## Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens

## World Heritage Steering Committee meeting

Minutes

Date: Wednesday 27 April 2022  
Time: 10am – 1pm  
Venue: Microsoft Teams Meeting  
Attendees:

**Steering Committee members:**

* Steven Avery (Chair), Executive Director, Heritage Victoria, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)
* Sophie Handley, Director, City Strategy, Strategy, Planning and Climate Change, City of Melbourne
* Richa Swarup, Senior Advisor, City Heritage, City of Yarra
* Felicity Watson, Executive Manager, Advocacy, National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

**Presenters:**

* Therese McCarthy, Senior Heritage Consultant, GML Heritage
* Rachel Jackson, GML Heritage Principal, GML Heritage

**Officers:**

* Angela Hill, Senior Open Space Planner, Parks and City Greening, City of Melbourne
* Ronnie Fookes, Senior Project Manager, Museums Victoria
* Rebecca O’Brien, Principle, Heritage Policy, Heritage Victoria, DELWP
* Hannah Fairbridge, Heritage Policy Officer, Heritage Victoria, DELWP (Minute taker)

**Apologies:**

* Lynley Crosswell, Chief Executive Officer, Museums Victoria
* Amanda Bacon, Manager Policy and Programs, Heritage Victoria, DELWP

**Item 1. Introduction**

The Chair welcomed and thanked those attending the meeting and acknowledged the Traditional Owners across Victoria whose land the meeting was held on.

Attendees granted the Chair permission to record the meeting.

**Item 2. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting**

Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed.

Museums Victoria provided an update on the Royal Exhibition Building and Exhibition Reserve Master Plan and the Traditional Owner Cultural Values report. Both documents have been finalised, unspent funds from the Traditional Owner and Cultural Values report will be held for Steering Committee purposes.

The Chair raised two matters for Steering Committee consideration:

* The Steering Committee has no ability to nominate alternate members, making meetings difficult in the absence of members. Members were asked to nominate alternate members in the coming weeks so that Heritage Victoria can progress seeking permission from the Minister for Planning.
* The Steering Committee has no Terms of Reference.

*Action(s):*

1. Steering Committee members to nominate an alternate representative in their absence and provide details to Heritage Victoria.
2. Heritage Victoria to progress developing a draft Terms of Reference and circulate for discussion.

**Item 3. World Heritage Management Plan (WHMP) content and notification**

Rebecca O’Brien introduced herself as Principal Heritage Policy Officer, Heritage Victoria, advising her role as project manager on the World Heritage Management Plan (WHMP) overview report. Rebecca outlined *agenda paper attachment 2*, which had been prepared to confirm which documents form the WHMP. Rebecca opened the floor to the Steering Committee to discuss the recommendations.

The Steering Committee raised the potential reconfiguration of the WHMP, outlined in the *attachment three* flowchart. Some members expressed concern with the recommendation to exclude the Strategy Plan from the WHMP. Rebecca advised that the proposal to remove the Strategy Plan was to assist the intentions of the *Heritage Act 2017* (the Heritage Act)and that including the Strategy Plan had consequences for notification, submission and amendment of the Strategy Plan.

The Steering Committee suggested that the purpose of the Strategy Plan in guiding the management plan would need to be considered.

The Steering Committee members queried the drafting of the Heritage Act in relation to separating the WHMP and the Strategy Plan. Rebecca advised that the 2017 Act was largely similar to the 1995 Act.

The Steering Committee agreed that any changes now would potentially impact the implementation of the plan over the next seven years. Concern raised that if the Strategy Plan was not included as part of the WHMP the seven-year trigger for review wouldn’t apply.

Attendee queried management of buffer zones at other sites. GML Heritage responded, advising that the REB&CG is in a unique position – only site in Australia with a ‘buffer zone’. Examples including Sydney Opera House, and Old Government House and Domain, Parramatta which have views studies were raised, GML Heritage advised there is no standardised approach to managing ‘buffer zones’.

The Chair advised that this item would be returned to before the end of the meeting.

**Item 4.****World Heritage Management Plan workshop**

Rebecca O’Brien introduced GML Heritage who have been hired to complete the review of the WHMP Overview Report.

GML Heritage presented a summary of the project brief and introduced the project team; Rachel Jackson, Principle GML Heritage and Therese McCarthy, Senior Heritage Consultant. GML Heritage outlined the proposed structure and content of the WHMP Overview report. Therese raised topics for discussion including:

* structure and terminology;
* management issues;
* level of detail;
* policies and recommendations;
* useful inclusions.

GML Heritage opened the floor to discussion.

*Prompt: Is the proposed structure and terminology in the draft WHMP suitable?*

* Attendee raised that the responsible agency ‘tag’ attached to the Traditional Owner report should be amended, as it was not strictly prepared by Museums Victoria and City of Melbourne;
* Attendees discussed the position of the Strategy Plan within the flowchart, noting that it currently appears as a hierarchy with the Strategy Plan at the bottom;
* Attendee raised for noting that not all content of the ‘area plans’ are relevant to the WHMP, with some policies only relevant to site management not World Heritage values;
* GML Heritage advised that the diagram was prepared based on the option to remove the Strategy Plan from the WHMP, raising an option for the Strategy Plan to be presented as ‘area plan 3’;
* The Steering Committee were presented with the following options which would follow if the Strategy Plan was taken to be separate from the WHMP:
* HMP amended to include additional information relevant to the Strategy Plan;
* Overview report drafted to include additional information relevant to the Strategy Plan;
* Museums Victoria commented that the option to amend the HMP is unlikely to go ahead due to original brief only covering the site itself;
* GML Heritage advised that the Overview Site Management Plan is not intended to regulate the Environs Area but does include information on the Strategy Plan for context;
* GML Heritage advised that a flowchart to present governance arrangements for the site may also be included in the Overview Site Management Plan, the Commonwealth responsibility/relationship to the governance will be covered in a separate section of the Overview Site Management Plan;
* Attendees raised that the community are looking for changes and that the role of Steering Committee will be to take the WHMP to the next step and resolve the issues, the WHMP will equip the Steering Committee to seek resourcing and bid for management of the site in an ongoing way;
* The Steering Committee were asked whether the proposed terminology referring to the current ‘Attachments’ as ‘Parts’ was suitable, the Steering Committee agreed with the terminology.

