

Historic Places on Public Land

Committees of Management on the Coast

Series No 6

What are Historic Places?

For the purpose of this guideline, historic places are non-Aboriginal places that provide a tangible link to our history and help us to understand and appreciate our past. Generally the term 'historic places' refers to sites, areas, land, landscapes, buildings or other work, and groups of buildings or other works and may also include contents.

The 'heritage value' of an historic place may include aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present and future generations. These values may have been identified by individual nominations to heritage registers but increasingly through local government or regional heritage studies.

Historic places on public land are diverse and reflect many activities. Historic places may include mining and saw milling sites, maritime structures, public buildings, recreational features, gardens and cemeteries, and sites associated with events and/or people.

Historic places in Victoria may have statutory

protection at different, or multiple, levels of government.

- at the federal level, historic places may be included on the Register of the National Estate and protected under the *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975* (<http://www.ahc.gov.au>)
- at the state level, historic places may be included on the Victorian Heritage Register or the Victorian Heritage Inventory and protected under the *Heritage Act 1995* (<http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au>)
- at the local level historic places may be included on the heritage overlay of the local planning scheme and protected under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (refer to the relevant local government web sites)
- in addition, Historic Places can be protected by land reservation, under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act, National Parks Act 1975, and Forests Act 1958*
- Historic places may also be identified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). This identification does not provide any statutory protection under legislation, but it is an expression of community concern and value. (<http://www.natrust.com.au>)

Responsibilities of Committees of Management

Committees of Management have a custodial role in managing the public land assigned to them. For some Committees of Management this will include responsibilities for managing historic places, either individually or as part of a larger area of public land. Committees of Management must be aware of those responsibilities, respond accordingly with the statutory requirements and be prepared to provide documentation of their compliance.



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Committees of Management with responsibilities for historic places are requested to prepare conservation plans for those places, or groups of places, to ensure that their management activities address and respect the relevant heritage values and to ensure that all statutory requirements are met. These consortium plans can be prepared as part of broader management plans. Committees of Management are encouraged to seek professional assistance regarding conservation plans and their management activities. In particular Committees of Management are required to keep documentation of all actions, decisions, permits and consents for historic places on their assigned land.

Traditionally, '*restoration*' has been the response to conserving heritage values. While this response still has applications, increasingly, it is combined with '*adaptation*' to accommodate new uses and activities. A conservation plan will assist with identifying the components or elements with the greatest sensitivity and where changes are acceptable. 'Conservation-by-use' is an underlying principle of the *Victorian Heritage Strategy*, acknowledging that an active and sustainable use is part of conserving heritage values.

Assistance for Committees of Management

The Department of Sustainability and Environment can assist and advise Committees of Management with determining whether an historic place is listed or not, identifying statutory obligations, the preparation of conservation plans and advice generally about the opportunities and constraints associated with managing historic places.

Technical assistance may also be available through a network of local heritage advisers maintained by Heritage Victoria and most local government authorities.

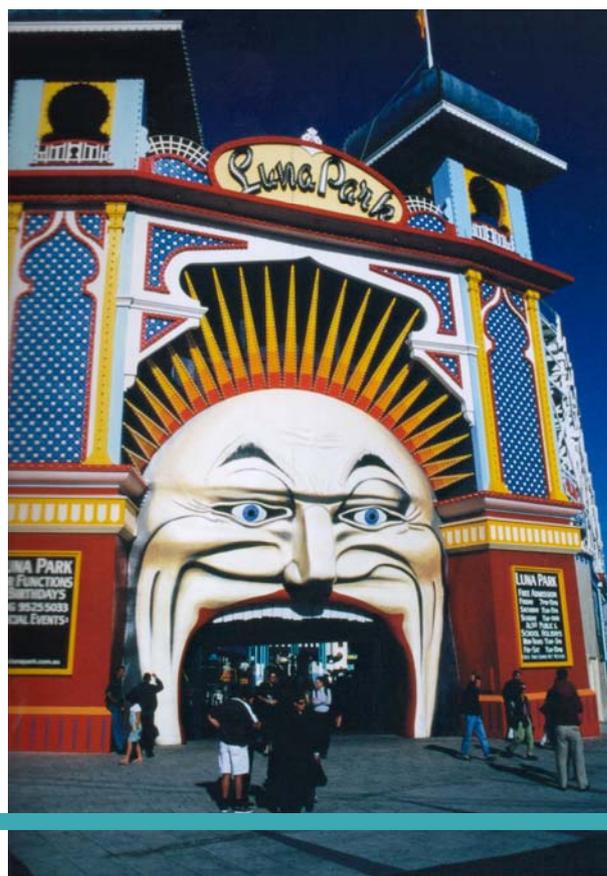
Funding assistance for specifically historic places may be available from Heritage Victoria, Parks Victoria, local government authorities and/or Environment Australia, (under the Cultural Heritage Projects Program). The availability and extent of this funding will vary.

Committees of Management are also encouraged to

investigate non-heritage funding programs offered by other State and Commonwealth Departments that could be applied towards accommodating new uses and activities in historic places. These may not be aimed specifically towards heritage conservation but could be used to finance improvements and infrastructure as part of an activity.

The Commonwealth Government has a useful web site called GrantsLINK where details on all Commonwealth funding opportunities is available. (<http://www.grantslink.gov.au/>)

For further assistance on Historic Places the Historic Places staff of the Department of Sustainability and Environment can help you. For more details contact the DSE Customer Service Centre on 136 186.



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