

# Western Australian Heritage

**Helen Chernoff & Bryanna Minchin**

Heritage is important for understanding the story of Western Australia – its history, identity and its people. Heritage values can take the form of landmarks, buildings and their contents, structures, gardens, cemeteries, memorials, landscapes, archaeological sites and the stories associated with them.

Heritage Perth defines heritage as “*Those things from the past which are valued enough today to save for the people of tomorrow*” (Heritage Perth 2020). Many of us are proud of our local history because it often builds a sense of shared community identity. Heritage sites and buildings can be considered the physical representation of an area’s identity and culture (University of Toronto 2020). Across Western Australia, there are many historical sites that form part of our state’s unique identity. For example, we recognise Fremantle for its beautiful historic buildings and Purnululu for its rich connection to the local aboriginal culture and its unique natural landscapes.

In Western Australia, we protect heritage under the *Heritage Act 2018* and the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*. Cultural heritage is classified for its significance and historical, aesthetic, scientific, social and/or spiritual values (Heritage Perth 2020). By protecting our cultural heritage sites, we are showing our respect for their significance, supporting local cultural identity and tourism, and providing opportunities to learn from our past and understand other cultures.

## Aboriginal Heritage

***Aboriginal sites are of immense cultural, scientific, educational and historic interest and provide Aboriginal people with an important link to their present and past culture.***

(DPLA 2020)



Source: *The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage*

Western Australia has a wealth of Aboriginal heritage which provides an important connection for Aboriginal people to their past and their culture. Under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*, the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage works with Aboriginal people to protect and manage significant places (DPLA 2020).



## Exploring Heritage



Explore the wealth of history and heritage in each of WA’s regions. From walking tours in the city to road trips through the vast Western Australian outback, visiting historic and cultural sites provides a unique experience for all visitors to our State.



The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage is responsible for:

- Protecting Aboriginal Heritage
- Assisting with compliance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*
- Providing access to heritage information

The Aboriginal Heritage Inquiry System (AHIS) is an online tool that provides details about Aboriginal heritage sites in Western Australia. Access to departmental information on Aboriginal sites, other heritage places and Aboriginal Heritage Surveys is available through AHIS via the following link <https://www.dplh.wa.gov.au/information-and-services/online-services/aboriginal-heritage-inquiry-system>



Source: [The Conversation](#)

## Review of the Aboriginal Heritage Act

A review of the Aboriginal Heritage Act is currently underway in an effort to improve the protection of Aboriginal heritage. The new legislation will include:

- An updated definition of what constitutes Aboriginal heritage, cultural landscapes and place-based intangible heritage.
- All Aboriginal heritage continues to be protected under the new Act.
- Encourage agreements between Aboriginal people and land use proponents.
- A new directory, to replace the Register of Aboriginal Places and Objects, which reflects the broader scope of heritage in the new legislation.
- Offences and penalties brought into line with the *Heritage Act 2018* and other modern legislation.
- Extending the period within which enforcement action must be commenced to five years.

Further information and fact sheets are available via [www.dplh.wa.gov.au](http://www.dplh.wa.gov.au) (Department of Planning Lands & Heritage 2019). Integrate Sustainability will explore this topic in further depth in a future insight.

## Historical Heritage

In Western Australia, our cultural heritage is recognised, identified and documented as per the *Heritage Act 2018*. The Act also provides provisions for the conservation, use and development of places of cultural heritage significance (The Government of Western Australia 2019).

The *Heritage Act 2018* establishes the Heritage Council of Western Australia as the Western Australian State Government's advisory body on historic heritage matters. The council's primary responsibilities include:

- Making decisions about places to be entered into the State Register of Heritage Places, and
- Provide advice to decision-makers and custodians on the development of heritage places (DPLA 2020). The heritage has developed several [policies and guidelines](#) that clarify how heritage places are recognised, protected and promoted and the role of the council in these matters.

