

Why do we protect heritage?

When efforts are made to look after cultural heritage, it not only benefits future generations, but can improve our everyday lives too.



The benefits of heritage protection

Heritage helps shape our identity

By providing links to the past, heritage contributes to our understanding of individual and shared histories that make us who we are. Heritage also helps us understand and appreciate the different cultures, religions and experiences that shape our communities.

Heritage enriches our vibrant communities and quality of life

As elements of our urban and rural landscapes, heritage sites play an important role in placemaking – by integrating the old with the new, giving us a connection in the present to the ways of the past, and marking out what makes our environments special.

Heritage enhances streetscapes and provides us with spaces where our cultures and community values can be shared, celebrated, and shaped in the future.

When we feel a deeper connection to shared places, we have more of a collective investment in their protection and celebration.

Heritage adds to a place's uniqueness

The history, religions, experiences, and cultures of a community are recorded in its heritage, meaning every community's heritage is different. When heritage is protected and preserved it shows what is valued by the people of that community. So, cultural heritage emphasises what makes our towns, cities, and countries different.

Heritage helps us understand different cultures and histories

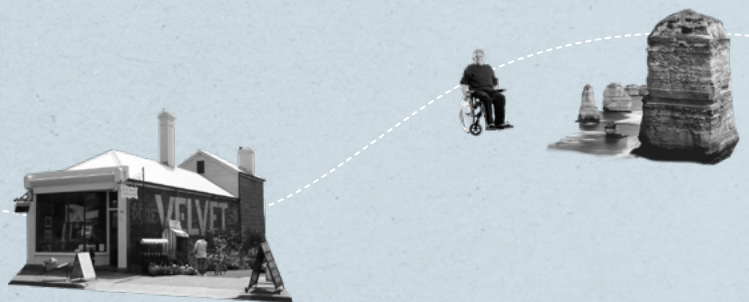
Communities are made up of many different people, and each person has different experiences, culture, values, beliefs, and traditions. The heritage we choose to protect reflects the diverse nature of our societies.

Heritage helps us learn why things are the way they are

Heritage tells a story of the past, explaining how things have changed and how we as a community have arrived at where we are today. Understanding our past helps us plan for our future.

Heritage presents opportunities for education and research. There are many different types of heritage in the world, and all of these can teach us something about our past, present, and future.

Heritage also provides opportunities to learn about histories which may be painful or uncomfortable to acknowledge. By finding an understanding of others, we can help build stronger and more inclusive communities.



Heritage is sustainable

Saving embodied carbon will become increasingly important as we decarbonise our grid, and the preservation of heritage buildings can directly contribute to this. It often takes less energy to adapt an existing structure, than to construct a new one. Adaptive reuse of heritage buildings reduces landfill waste, production of new materials and energy used in demolition and construction.

The conservation of heritage means places and spaces can be repurposed in a sustainable way. By creatively designing integration of the old with the new, a heritage building can be regenerated with new life and continue to be used by the community.

Although heritage listing may add constraints to development options, it does not mean that development is prohibited. Good design and cultural heritage awareness are key in managing change to heritage places. With expert advice and assistance, you can support the heritage values of a place whilst also creating a contemporary space for living and working. Small modifications to heritage buildings – including the addition of items such as solar panels – can also make a big difference to energy consumption and help make a heritage building environmentally sustainable.

Heritage can help support local economies

Heritage provides employment opportunities, with the need for professions in a variety of diverse areas such as architecture, construction, archaeology, conservation, engineering and more.

Heritage can attract visitors to your community, which will support local businesses and promote the distinctiveness of your region.

Heritage protection can also mean taking care of everyday spaces

Places where people interact regularly, such as schools, markets, libraries, and places of worship, may also be heritage sites. These places need to be respected, protected, and supported to keep them in good condition for use by the community. These heritage places and spaces are often the ones which play pivotal roles in local communities. Community efforts to protect places of local significance often also teach people about the importance of heritage protection more generally.



Heritage belongs to all of us. We need to protect it, because if we don't, it's lost forever.



For more information about Victorian heritage and how it is protected, see all the resources from the Heritage Information Pack, at heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/heritage-protection/heritage_info_pack/

