

26 August 2019

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**Re: Draft Greater Shepparton Heritage Strategy 2019**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for providing an opportunity to provide comment on the Draft Greater Shepparton Heritage Strategy 2019.

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) (National Trust) is the state's largest community-based heritage advocacy organisation actively working towards conserving and protecting our heritage for future generations to enjoy, representing 26,000 members across Victoria. The National Trust maintains a Heritage Register of Significant Places, including buildings, landscapes, gardens and trees. Within the City of Greater Shepparton there are currently 11 built heritage places and 9 trees included in the Register.

As Victoria's premier heritage and conservation organisation, the National Trust has an interest in ensuring that the wide range of natural, cultural, social and Indigenous heritage values of the municipality are protected and respected, contributing to strong, vibrant and prosperous communities.

The National Trust has been impressed by Council's recent work to increase its commitment to heritage across the municipality, particularly following the formation of the Greater Shepparton Heritage Advisory Committee, which has seen the establishment of the Biennial Cultural Heritage Awards, the Biennial Bruce Wilson Memorial Heritage Lecture, a heritage advisory service and most recently, two successful Heritage Open Days, featuring open houses and guided tours at heritage sites. The National Trust views these activities as complementing the strategic work currently being undertaken by Council to raise the profile of heritage throughout the region.

In taking this commitment a step further, we commend the City of Greater Shepparton for progressing the inaugural Heritage Strategy which focuses on 'ensuring that the City of Greater Shepparton has strong foundations in place to ensure the conservation and protection of its heritage places, enabling the community to access and connect to heritage, and participate in expanding our knowledge' (p8).

While we support the implementation of the Draft Heritage Strategy, this submission provides some comments for consideration as the document is finalised. We welcome further discussion and consultation with Council regarding our points outlined below.

## **1. 20<sup>th</sup> Century places and objects**

We note that Council has included a future direction within the strategy to conduct further research into Greater Shepparton's 'tangible and intangible heritage, particularly significant 20<sup>th</sup> century places' and to conduct 'on-going heritage studies and concomitant planning scheme amendments to implement heritage controls under the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme, particularly significant 20<sup>th</sup> century places' (p19).

We are pleased that Council has identified this period in particular as a gap priority in progressing further research and protection into the future, which is in line with the strategic work our organisation is currently undertaking as part of our 'Suburban Modern Campaign', focusing on the post-war period in particular (link:[www.nationaltrust.org.au/campaigns-vic/suburban-modern-campaign/](http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/campaigns-vic/suburban-modern-campaign/)). We encourage Council officers to monitor development impacts relating to significant places that fall within this period but are yet to receive statutory protection, and to undertake community education regarding the significance of 20<sup>th</sup> century places and objects.

## **2. Aboriginal Cultural Heritage**

We note that Greater Shepparton is home to 'one of the largest population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples outside metropolitan Melbourne, numbering an estimated 6,000 people' (p10). We are thus pleased to see a key opportunity identified in the strategy is to engage with the Aboriginal community 'for the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage assets' (p17).

We note that the identification of this opportunity has been directly reflected in an action to 'undertake a scoping study of 20<sup>th</sup> century Aboriginal cultural heritage, particularly building community relationships and reconciliation' (p25). As a first step, we suggest that the reference to '20<sup>th</sup> century' is removed to broaden the scope of this commitment to identifying, protecting and celebrating significant Aboriginal cultural heritage sites, and to include more explicit wording that this action will be undertaken in consultation and collaboration with the Aboriginal community.

As noted in the strategy, the Bangerang Cultural Centre collection recently underwent a heritage assessment (p18). We support the provision of additional funding and/or resources to the Centre, particularly to support the Traditional Owners that manage the site and to increase community engagement with the site and its collection. Such an initiative would work towards the realisation of the future direction identified in the strategy to provide and facilitate 'resources and services to local museums and historical societies for their work in researching and publishing local accounts, collecting objects and promoting heritage' (p20) and the future direction to allocate 'appropriate resources to ensure the identification and management of Aboriginal, natural or historical cultural assets' (p22).

Overall, we commend the leadership by Council in the identification of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage values in the Heritage Strategy for recognition, protection and celebration, reflecting the shared values present throughout the region.

### **3. Australian Heritage Festival**

We note the inclusion of an action within the strategy to ‘increase/capture opportunities to promote heritage related events and projects’ (p28). We would welcome the inclusion of an additional action within the strategy to become involved in the annual National Trust Australian Heritage Festival, Australia’s largest grassroots, community-led heritage festival. Held every year in April and May, the Festival brings together communities from all walks of life to recognise and celebrate heritage and culture through ceremony, song and dance, performance art, art in various media and artefacts, talks on books and stories, and guided tours of towns, places and spaces. In 2018, the Australian Heritage Festival provided Australians with a selection of 1,253 events celebrating cultural, natural and built heritage nationally, attracted 441,000 visitors to events across the nation and digitally engaged 80,958 people with stories about heritage and culture over four weeks. We would welcome the opportunity to showcase the heritage of the Shepparton region as part of this program.

To learn more about the Festival, we invite Council to contact our Australian Heritage Festival coordinator, Freya Keam, to discuss how the Council can become involved with the program, including as part of our ‘Friends of the Festival’ program, which has been taken up by multiple local councils across Victoria. Freya can be contacted on (03) 9656 9818 or at [freya.keam@nattrust.com.au](mailto:freya.keam@nattrust.com.au).

### **4. Implementation, monitoring and review**

We note that the majority of actions included within the strategy have been allocated to either the Heritage Advisory Committee or ‘Council’. In regard to ‘responsibility’, we recommend that the Strategy identifies which specific department/s within Council will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the strategy. In terms of resourcing, we also recommend that a department should be identified with the responsibility to advocate for yearly budget allocation to ensure that all actions can be appropriately funded.

While members of the Heritage Advisory Committee may be best placed to undertake specific projects in terms of the identification and celebration of the municipality’s cultural heritage, Council officers have the ability to implement this work in terms of strategic development, budget allocation and final implementation. Through our experience in consulting with local councils on Heritage Strategies, and through our involvement in local Heritage Advisory Committees, including the City of Yarra HAC, we have found that identifying specific champions within Council provides clearer accountability, and assists with getting “buy-in” across Council departments.

We further note that within the strategy there is a commitment to undertake an annual assessment that details how actions within the Strategy have been implemented, coinciding with the Heritage Advisory Committee’s Annual Report to Council. We support this intention and recommend that Council officers commit to ongoing and meaningful consultation with stakeholders and the community with regard to the actions documented in the plan.

## 5. Conclusion

The National Trust strongly supports the adoption of the Draft Greater Shepparton Heritage Strategy 2019, noting some suggested amendments put forward in our submission, and we commend Council for undertaking this work. We welcome future opportunities to provide comment and feedback on the various actions outlined in the strategy. For any enquiries regarding this submission, please get in touch with this office on 9656 9837 or with me directly at [caitlin.mitropoulos@nattrust.com.au](mailto:caitlin.mitropoulos@nattrust.com.au).

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C Mitropoulos', is positioned below the text 'Kind Regards,'.

Caitlin Mitropoulos  
Heritage Advocacy Advisor  
National Trust of Australia (Victoria)