The State Government owns a wide range of heritage places, buildings, relics and other works. These assets are often significant to the community and need careful management, so they can be used and enjoyed now and in the future.

This guideline assists State government agencies to prepare and use heritage and conservation registers. It updates the section 170 guidelines issued by the Department of Planning in 1988 and 1993. The guideline is based on the three-step management system outlined in the NSW Heritage Manual — investigate significance, assess significance and manage significance.

State-owned heritage — the locomotive workshops at Eveleigh operated between 1887 and 1988 as part of a large complex of railway workshops, now considered to be one of the best examples of their kind in the world. State Rail has facilitated the adaptive re-use of the buildings and the proposed conservation of significant machinery. The workshops are now an integral part of the Australian Technology Park, a joint venture development between three universities and private industry. Photo: Lindy Kerr.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A HERITAGE REGISTER?
In 1987, section 170 was added to the Heritage Act 1977 requiring government agencies to prepare a register of the heritage assets it owns or controls. The completion of these registers will result in a comprehensive inventory of state-owned heritage assets — suitable for inclusion in the NSW Heritage Database.

Understanding the significance of its heritage assets will help an agency to manage them properly. The development of a register will enable these resources to be incorporated into a 'total asset management' approach.

Most state-owned heritage assets such as schools and courthouses are still in use and this ensures, at least, their basic conservation. Those surplus to the needs of the agency however, are often not maintained, especially if they are proposed for disposal.

Heritage assets provide many opportunities for re-use, but these can be jeopardised by ill-considered, short-term decisions by an owner, user or occupier. If all parties understand their obligations in managing an asset, the best use can be made of it, and unsympathetic development avoided. This applies to all assets, not just heritage items.

WHAT COMPRISSES A REGISTER?
A heritage and conservation register requires:

- a study of the heritage of an agency
- a list of heritage assets owned or managed by an agency
- an assessment of the heritage significance of each asset, individually and collectively.

A register includes places, buildings, relics and other works of cultural, Aboriginal and natural heritage. It details all items that are protected by conservation orders or planning instruments, or which warrant such protection.

What Should Be Included?
A variety of heritage assets can appear in a register. For most agencies, it will include mainly buildings and landscape settings. For those that own a range of significant works, structures or areas, it could include anything from moveable items (such as machinery, vehicles, furniture and memorabilia) to land containing Aboriginal relics. Alternatively, historical archaeological relics (which include submerged relics such as shipwrecks) might comprise the major component of an agency’s register.

Written records, interior fittings and art works are often overlooked; as is the land on which some assets are situated, which may, itself, have considerable natural heritage significance.

WHICH AGENCIES MUST PREPARE A REGISTER?
Section 170 applies to government agencies that are required to provide land details to the Premier’s Department under section 14 of the Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984 or section 17 of the Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985. It applies to assets under their control, including those that are owned by private sector organisations.
It is possible that some items may be entered on more than one government agency register, for example, when an agency that owns an asset transfers it to another to manage. While the primary responsibility still lies with the owner, managing agencies need to be aware that the asset is on the register of the owning agency, and manage it in a manner in keeping with its heritage significance.

**HOW CAN A REGISTER BE USED?**
In its efforts to improve the management of the NSW economy, and to make public sector agencies more accountable, the State Government has been introducing changes such as accrual accounting and strategic planning. Total asset management is also being used as a means to integrate the strategies of agencies into the overall government planning cycle.\(^{(1)}\)

A section 170 register is a tool which not only identifies heritage assets, but also helps an agency to manage those assets in this broader context. It provides the information needed to make appropriate decisions about use, management, funding and disposal.

**Benefits of a Register**
A heritage and conservation register is valuable for:

- establishing the heritage significance of government assets
- identifying items subject to a conservation instrument or other heritage controls
- establishing suitable levels of management
- developing maintenance programs and other asset management strategies (for example, funding)
- identifying specific categories of building types and materials that require specialised maintenance programs (for example, stonework, slate roofs)
- assessing proposals for alteration or adaptive re-use — to ensure they have a minimal impact on heritage significance
- deciding on appropriate protective measures, (for example, local environmental plans, heritage schedules, conservation orders, special conditions of sale, positive covenants on title, agreements and leases)
- deciding when further information may be required (for example, a conservation management plan, or other information to accompany a development application)
- establishing funding and management priorities
- reducing the risk of community or local authority opposition and associated delays and costs by demonstrating heritage issues have been considered.

