



LANDSCAPES OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE: ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

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Purpose & Scope

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the *Landscapes of Cultural Heritage Significance: Assessment Guidelines* ('Guidelines') is to improve the understanding, identification and assessment of the cultural values of landscapes in Victoria. It seeks to clarify the information that needs to be collected, analysed and considered in a systematic manner in relation to landscapes.

More specifically, this document:

- Clarifies key definitions and terms relating to cultural heritage landscapes;
- Describes a range of landscape categories that are assessable under the *Heritage Act 1995* and other statutory mechanisms; and
- Sets out a methodology for identifying, documenting and assessing landscapes of cultural heritage significance.

When applied to places nominated to the Victorian Heritage Register, these Guidelines supplement *"The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria & Threshold Guidelines: Assessing the Cultural Heritage Significance of Places and Objects for Possible State Heritage Listing,"* endorsed by the Heritage Council of Victoria in December 2012 (as updated from time to time).

Fitzroy Gardens, Melbourne



1.2 Users of these Guidelines

These guidelines have been designed to assist the following groups and individuals:

- Community organisations and other interest groups can use these Guidelines to document and assess landscapes that are important to them; and
- Heritage and other professionals can use them to identify, document and assess landscapes of cultural heritage significance.

1.3 How to Use these Guidelines

These Guidelines are divided into two sections;

1. *Purpose & Scope*: outlines the purpose of these Guidelines and describes landscapes of cultural heritage significance; and
2. *Assessment Guidelines*: describes how landscapes of cultural heritage significance may be identified, documented and assessed.

1.4 Scope

The cultural values of landscapes may be related to their aesthetic, archaeological, historical, scientific, social, or architectural values, any or all of which could co-exist in the one place. These values may be significant to communities at local, state, national or world (universal) levels.

The focus of these Guidelines is assessing places that may have significance at the local or state level. This may include 'designed' landscapes, such as gardens, parks and reserves which are increasingly represented in Australian heritage systems. It may also include landscapes which are more complex and do not readily fit into established Australian cultural heritage frameworks. These latter types are often described as 'organically evolved' and 'associative' landscapes.

An *organically evolved landscape* results from an initial social, economic, administrative, and/or religious imperative and has developed its present form by association with and in response to its natural environment. Such landscapes reflect that process of evolution in their form and component features. An *associative cultural landscape* has powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence, which may be insignificant or even absent.

It is important to distinguish the assessment of 'cultural heritage significance' from 'landscape character' assessment. Landscape character assessment is a descriptive process that records the present-day features of a landscape. Traditionally, it focuses on physical and visual qualities, as seen from key routes or viewpoints, and includes an assessment of sensitivity to change.

By contrast, an assessment of the 'cultural heritage significance' of a landscape focuses on the way people have interacted with the physical environment over time. This produces a particular combination of remnant natural features, and introduces living elements and structures.

Natural areas and Aboriginal landscapes may be covered by other Victorian legislation such as the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, the *National Parks Act 1975*, the *Flora & Fauna Guarantee Act 1998*, and other statutory mechanisms such as planning scheme provisions. These legislative provisions capture many aspects of the cultural heritage values of broad areas. As a result, places may be recognised and protected under more than one Act.

1.5 Existing Guidelines

Other guidelines exist for assessment of landscapes of cultural heritage significance. It should be noted that this document does not supersede them. Instead, it seeks to provide more detail on the identification, documentation and assessment of cultural heritage values in a broader range of landscape categories.

These Guidelines are based on current assessment practices developed by Heritage Victoria and the Heritage Council of Victoria and outlined in the *Criteria and Threshold Guidelines* (refer subsection 1.1). They are also based on practices undertaken by other relevant bodies in Australia and beyond, and respond to precedents wherever these are available and are relevant. These include:

- UNESCO and the definitions in the World Heritage Convention and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.
- The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance ("The Burra Charter").
- Guidelines and reference documents published by the Australian Heritage Council and its predecessor, the Australian Heritage Commission, e.g. *Guidelines for the Assessment of Places on the National Heritage List* (2009).
- National Trust of Australia policies on conservation of cultural landscapes.
- *Victoria's Framework of Historic Themes*, endorsed by the Heritage Council of Victoria in 2010 and
- Material from comparable countries internationally.