**Summary:** The Steering Committee agreed that the position of the Strategy Plan within the flowchart should be amended, and that the proposed hierarchy structure should be amended. Steering Committee agreed that use of the term ‘Parts’ when referring to what are currently known as the ‘Attachment Documents’ was suitable.

*Prompt: around the room discussion about issues including funding, resourcing, community, implementation, governance.*

* Attendees raised issues of funding and resourcing, stating that most funding is through grants and there is no access to a funding stream;
* Attendees raised that the community currently reach out to all agencies, and that a central point of contact with the community would be beneficial;
* Attendees discussed interpretation as an area where there is a lot of potential;
* Attendees raised that Museums Victoria has the expertise to undertake interpretation when needed;
* Three considerations in relation to resourcing were raised:
* Resourcing should be available to the agencies responsible for managing the site; and
* resourcing for Heritage Victoria on behalf of Executive Director to oversee implementation of the WHMP or to employ an ongoing coordinator to oversee the WHMP processes; and
* ensure resources are available for the Executive Director to participate in Statutory Planning processes and appeals;
* The Steering Committee agreed that resourcing could support implementation of an advisory committee or expert committee but raised that coordination of decisions is important;
* The Steering Committee raised the importance of implementing a reporting process;
* The Steering Committee discussed the governance work that was previously undertaken, and agreed to review the governance model report in the context of the WHMP review;
* The Steering Committee raised that governance could be improved by having a consistent avenue for the community to raise issues and queries or by having one central point of contact;
* The Steering Committee agreed that there is confusion about the role of the Commonwealth, and that this could be resolved in the WHMP review.

**Summary:** Steering Committee agreed there is a clear need to obtain resourcing to implement the Management Plan, and funding for the separate agencies to deliver each Part including for Heritage Victoria to coordinate the process.

*Prompt: Community representative on the Steering Committee?*

* The Steering Committee discussed what the most beneficial and useful framework of community representation would be, considering whether a representative to sit on the Steering Committee or having a central point of contact for community engagement would be most beneficial;
* Attendees generally discussed the importance of having clear expectations around Steering Committee member’s opportunities to provide input and make management decisions;
* Attendees discussed the possibility of including expert advisers on the Steering Committee, agreeing that any change in approach needs to be formalised;
* There was a discussion about what an advisory committee would do and who would sit on it, and confirmation that an advisory committee would be a sub-committee to provide advice, with a similar role and function of a design review panel, Sydney Opera House was raised as an example;
* The Steering Committee raised that Terms of Reference will assist clarifying the role of the Steering Committee;
* The Steering Committee agreed that an advisory body made up of specific experts could balance the range of public interests at the site;
* The Steering Committee discussed the oversight of not including a Wurundjeri representative and agreed to progress appointment of a Wurundjeri representative;
* Steering Committee members raised that a challenge is that there is no direction around the roles of the Steering Committee members and a lack of clarity around the role of the National Trust and its ability to represent the community
* The Steering Committee raised that there needs to be a way to hear from community directly and not just during the seven-year cycle;
* There was general agreement that instigation of a community engagement platform would be useful and that points raised could be considered when the Steering Committee meet;
* Discussion that a community engagement platform could be combined with reporting and that an activity report including a section on community engagement could assist the Steering Committee to know whether the WHMP is functioning.

**Summary:** The Steering Committee agreed to explore its make-up and representation, discussing a number of options:

* Appointment of a Wurundjeri representative;
* Inclusion of experts, eg. Commonwealth Government and ICOMOS representatives on the Steering Committee;
* Instigation of a single central point of contact or platform for community engagement.

The Steering Committee discussed a number of avenues for resolving these matters including building the matters into the Terms of Reference and progressing adding alternate members.

The Steering Committee agreed to and expressed support to appoint a Wurundjeri representative on the Committee and progressing the drafting of Terms of Reference for review.

*Action(s):*

1. Heritage Victoria to recommend to the Minister for Planning that a Wurundjeri representative be appointed to the Steering Committee and that all members be granted voting rights.
2. Heritage Victoria to circulate feedback table to Steering Committee members and representatives for feedback within two weeks.

*Prompt: Return to the recommendations of attachment two in relation to the structure of the WHMP*

The Steering Committee were asked to return to attachment two and the question around the structure of the WHMP.

Attendees discussed whether each Part of the WHMP would be publicly advertised when the Overview Site Management Plan is finalised. The Steering Committee agreed that as each Part forms the WHMP the reports would be publicly advertised in addition to the Overview Site Management Plan. The Steering Committee agreed that in its call for submissions it would ask that submissions focus on the Overview Site Management Plan.

The Steering Committee confirmed that the Strategy Plan will not be re-advertised due to the advertising requirements outlined in the Heritage Act.

*Action(s)*

1. GML Heritage to re-configure flowchart, Heritage Victoria to distribute the flowchart to the Steering Committee and representatives for further comment.

The Chair thanked GML Heritage for coordinating the workshop and thanked all attendees for their participation and contribution.

**Meeting concluded at 1.10pm.**