\(^{(1)}\) These changes are outlined in the Total Asset Management Manual issued by the Department of Public Works and Services in 1992 (reissued 1996).
DEVELOPING A HERITAGE ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY

The best way to ensure that a register is prepared and used effectively is to develop an overall policy for managing the agency’s heritage assets. This would set out the procedures to be undertaken when work (including maintenance, alteration, reuse and disposal) is proposed for an item. These procedures can then be integrated into the agency’s overall asset management processes, and publicised throughout the organisation.

A committee responsible for asset management should be formed to develop the policy and to supervise the development and use of the register. It could also include representatives of organisations such as the National Trust.

UNDERTAKE A HERITAGE STUDY

A heritage study of the assets of an agency starts with an investigation of historical context and an inventory of the heritage items which will comprise a register. The significance of each item is then assessed so that recommendations can be made on how it is to be managed.\(^{(2)}\)

If the task is complex and a policy committee has not already been set up, it is advisable to establish a steering group — to guide the heritage study, finalise the register and develop heritage asset management policies.

A heritage study can also be used to promote the agency and to inform the community about the service it currently provides, with reference to its historical development.

\(^{(2)}\) The publication *Heritage Studies* outlines the procedure to follow, while *Heritage Assessments* explains the criteria to be used to assess each item. These have been published as part of the NSW Heritage Manual.

Opening the Albury–Wodonga rail link, 1883. Heritage studies can be used to improve the cultural identity of the agency, benefiting staff and the community. Courtesy: State Rail Authority.
Get Help from a Professional
A heritage consultant can be engaged to assist the section 170 steering committee; alternatively, in-house expertise may be used. A list of heritage consultants is available from the Heritage Office.

Complete a Historical Context Report
An historical context report provides the framework to properly assess heritage significance, and the cultural identity of the agency. Completing this history enables each asset to be assessed within the context of the agency’s particular background.

Identify Items of Possible Significance
To identify which assets are likely to be significant, consult existing heritage registers. This will give also some indication of the resources needed to undertake a proper heritage assessment of assets. Existing registers include:

- Australian Heritage Commission — register of the National Estate
- Heritage Council — register of orders made under the Heritage Act 1977
- National Parks and Wildlife Service — register of Aboriginal and natural sites
- Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and local councils — regional and local environmental plans and heritage schedules
- National Trust of Australia (NSW) register
- Royal Australian Institute of Architects (NSW) — register of 20th century buildings
- Institution of Engineers — register of significant engineering works
- Geological Society of Australia — register
- any relevant archaeological zoning or management plans.

If your organisation has substantial numbers of moveable items it may be appropriate to undertake a preliminary survey of the total moveable heritage collections. This may focus on artefacts at a particular building or site, or those located at a place scheduled for closure. The preliminary survey would include the register of some collections, as well as an overview of the range of moveable heritage belonging to the organisation.

If you consider you do not have any heritage items in your asset portfolio, please discuss this with the Heritage Office (see Contacts, page 8).

Assess Heritage Significance
Assessment of the organisation’s total assets provides greater certainty of what is significant and why. To assess the heritage significance of a heritage item:

- undertake fieldwork to analyse the historical fabric and the current condition and use of the item and update the photographic record if required
- investigate historical and contemporary records on the item
- consultation with experienced staff and experts
- analyse the item in relation to the historical context report
- analyse the evidence and assess the item’s heritage significance
- prepare a statement of significance.

To ensure compatibility with other registers each heritage asset must be assessed using the evaluation criteria in Heritage Assessments in the NSW Heritage Manual. The register you create will need to be compatible with the NSW Heritage Database — a state-wide, computerised inventory. Information from all section 170 registers will eventually be included in the database.

Some organisations have formed expert advisory committees to oversee the process, including expertise in moveable heritage. A skilled committee may also advise on management of the collection and appropriate disposal of unwanted items.

(3) Some of these lists are available for reference at the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning’s library on level 15, Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney.

(4) Note that evaluation criteria are currently being developed for items of Aboriginal and natural heritage. The NSW Heritage Database form can be adapted to register these items.
Cumberland Hospital heritage precinct beside the Parramatta River offers a rare insight into the way attitudes to welfare, criminal behaviour and mental health have changed over the years. The site was first used for a Female Factory in 1818 and the area is potentially a rich source of archaeological material. The site is owned by NSW Health, which is reviewing options for the future use and development of the precinct. NSW Health and its consultants have finalised a conservation management plan for the site to assist in its future management. Courtesy: NSW Health.

SUBMITTING THE REGISTER
Submit a copy of the completed register to the Heritage Council. A standard letter to accompany your submission is provided on page 10. The Heritage Council is required to keep copies of all section 170 registers and to make them available for public reference.