1.6 Commonly Used Cultural Heritage Terms

A common understanding is needed of the terminology of cultural landscape heritage significance, and the standards that should apply. Terms commonly used in relation to the assessment of cultural heritage values are outlined here. Where available, the meanings of terms are generally consistent with the definitions provided in the Burra Charter.

Associations: the special connections that exist between people and a place.

Condition: has to do with the place's state of repair, safety and structural soundness (condition is not usually a consideration in assessing values or significance, but may be important for heritage management).

Cultural landscape or landscape of cultural heritage significance: an expanse of land which can provide information about human occupation or use over time.

Fabric: means all the material of a place or object, including components, fixtures and features. It may also include living material such as trees and other plants.

Heritage values: the aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, cultural, historical, scientific or social significance of a place or object.

Historical themes: the important processes and activities in the development, culture and identity of particular areas.

Intactness: refers to the degree to which a place or object has been altered or has lost its significant fabric. With an archaeological site, it can also refer to the degree of physical disturbance or interference.

Intangible heritage: the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals, recognise as part of their cultural heritage.

Integrity: has to do with authenticity and the degree to which the original design or use can be discerned.

Meanings: denotes what a place signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses for certain cultures or people.

Natural landscape: an area where biophysical processes and landform features predominate over cultural elements. Note: few areas are totally pristine and all natural areas are in a dynamic state and to some extent involve contact with people.

Place: a geographically defined area with tangible and intangible dimensions. It may include (a) a building; (b) a garden; (c) a tree; (d) an archaeological site; (e) a precinct; (f) a site; (g) a landscape and (h) land associated with anything listed above in (a) to (h)'.

Precinct: a heritage area definable by physical boundaries and containing elements that relate to each other to form a single, recognisable entity. The key attributes of a precinct are its natural and human elements, their distribution and relationship to each other, and the history that links them. The grouping should represent a level of cultural heritage significance that is generally greater than the sum of the parts.

Related place: means a **place** that contributes to the cultural significance of another place.

Setting: the immediate and extended environment that is part of, or contributes to the significance and distinctive character of a place. May include views to, or from, a place.

Threshold: the measure, demonstrated through comparison, of the level of heritage significance required for attributing local, state, national or world heritage significance under a particular criteria.

Historic Urban Landscape

In 2011 UNESCO adopted a recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape. This recommendation offers a tool to "integrate policies and practices of conservation of the built environment into the wider goals of urban development in respect of the inherited values and traditions of different cultural contexts". It does so by understanding "the urban area" as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of *historic centre* or *ensemble* to include the broader urban context and its setting". The Historic Urban Landscape approach complements and extends the concepts outlined in these guidelines, particularly in the areas of partnerships for management, conservation and development.

1.7 Landscape Types

Three general landscape categories have been developed and applied by heritage organisations to assist in understanding different types of landscapes:

- Designed landscapes
- Organically evolved landscapes
- Associative landscapes

Describing landscapes by type assists with assessment of cultural heritage significance, and particularly with comparative analysis. Some landscapes may embody or express more than one type. The following tables describe some landscapes that may fall under each of the categories and gives examples, from the Victorian Heritage Register and elsewhere. It is not an exhaustive list of either landscape types or examples.

Great Ocean Road



Designed Landscapes

Designed landscapes include trees, avenues, parks, gardens, cemeteries, plazas and other landscapes and may be associated with significant buildings. They are often the work of a particular landscape designer, architect or planner. Most designed landscapes have a high degree of modification from the original natural landscape and landforms; vegetation and drainage systems may all have been changed.

Designed landscapes are the result of the implementation of a conscious design intent, and typically involve a planned layout and selection of plantings for colour and form. They may include contrived vistas, paving, water features, statuary and other built components, all seeking to achieve an intended aesthetic effect.

