presenter Kirsteen Thomson introduced herself to attendees. Kirsteen has architectural and planning experience and has previously worked at the Edinburgh Old and News Towns, which form the Edinburgh World Heritage site.

Kirsteen presented on the governance structure of the Edinburgh World Heritage site and touched on the sub-committees established to ensure the site is equitably managed. Kirsteen also touched on the importance of measuring progress at the World Heritage Site. Kirsteen advised that multiple sub-committees at the site assist with management: Sub-committees include:

* **The Economic Development Group** (purpose: to identify development proposals which lift the economy, identify land use for sites, facilitate development uptake and develop an infrastructure plan);
* **The Development Quality Group** (purpose: to receive and approve recommendations of the conservation panel and produce the annual action plan);
* **The Quality of Life Group** (purpose: to coordinate interests of the local community and understand issues from community of interest, coordinate interests of the local business community);
* **The Conservation Panel** (purpose: to establish standards of repair and maintenance, to approve grants for restoration, to report to the Development Quality group).

Following the presentation, the facilitator called on attendees for questions.

An attendee asked about the role of Council on the Edinburgh World Heritage Site board. Kirsteen advised that the role of including political representation on the board is to enable advocation of the site, and assistance in leveraging funds.

**Facilitated discussion – *What is not working?***

Attendees were asked by the facilitator to consider factors of site governance that are currently not working. Points raised by attendees include:

* The lack of Indigenous involvement and consultation;
* A need for greater understanding of how the site contributes to the economics of the area, and an understanding of whether opportunities for economic development exist;
* The need for stronger emphasis on the World Heritage values of the site, when it comes to planning decisions in the World Heritage Environs Area;
* Greater communication around the purpose of the building, to encourage community understanding of its function and use;
* There is a lack of integration between the World Heritage Environs Area and the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens themselves;
* Implementation of the World Heritage Management Plan is not being followed through after the World Heritage Management Plan is developed;
* Currently community representation is missing from the governance structure of the site, greater transparency about the activities of the Steering Committee is needed. There is a need to consider the community as being broader than residents, the site is for all Victorians;
* Greater clarification of the legislation and structures governing each agency as well as roles and responsibilities is needed.

Following this discussion Kirsteen added that the Edinburgh World Heritage site was mainly governed by volunteers. Kirsteen advised that some of the issues outlined in the discussion may be solved through greater facilitation of community led projects. The discussion ended with a conversation around the importance of developing a coherent brand for the site, and conversation around what can be done within the existing framework and limited resourcing.

**Guest presentation – E*stablishing Community Advisory Committees at World Heritage places, pre-recorded presentation, Joanna Lyngcoln***

A pre-recorded presentation filmed by guest presenter Joanna Lyngcoln was played to attendees. Joanna is a current staff member of Heritage Victoria who had previously worked as the Conservation Infrastructure Manager at the Port Arthur Historic Site, Tasmania. Joanna spoke of the importance of allowing the community to meaningfully engage in discussion at World Heritage sites and of the importance in listening to community concerns. Joanna advised that the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority (PAHSMA) had established a community advisory body during the nomination process. This advisory body remains in place today. Joanna discussed some of the benefits and challenges of incorporating a community advisory body into the governance structure of PAHSMA.

**Facilitated discussion – *What could be improved?***

The facilitator asked attendees to consider areas of improvement for the overall governance and management of the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens. Points raised by attendees include:

* Any new approach or model of governance needs to be consistent and present a clear plan for community involvement;
* Community involvement must be meaningful, a way to increase community engagement may be to increase transparency of the activities of the Steering Committee;
* There may be opportunity to leverage community involvement for advocacy and fundraising of the site;
* The local community currently view the City of Melbourne and Museums Victoria as the site managers who have responsibility over day-to-day activities such as maintaining rubbish bins and bike paths, garden maintenance, hosting and managing events etc. Important to be aware that there is also a community with an interest in the World Heritage values of the site;
* There is a need to allow for delineation of the day-to-day management of the site and the broader, more high-level management of the World Heritage values;
* There is a need to include a community advisory committee in the future. Any advisory committee needs to include a range of representatives;
* Agreement that there is a need to disaggregate the activities that fall into day-to-day management and those activities that relate to the World Heritage status of the site.