AMENDING THE REGISTER
As new information becomes available, and properties are acquired or disposed of, it will be necessary to amend the register. Section 170 also requires an annual review to ensure the relevance of the register as a management tool. This appraisal can be done in-house.

When reviewing the register:
- add any new items which have been identified
- update the entries where additional information has been obtained in regard to significance or management
- delete items which have been disposed of or found to be insignificant. Before removing an item from the register you should ensure that you have adequately considered its heritage significance. In most cases assessment by an experienced heritage professional is required.

USING THE REGISTER FOR HERITAGE MANAGEMENT
Conservation Policy
When writing a heritage asset management strategy, consider:
- heritage significance (including architectural and archaeological considerations)
- organisational requirements
- budget constraints.

The aim will be to develop a conservation policy that ensures:
- the heritage significance of your assets is maintained
- heritage is fully considered in the design and approval of future development proposals
- the maintenance of heritage assets is integrated into the organisation’s overall asset management strategy.

Conservation Management Plan
Conservation management plans for heritage items (especially those managed by approval authorities at a regional or state level) are a considerable help in decision making. The process of ‘working-through’ a conservation management
plan can be useful to address and solve problems associated with complex heritage assets. A conservation management plan consists of:

- a detailed assessment of significance the item
- an analysis of its physical condition
- a conservation policy.

It may also include a strategy for implementing the policy and recommendations on other aspects of management, maintenance and future development.

**Maintenance Strategy**

A maintenance strategy should be developed which is linked to your agency’s total asset management requirements. Typical components of a maintenance strategy include:

- ‘fix when fail’ or breakdown maintenance
- preventive maintenance
- servicing maintenance
- cyclic maintenance
- condition-based maintenance.

Maintenance of moveable collections requires appropriate storage and environmental conditions, regular stocktakings and attention to the artefacts’s security.

No single approach will suit all heritage assets. *Heritage Asset Management Guidelines* has been developed by the Department of Public Works and Services, with the assistance of the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning’s former Heritage Branch, to explain how to use a section 170 register as a management tool and how to integrate heritage into total asset management. The guidelines form part of the *Total Asset Management Manual*.

**FUTURE OPTIONS**

**Alteration, Adaptation and Re-Use**

Along with a proper maintenance strategy, the best way to conserve a heritage asset is to maintain its viable use. If some alteration or adaptation is required, your register will help to determine the impact that change could have. For example, a highly significant item might not sustain major changes to its fabric without an unacceptable loss of significance. In these cases in particular, you should seek the advice of an experienced consultant.

Unoccupied buildings and unused machinery will deteriorate rapidly or attract vandals. Total asset management means looking after all your assets. For some of your assets this may mean considering sympathetic, adaptive re-use.

(5) For further information see *Conservation Management Documents* in the NSW Heritage Manual. This includes a model brief for hiring a consultant.

Kirkbride buildings, Rozelle Hospital, are NSW Health properties that are surplus to current needs. Extensive investigations have been made into the adaptive re-use of the buildings for educational purposes, with minimal impact on their heritage significance. Courtesy: Department of Public Works and Services.
A proposal to adapt an item that is covered by the Heritage Act, an environmental planning instrument, or is otherwise identified as being significant, may require approval from the Heritage Council or the local council. This may also apply to an item whose significance is yet to be assessed (see below, Referral to the Heritage Council).

Heritage considerations should be an integral part of the project design and approval from the initial stage of a development proposal. Consideration should be given to the use of a specialist heritage architect for design work. Submissions prepared in accordance with Parts 4 and 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 should be referenced to the section 170 register and include specific heritage analysis and management recommendations, where appropriate.

**Disposal**

The register is a guide to the checks that need to be made on items which are to be included in future property disposal plans. Always try to find opportunities for adapting or re-using items listed on your register before including them in property disposal plans. In most cases, this will be a better and cheaper alternative to demolition, re-building or leasing space.

With moveable collections, the policy section of the register should provide general guidelines for disposal. Consideration should be given to the building and its contents as a whole.

The Portfolio Strategies Unit of the Department of Public Works and Services is responsible for administering the State Government’s property management and disposal program. Its guidelines are included in the Total Asset Management Manual.

Sale and auction documentation should make reference to the heritage significance of the asset. Where an item is of sufficient significance, a conservation management plan should be prepared prior to disposal, or alternatively the subsequent preparation of the plan by the purchaser should be a condition of contract.

**Demolition**

Consult the section 170 register to see if any building or structure proposed for demolition is identified as being of heritage significance. The register should indicate when you will need to make an application for approval to demolish.

If a building or structure is of heritage significance, consider demolition only under exceptional circumstances. This applies to items of local as well as state or regional significance. If the item is not listed in the register and a heritage study of the agency has not been carried out, ensure that a heritage assessment is undertaken before a final decision is made.

