

21 June 2021

Jennifer Moles
Chair
Heritage Council of Victoria

E: heritage.council@delwp.vic.gov.au

RE: National Trust support for the Executive Director's recommendation to include Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement (PROV VHR H2409) in the Victorian Heritage Register

Dear Ms Moles,

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 approximately 30,000 members across Victoria.

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

The National Trust agrees that the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement warrants inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register as the first and most influential example of the Museum Village movement in Victoria, as well as the site's association with modernist architect Roy Grounds and artist Robert Ingpen.

We support the Executive Director's recommendation, including the proposed Statement of Cultural Heritage Significance, Extent of Registration, Permit Policy and Permit Exemptions. A discussion of the National Trust's response to the recommendation is provided below.

Proposed Statement of Cultural Heritage Significance

The National Trust supports the assessment undertaken by the Executive Director that the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement meets the thresholds for criteria A, D, and H at the state level.

The National Trust maintains a Heritage Register of Significant Places, including buildings, landscapes, gardens, trees, and public art. While Pioneer Settlement is not classified by the National Trust, we do maintain a file on Portable Iron House (B5252 File Only). We are therefore pleased that a comprehensive assessment has now been undertaken to consider the significance of the place as a whole.

Proposed Extent of Registration, Permit Policy and Permit Exemptions

The National Trust supports the proposed extent of registration, including the 12 movable objects identified as objects integral to the place.

We submit that the proposed extent and overview of significance will ensure that any proposed works take into consideration the cultural heritage significance of the place, both internally and externally.

We note that the Heritage Victoria did not have access to a complete inventory of all objects currently housed in Pioneer Settlement, and so was unable to properly assess the whole collection of movable objects held at the Settlement. We recommend that as part of the future management of the place, further assessment should be undertaken to identify significant objects that are considered integral to the place, and the registration amended if appropriate.

We support the proposed Permit Policy and the general conditions and specific permit exemptions as proposed by the Executive Director. We submit that the specific permit exemptions are appropriate provided that they are carried out in a manner which does not harm the cultural heritage significance of the place. We support the recommendation that a Conservation Management Plan is developed to manage the place in a manner which respects its cultural heritage significance.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment regarding the Executive Director's recommendation that the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement be added to the Victorian Heritage Register. The National Trust strongly supports the Executive Director's recommendations.

Please get in touch with this office on 9656 9818 should you have any questions regarding our submission.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Watson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Felicity Watson
Executive Manager—Advocacy
National Trust of Australia (Victoria)