The State Register ensures that places of State significance are recognised and any proposed changes to the area respect and preserve the surrounding heritage values. A site listed on the Heritage Council's Assessment Program is a site that the Heritage Council has an interest in and will be assessed and considered for inclusion on the State Register of Heritage Places (DPLA 2020).



Local governments, as key decision-makers in urban planning and development, also play an essential role in the conservation management of heritage places. Local governments are required to adopt a heritage list and ensure that local planning policies make provisions for heritage areas that co-exist with the Heritage Council's advice on the conservation of heritage places (DPLA 2020).



Logo of the Heritage Council of Western Australia



## Review of Heritage of WA Act

In July 2019, the *Heritage Act 2018* replaced the former Heritage of WA Act which streamlines the process for entering a heritage place onto the State Register. The new legislation aims to provide better protection for heritage places and improve transparency by publishing the Heritage Council's advice to the Minister for Heritage.



## Find out more about your local heritage

Places of historic significance are all around us. Want to learn more about your local heritage sites? Have a look at the following resources for information on heritage sites:

- Museums - local museums often have a wealth of historical information about your local area
- Council records - visit your local council's website for information on heritage sites and buildings in your area
- Historical societies and organisations, such as
  - \* [Heritage Perth](#)
  - \* [The Royal Western Australian Historical Society](#)
  - \* [History Council of Western Australia](#)
- Browse historical records from the
  - \* [State Library of Western Australia](#)
  - \* [State Records Office WA](#)
  - \* [Trove \(National Library of Australia\)](#)
- Search Australian Heritage Databases for heritage listings
  - \* [The State Register of Heritage Places \(WA\) \(InHerit\)](#)
  - \* [Australian Heritage Database](#)
  - \* [Australian Heritage Places Inventory](#)
  - \* [Australian National Shipwreck Database](#)
  - \* [GeoHeritage \(WA\)](#)
  - \* [Landgate](#)



## Heritage at ISPL

Our team works with specialist archeologists and heritage experts to coordinate heritage surveys across WA. We have experience supporting a range of services to support exploration and mining applications, and to develop procedures and plans to assist operations with managing the preservation of heritage sites. If you need assistance with heritage matters or connecting with your local community, please contact us via [enquires@integratesustainability.com.au](mailto:enquires@integratesustainability.com.au) or phone 9468 0338.

### Integrate Sustainability

Primary Business Address  
Lower Ground Floor  
3 Richardson St  
West Perth, 6005  
Western Australia

Phone: (+618) 9468 0338  
E-mail: [enquiries@integratesustainability.com.au](mailto:enquiries@integratesustainability.com.au)



■ environment ■ safety ■ community

## References

- Department of Planning Lands & Heritage. 2019. *Review of Aboriginal Heritage Fact Sheet*. DPLA.
- Department of Planning Lands & Heritage. 2019. *State register of heritage places development assessment framework*. DPLA.
- DPLA. 2020. <https://www.dplh.wa.gov.au/>. Accessed April 30, 2020.
- Heritage Perth. 2020. *About - Heritage Perth Education*. Accessed May 7, 2020. <https://learning.heritageperth.com.au/about/>.
- . 2020. *Heritage Perth*. Accessed May 7, 2020. <https://heritageperth.com.au/>.
- The Government of Western Australia. 2019. "Heritage Act 2018." *Western Australian Legislation*. July 01. Accessed May 08, 2020. [https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc\\_42072.pdf/\\$FILE/Heritage%20Act%202018%20-%20%5B00-b0-01%5D.pdf?OpenElement](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_42072.pdf/$FILE/Heritage%20Act%202018%20-%20%5B00-b0-01%5D.pdf?OpenElement).
- University of Toronto. 2020. *Why Heritage Preservation Is Way More Important Than You Thought*. Accessed May 7, 2020. <https://sites.utm.utoronto.ca/historyinternships/blog/10252015-2300/why-heritage-preservation-way-more-important-you-thought>.