TABLE 1: DESIGNED LANDSCAPES

EXAMPLES

Botanic gardens and landscapes created for scientific purposes, such as arboreta, systematic gardens or experimental plots	Camperdown Botanic Gardens & Arboretum*, Burnley Gardens*, Buchan Caves Reserve*, Australian Garden (Cranbourne), Daylesford Botanic Gardens*
Public designed landscapes, such as parks, squares and major sporting facilities	Fitzroy Gardens*, Jolimont Square*, H.V. McKay Gardens* (Sunshine), Flemington Racecourse**
Residential and domestic designed landscapes, including country estates	Buda* (Castlemaine), Mawallok* (Beaufort), Bickleigh Vale* (Mooroolbark)
Institutional, commercial and industrial designed landscapes	Former Mayday Hills Hospital* (Beechworth), Fletcher Jones Factory & Gardens* (Warrnambool)
Commemorative landscapes such as cemeteries, avenues of honour, memorial trees	Avenue of Honour & Arch of Victory* (Ballarat), White Hills Cemetery* (Bendigo), Fawcner Memorial Park* (Fawcner)

* Included on the Victorian Heritage Register

** Included on the Victorian Heritage Register and on the National Heritage List

Flemington Racecourse



Organically Evolved Landscapes

Organically evolved landscapes express the interaction between land use and natural systems over time. Because these landscapes represent the accumulation of layers of change, without any overt comprehensive design intent (although some limited intent may be exercised, such as through planning controls), they are often referred to as 'vernacular' landscapes.

In some cases, the uses that shaped the landscape may be ongoing, and the landscape's character may be still evolving. In other cases, landscapes may exhibit relics of uses that are no longer practised, and natural systems may be regaining dominance over once-settled areas.

TABLE 2: ORGANICALLY EVOLVED LANDSCAPES

EXAMPLES

Rural community development and land use patterns	Mornington Peninsula, Yarra Valley
Land units with range of uses over time	Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park**
Productive/industrial landscapes such as goldfields, mining sites, forestry sites	Oriental Claims Hydraulic Sluicing Site* (Omeo), Spring Creek Sawmill Site* (Benalla)
Linear landscapes such as irrigation systems or transport routes, coach routes, train lines, water supply or sewerage pipelines	Coliban Water Supply System*, Ovoid Sewer Aqueduct over the Barwon River* (Geelong), Great Ocean Road**
Areas showing distinctive patterns of property subdivision or boundary marking	Dry stone walls, fence lines, windbreaks or hedges, e.g. the Stony Rises (Colac), locations in Melton City.

* Included on the Victorian Heritage Register

** Included on the Victorian Heritage Register and on the National Heritage List

Ovoid Sewer Aqueduct



Associative Landscapes

Associative landscapes are important to people because of special religious, artistic or social associations and connections. Associations may be with intangible aspects of the place, such as the spiritual values it holds for communities, its natural features, or activities that once occurred or continue to occur.

These landscapes may or may not exhibit discernible evidence of human influence on the environment but they often contain a dominant landform feature, such as a mountain, river or forest, or built form which is important to people in the locality or the wider community.

TABLE 3: ASSOCIATIVE LANDSCAPES

EXAMPLES

Sites associated with important historical events	Eureka Historic Precinct** (Ballarat), Stringybark Creek Site* (Archerton), Convincing Ground* (Allestree)
Sites of historical scientific value such as palaeontological, geological, or botanical sites	Thomas Smith's 'good bed' fossil quarry* (Werona)
Scenic locations and elements	The Pines Foreshore Reserve* (Shoreham), Refuge Cove* (Wilson's Promontory)
Sites or landscapes associated with significant people or cultural activities	Fontainbleau* (Mt Macedon), residence of artist Frederick McCubbin and the subject of several major paintings, Long Acres (Olinda) for its association with the works of Arthur Streeton.
Predominantly natural sites which over time have become associated with recreational use* and other social activities, such as picnic places, foreshore and camping areas	Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve*, Hanging Rock, Mt Arapiles

* Included on the Victorian Heritage Register

** Included on the Victorian Heritage Register and on the National Heritage List

Bells Beach



1.8 Values of Cultural Heritage Significance

Individuals and groups have different interpretations of the landscape. Aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, historical, scientific or social significance values will vary for different cultures, and for past, present or future generations. These values are described below.

Aesthetic significance encompasses all the sensory responses generated by a place or object.