**REFERRAL TO THE HERITAGE COUNCIL**

Proposals involving alteration, disposal or demolition of items managed at a state or regional level, such as those listed in regional environmental plans or covered by conservation orders, should be referred to the Heritage Council through the Heritage Office. Also contact the office if the heritage asset affected is complex (for example, an extensive hospital site) or the significance of the item has not yet been fully assessed.

If items on your register have been listed in a local environmental plan, you should consult with the local council before any decision is made on their disposal.

**FUNDING**

Each government agency is expected to pay for its register as it is a statutory requirement under the Heritage Act. Capital funding for conservation works, however, can be requested from the Government as part of the annual agency submission for approved expenditure, in two categories:

- as part of the Treasury-funded capital program coordinated through the Government’s Capital Works Committee
- as works funded by the agency where Government Capital Works Committee endorsement is required.

Another form of capital funding is the Across Agency Capital Program, in which a number of agencies gain financial and administrative benefits from participating in a works program, such as the stonework program managed for the Government by the Department of Public Works and Services.

The timing of submissions for funds of this type is particularly important. Refer to the Total Asset Management Manual.
Statue of Robert Burns, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney. The bronze statue by Frederick Pomeroy was unveiled on 30 January 1905. The statue was commissioned by the Burns Memorial Committee at a cost of £1 000 and is one of many statues, fountains and memorials included in the section 170 register prepared by the Gardens management. Courtesy: Royal Botanical Gardens.

The Technical Advisory Group on Materials Conservation (TAGMAC), a specialist committee of the Heritage Council, can provide advice on complex technical and conservation matters. The Heritage Council’s Fire Advisory Panel provides advice to government organisations, local councils and building owners on ways of achieving adequate fire safety without affecting the character of heritage buildings. To get advice from either TAGMAC or the Fire Advisory Panel contact the Heritage Office.

Detailed advice on the items to be included on your register should be obtained from a qualified heritage consultant.

Department of Public Works and Services
The Department of Public Works and Services can advise you on the management and conservation of your agency’s assets. The address is: Department of Public Works and Services, 2–24 Rawson Place, Sydney NSW 2000.

You can obtain information on specific public buildings by contacting the Heritage Group, State Projects, phone (02) 9372 8494, fax (02) 9372 8487.

The Portfolio Strategies Unit assists government agencies with property issues, such as site assessment and disposal services or, in the case of more complex properties, property and project management services. Contact the Portfolio Strategies Unit, Client Services Division, phone (02) 9372 8537, fax (02) 9372 8544.

Local Councils
Under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, local councils identify and manage heritage assets which are of heritage significance through heritage studies and local planning instruments. Some councils now employ specialist staff or consultant heritage advisers to facilitate the community’s role in the assessment of applications affecting heritage assets.

CONTACTS
See also Heritage Contacts in the NSW Heritage Manual.

Heritage Office
If you need guidance on your obligation under the Heritage Act and in preparing your heritage and conservation register you should contact: Heritage Office, Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW 2000, phone (02) 9391 2221, fax (02) 9391 2336. An additional package of information is available.
FURTHER INFORMATION
These publications are available for purchase or inspection through the Information Centre of the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, corner Phillip and Bent Streets, Sydney.


Heritage Office 1996, Consultant List, HO, Sydney. This lists names of individuals and companies who can assist in the preparation of all or part of the register.

Heritage Office 1996, NSW Heritage Database Form, HO, Sydney. A copy of the form and an annotated version is included in the NSW Heritage Manual.


Heritage Office & Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 1996 Conservation Management Documents, NSW Heritage Manual, HO/DUAP, Sydney. Explains what is meant by a statement of significance, a conservation policy and conservation management plan; and includes a model brief for hiring a consultant to prepare a plan.

Heritage Office & Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 1996 Heritage Approvals, NSW Heritage Manual, HO/DUAP, Sydney. Advises on how to prepare an application for work affecting a heritage item and includes a checklist of the information to be supplied.


To whom it may concern,

RE: HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION REGISTER

Enclosed is a copy of the [name of government agency] Heritage and Conservation Register, which is submitted pursuant to section 170(6) of the Heritage Act 1977.

I certify that the Register is an accurate and comprehensive list of the heritage assets of the [name of government agency]...and meets the requirements outlined in NSW Government and Heritage, NSW Heritage Manual, 1996 published jointly by the Heritage Office and the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning.

[Outline any additional information for the Heritage Council's attention, such as the development of heritage asset management strategies.]

Yours faithfully,

Chief Executive