**Facilitated discussion – *What barriers are we currently facing?***

The facilitator asked attendees to consider any barriers that may inhibit progression, and to consider how such barriers may be overcome. Points raised by attendees include:

* The current lack of resourcing for the Steering Committee and the site in general is a barrier. Agreement that achievements are being made despite this barrier;
* Legislation has been seen as a barrier in the past, but it is possible that it could be an enabler. General discussion around the provisions of the *Heritage Act 2017* that relate to the Steering Committee and World Heritage Management Plan was held;
* There is no implementation plan attached to the World Heritage Management Plan, this could be something useful going forward;
* Previously, there was a stronger emphasis on implementation and an attempt at formalising implementation following adoption of the previous iteration of the World Heritage Management Plan. However, this dropped off the World Heritage Management Plan as the implementation plan was not formalised;
* There is no articulated vision for strategic direction. This is something that could be improved and addressed in the reviewed World Heritage Management Plan;
* The site is not managed as a precinct, despite the World Heritage Environs Area precinct;
* There is a lack of recognition of the World Heritage status of the site across the public and private sector, recognition is only seen from a few agencies who have a direct management interest in the site;
* There is no central repository for public information, it is clear from community consultation that the public go to a range of sources for information, and important information is spread across multiple webpages.

**Facilitated discussion – *Agreeing next steps***

Attendees were asked to consider all points that had previously been raised during the workshop and agree on actions and priorities going forward.

A change matrix was developed, which is included on **Page 6** of this document.

Points raised during this discussion include:

* There are a number of high impact, low effort actions that can be taken to make improvements. One of the most essential actions is to articulate a vision;
* Once a vision has been developed, it needs to be communicated. A communication plan is another high impact low effort activity that could lead to improvements within the governance structure of the site and the overall promotion of the site;
* Attendees discussed current communication strategies, including where information is currently stored, where the public go for information, and the value and effectiveness of current information repositories (Museums Victoria website, Heritage Victoria website);
* Attendees generally agreed that despite work being done to improve website communications, there is a need for more sophisticated information sharing;
* Attendees discussed the mechanism by which new models of governance would be considered in the context of the current review process, attendees considered developing a proposal for change and submitting it to the Minister;
* Attendees agreed that there is a need to elevate the management of the site to that of other World Heritage sites;
* A high impact, high effort action to consider going forward, is the creation of a community advisory board/reference group/body. Agreement that this would require substantial effort and resourcing but would align with community expectations of the site;
* There is therefore a need to secure more resources;
* It may be useful to look to examples of how other public land and assets are managed, there is a Crown Land and Committee of Management Support branch within DELWP, it may be useful to seek examples to understand the management of public land and assets.

Attendees discussed whether the World Heritage Management Plan review was the appropriate vehicle to suggest governance change, general agreement among attendees that recommendations for change should be included in the future iteration of the World Heritage Management Plan as a response to submissions received.

Attendees also discussed actions that could be taken outside of the review process, agreement that a strategy and communication plan could be developed outside the review process.

**Facilitated discussion – *Recap and agreement on next steps***

Attendees agreed that of the points raised throughout the workshop, the most logical immediate next step is to develop a strategic vision, followed by a communication strategy for the site. It was also agreed that the current Terms of Reference developed in 2005 need to be revisited and redeveloped.

Attendees agreed that a strategic vision and possibly communications strategy could look to be developed before the review of the World Heritage Management Plan is complete, it is hoped these documents could form part of the reviewed World Heritage Management Plan.

**Change Matrix:**

**High impact, low effort and constraints**

* Develop a strategic vision and communication strategy – guidance on how to move forward;
* Mapping of governance across agencies (including role of Cm’wealth);
* Create a central information repository and a profile for the site – conscious of resources, direct traffic to existing website.

**High effort and constraints, high impact**

* Propose a new structure, SC is procedural, focused on WHMP;
* Officer working group to put together proposal for new model;
* Addition of community advisory committee, board etc. provide formalised input into management of site that community members are looking for;
* Secure more resources.

**Low effort and constraints, low impact**

* Increase transparency by reconsidering minute publishing, reviewing and publishing TOR;
* Reconsider the value and effectiveness of the Museums Victoria and Heritage Victoria website, is there a way to combine these for holistic, overall information sharing?
* Finding/re-developing Terms of Reference (currently date from 2005).

**High effort and constraints, low impact**

HIGH

IMPACT/VALUE

HIGH

EFFORT AND CONSTRAINTS

LOW

LOW