Archaeological significance encompasses the ability of the place or object to demonstrate aspects of historical function, design and technology through remaining fabric (particularly where fabric is deteriorated, buried or concealed).

Architectural significance encompasses the ability of a place to demonstrate artistic and technological aspects of buildings or works, or for those aspects to be reflected in the design of the buildings or works.

Historical significance relates to the value of a place's association with important historical events and themes, eras, patterns of use and development or individual people. It incorporates the history of aesthetics, architecture, archaeology, science and society, so it overlaps (or underlies) the other categories of cultural heritage significance.

Scientific significance relates to the technical achievements associated with a place, or to its educational potential. It also encompasses places important in furthering the understanding of the natural and altered environment, and the embodiment of scientific information, in such disciplines as botany, zoology, geology, geomorphology, agriculture, mining, and engineering.

Social significance encompasses the collective sense of attachment to a place or object that is felt by a group of people.

2

Assessment Guidelines

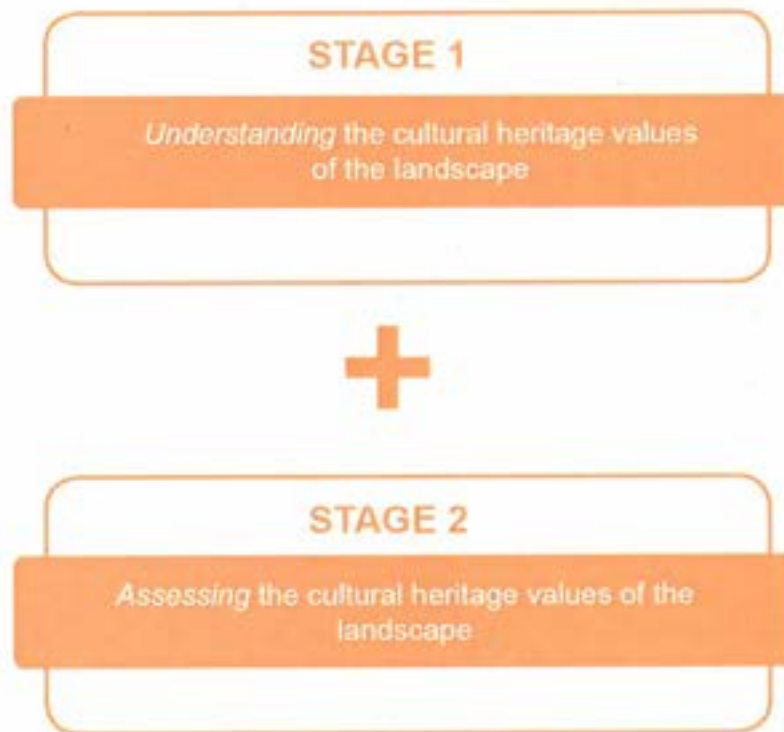
2.1 About the Assessment Guidelines

These Guidelines set out a logical sequence of investigation and evaluation, through two stages:

Stage 1: Understanding the Cultural Heritage Significance of the Landscape; and

Stage 2: Assessing the Cultural Heritage Significance of the Landscape.

The two stages provide the general framework that may be considered in the assessment of a cultural landscape.



2.2 Principles

The process described in these Guidelines is based on the following principles:

- A comprehensive understanding of the place is necessary, including the natural processes that have shaped the landscape, the history of human use of the area and interaction of people with the environment over time.
- Understanding the cultural heritage significance of landscapes requires more than an assessment of their scenic or visual quality. The full suite of cultural heritage values should be considered in identification and assessment, including aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, historical, scientific and social values.

Communities that value a place or a landscape should have input to the assessment process. A dialogue between professionals and interested communities is the best way to articulate what is valued, and to determine how widely these values are held.

2.3 Stage 1: Understanding the Cultural Heritage Values of the Landscape

The key task for Stage 1 is to understand the cultural heritage significance of the landscape. The various steps are listed in the checklist below.

