

Heritage Practitioners Reference Group

Heritage practitioners are a diverse group of professionals who may engage directly or indirectly with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage and Western Australia's two heritage related Acts covering Aboriginal and historic heritage. Some practitioners work closely with Departmental staff and have clear lines of communication while others have experienced the Department primarily as a regulator in relation to their field of work.

The Department has developed good relationships with heritage professions through their professional bodies and worked with them to share understanding of heritage practice and process. The Heritage Practitioners Reference Group (HPRG) aims to extend this model and bring together practitioners representing their professional bodies and groups which cover the spectrum of heritage work.

The objective of the HPRG is to build a more effective and efficient heritage sector and through that heritage outcomes through collaboration, sharing of information and early identification of shared issues.

Composition

Organisations nominated are those whose members, whether all members or a specific class of membership, are required to demonstrate a minimum standard of competency or qualification in their respective field.

One nominee (and a proxy) of each of the key professional bodies, and Departmental staff as relevant to the identified topics:

- Aboriginal Heritage, DPLH
- Historic Heritage, DPLH
- Australian Association of Consulting Archaeologists Inc (AACAI)
- ICOMOS WA Branch
- Australian Institute of Architects
- Engineering Heritage Australia
- Professional Historians Association
- Anthropological Society of Western Australia

Role

Objectives of the Reference Group are to:

- share understanding of the heritage sector from public and private sector perspectives
- act as a conduit for communicating between professional groups and Departmental staff
- provide informed feedback on relevant policy, processes and project proposals
- facilitate and encourage submissions on heritage matters from heritage professionals
- support collaboration and sharing between professional bodies
- provide opportunity for peer review and discussion on heritage matters
- support development of heritage-related projects
- assist in the development and delivery of information, updates and other material relevant to heritage practice

The Reference Group will be asked to review its activities at the end of each financial year and determine whether it is achieving the stated objectives and whether it proposes any changes to the format, role, membership or other aspects of the Reference Group.

Mechanics

Proposed format for operation is:

- At least one meeting or activity each quarter, with further communication via email.
- Members are intended to be representative of their respective organisations but will be primarily asked to provide professional views rather than a formally adopted position.
- Meetings will be arranged for a date and time agreed to best suit the majority of members.
- The Department will chair meetings, provide meeting space, administrative support and distribute electronic papers and agendas, to which members will be invited to contribute.
- Adopted views, positions or statements of the Reference Group will not constitute formal submissions but may be used to inform Department policy or material.
- In general, members may share material with their respective organisations; however, any request for items to remain confidential must be respected.
- No individual member should claim to represent the reference group in any other forum.
- The reference group will not generally be required to reach consensus on particular matters – understanding the range of views and perspectives will be as informative as having an agreed position.
- Members are encouraged to attend all meetings, with the proxy filling in if needed.
- The reference group may request participation of nominated individuals, groups, organisations or Departments for specified meetings or activities.
- Participants will not receive payment nor be eligible to claim expenses from the Department.

Identified Topics

The following is a non-exclusive list of issues that may form the subject of meeting agendas. Further items can be raised by group members, who will be given the opportunity to prioritise and order discussion to allow appropriate time for each topic. This may result in some meetings focusing only on one work area or key issue.

- Current guidelines, material and information from the Department - availability, relevance, usefulness, gaps etc.
- Input on processes and practice – what works well / priorities for review.
- Legislation and regulations – mechanisms for submissions and input from professional bodies / individuals.
- Stakeholder engagement – additional opportunities for engagement between Dept and professions, and between professional bodies / individuals.
- Opportunities for training / professional development.
- Accreditation and standards for heritage professionals.
- Government contract and tender processes for heritage consultants / professionals.
- Meet-and-greet sessions with Chairs of Heritage Council and Aboriginal Cultural Materials Committee, DPLH Director General.