STAGE 1

Understanding the cultural heritage values of the landscape

- Define objectives
- Identify the area of interest & key stakeholders
- Collate information & describe the physical characteristics of the area
- Identify the Major Phases of Human Interaction with the Area
- Correlate the physical evidence with the documentation
- Talk to the communities interested in the area

2.3.1 Define Objectives

Consider your needs and intentions. How will the material be used? Do you intend to nominate a place to the VHR? Do you intend to contribute to a strategic planning exercise?

DEFINING YOUR OBJECTIVES

Reasons for assessing a landscape for its cultural values may vary. Many councils will use assessments to inform their strategic planning and the framing of their planning schemes. Communities or community groups may wish to better document the values of a place under threat, in order that these can be considered in statutory processes. Others will wish to have the significance of a particular place recognised formally, for example through nomination to the Victorian Heritage Register. Each will have shared core elements, but may also have particular requirements which will need to be considered in each case.

2.3.2 Identify the Area of Interest & Key Stakeholders

At this stage, it is neither necessary nor desirable to define 'hard and fast' boundaries around a landscape of potential cultural heritage significance. Identify a study area, physically and conceptually, and broadly enough to cover the themes that are likely to be important, but not so big as to dilute the focus of the investigation.

Draw up a preliminary list of stakeholders. They may include:

- Aboriginal Traditional Owners, Registered Aboriginal Parties and other Aboriginal community groups;
- Landowners/lessees or land managers;
- Local historical societies or family history groups;
- Other residents, community groups and business people in the area or nearby towns;
- The relevant government agencies and authorities (may be local, state or Commonwealth);

- possibly other public authorities or private providers with infrastructure in the study area.

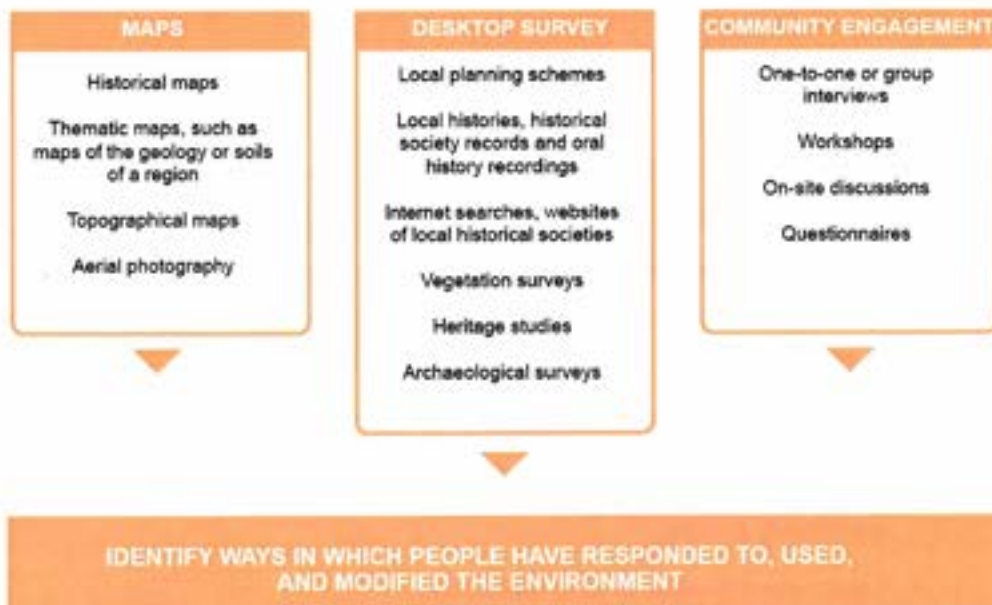
Note: Depending on the purpose of the landscape assessment, consideration should be given to whether a reference group drawn from key stakeholders might be valuable to provide advice, direction and feedback on outputs.

2.3.3 Collate Information & Describe the Physical Characteristics of the Area

Investigate and describe the climate, topography, hydrology, soils and vegetation of the study area, to provide a context for exploring the ways in which people have responded to, used and modified the environment.

This will help determine how historical influences have contributed to the layering and shaping of the landscape.

A number of sources of information are available when researching a landscape. These may include the following:



Maps

Thematic maps, such as maps of the hydrology, vegetation, geology or soils of a region, can contribute to understanding the origins of landscape features. Regional natural resource planning documents, such as regional catchment strategies (and their subsidiary plans), and national parks management plans, may also be relevant.

Links to maps (for example of vegetation types or waterway quality) and to other environmental material can be found on the following websites:

- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning website (www.delwp.vic.gov.au); and
- those of the catchment management authorities

Topographical maps (preferably at 1:25,000, where available) are good for broad areas. Larger scale maps or plans will be needed for designed landscapes such as urban parks or gardens.

Aerial photography – or modern equivalents such as Google Earth and NearMap – can also assist with understanding the physical components of a landscape. Historical maps and plans, and cadastral maps, such as those available in planning schemes, may be suitable for areas in and around townships.

Desktop Survey

Local planning schemes¹ may contain overlays that identify areas with particular natural values, for example, environmental significance, protected vegetation or significant landscapes. Heritage studies will usually contain a thematic environmental history that summarises the key themes relevant to the local government area, and include examples of the types of places associated with them.

Local histories, historical society records and oral history recordings may also be available. Books or articles dealing with specific phases in Victoria's history, such as the squatting era, or the development of particular industries, may also refer to places or events in your study area. Old maps, early parish plans, photographs, paintings or

¹ Planning schemes can be viewed as <http://www.planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/index.html>

sketches can give invaluable information about how the place looked and worked at particular times. They may also indicate the aspects that were valued by the people creating the pictorial record.

Information about the traditional use of the land by Aboriginal people may be available through oral histories, archaeological studies or an endorsed Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

Other options include Google searches, websites of local historical societies or other interest groups, and tourism sites. The National Library of Australia (www.nla.gov.au) has many relevant collections that are now available online through its Trove facility, including scanned newspapers and historic photographs (formerly Picture Australia).

Resource reports issued by the former Land Conservation Council of Victoria (and its successors the Environment Conservation Council and the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council) also provide a great deal of useful information about the natural environment.

Community Engagement

Community consultation can reveal additional source material, such as photographs or family diaries. Options for community engagement are discussed in *Talk to the Communities in the Area* (below).

2.3.4 Identify the Major Phases of Human Interaction with the Area

Explore how and why the landscape has been used and changed (or deliberately not changed) over time. Information collected on the history of the landscape should identify major phases of human interaction with the area.

This may range from Aboriginal occupation through establishment of pastoral or agricultural uses and/or resource exploitation (mining, timber milling) to building of townships and supporting infrastructure.

If the area has an existing thematic environmental history (e.g. prepared for a municipal heritage study) this will be a valuable starting point. Consultation and engagement with communities who know and have used the place – including for example through oral histories – will also be a useful source.

The physical features will often feed into the story of why certain things happened and where they happened, and how the landscape demonstrates this history today. However, various interactions or phases may not be immediately evident.

Guidance on how to identify historic themes important to an area can be obtained from the document *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes* published by the Heritage Council of Victoria.

APPLYING THE FRAMEWORK FOR HISTORICAL THEMES

Victoria's Framework of Historic Themes provides a means to understand the layers of history in a place: from the forces that shaped Victoria's environment through the interaction of Aboriginal people with the landscape, to various phases of using and developing the land and establishing the institutions and organisations that regulate our society and enrich community and cultural life.

The sub-themes, together with prompts and examples provided, help to identify the range of forces, both natural and human, which have impacted on different areas of Victoria and how they are embodied in particular places.

For example, Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve (H2032) is recognised as significant at a state level on the Victorian Heritage Register for its social and historical significance. The statement of significant identifies: consistently good waves recognised internationally; ongoing surfing competitions since 1961; and a largely natural setting providing very good viewing opportunities. It is an international icon of Australian surfing; hosts the longest running international surfing event; and its contribution to surfing technology and industry development in nearby Torquay.

These values of Bells Beach falls under the theme 'Shaping cultural and creative life' and the sub-theme of 'Participating in sport and recreation'. However, it also contains elements of the themes 'Shaping Victoria's environment', particularly in relation to the sub-theme 'Appreciating and protecting Victoria's natural wonders', and 'Building Victoria's industries and workforce' in its significance to the development of the surfing and surf wear industries.

2.3.5 Correlate the Physical Evidence with the Documentation

Link the existing physical features with the processes that have created them. Questions to ask about the landscape at this stage may include:

- What characteristics of the land, landforms and vegetation attracted people to the area in the first place?

- How has traditional Aboriginal usage and management influenced the landscape?
- What elements of the landscape remain relatively unchanged?
- What aspects of the original natural environment were not valued by settlers? How has this changed over time?
- How did successive groups of occupiers try to change their environment to better suit their needs and what physical evidence remains of the ways in which they went about this?
- Does the place embody any intangible cultural heritage? With what is this associated? Where is it understood, recorded, celebrated?
- Are there particular places in the landscape that have been the focus of social or artistic activity over a long period?
- Is there evidence that the landscape is continuing to evolve and change, either through natural or human-induced processes?
- Is it likely that the landscape includes historical fabric that is not easily seen (archaeological material)?

2.3.6 Talk to the Communities Interested in the Area

There will invariably be communities with an interest in any particular landscape. The information collected in previous stages can be used as a basis for conversations with key stakeholders to demonstrate what has been learned from the documentation and initial investigations and to seek responses.

Community engagement is particularly important in determining aspects of the landscape that are valued, and by whom. For example, Aboriginal people may value a place as part of their history and traditions and as a location that is significant to their living culture. Waterways are often valued by different groups for a variety of reasons e.g. recreation, irrigation/rural use (and therefore livelihood), Aboriginal history and continuing traditions.

Community engagement can be resource and time-intensive, so activities need to be tailored to the scale and nature of the project. Establish a purpose or 'objectives' for the community engagement exercise before proceeding. Numerous websites and associations can provide further advice regarding community engagement and public participation techniques.

Options for engagement include one-to-one or group interviews, workshops, on-site discussions, questionnaires and community photography exercises. Visual materials are

often very useful in community engagement. These may be historical or current, and may include photographs, prints, sketches or maps. Some stakeholders may be able to draw on a base map the areas or features that are central to their reasons for valuing the landscape. Others may need assistance in this task.

If the values are largely intangible, it may be difficult to define their location precisely. However, even with intangible values you might be able to identify features that are definitely 'in' and 'out' of the area under discussion.

ESTABLISHING BOUNDARIES OF SIGNIFICANCE

When establishing initial boundaries, you may find that key sites containing significant values are located conveniently within a cadastral boundary (land title or adjoining titles) or a defined area such as a National Park. However, it is more likely that boundaries will have to be drawn on some other basis, in order to ensure that all the important components are included and to minimise the extent of land that does not contribute to the significance of the place. Sometimes this can be done on the basis of landforms, such as ridgelines on both sides of a river valley, or a viewshed, but sometimes it may be an arbitrary line.

For example, the New Works Historic Complex at Lakes Entrance (H1532), the focus of the registered landscape is on encompassing all the significant elements that relate to the construction of the artificial entrance to the Gippsland Lakes, completed in 1888. These include jetties and piers, operational buildings including the 'rocket shed', workshop and boatshed, workers' cottages, remnants of rail tracks, machinery and other relics.

The place is located almost entirely on Crown land, including part of the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park and other Crown land reserved for public purposes. There are no appropriate cadastral or topographic boundaries that approximate the extent of the significant area. The solution in this case was to define an extent of registration that stretches from a line set 1000 metres west of the west side of the Entrance to another line 1000 metres east of the eastern side.

2.4 Stage 2: Assessing the Cultural Heritage Values of the Landscape

The key task for Stage 2 is to develop a clear statement of how and why the landscape is valued. The various steps are listed in the checklist below.

STAGE 2

Assessing the cultural heritage values of the landscape

- Define what is important and to whom
- Refine area & documentation
- Identify type & level of significance
- Prepare Statement of Significance
- Identify appropriate recognition/protection mechanisms

2.4.1 Define What is Important and to Whom

It is important to recognise that values held by some groups may be different from, or even opposed to, those of others who are involved with and interested in the same area. Consider each cultural heritage value in turn and determine whether there are locations within the study area that have particular aesthetic, social, historical, scientific or spiritual values to a group or groups of interested people. Use a map to show their location and extent.

The output of this stage should be a statement of values, setting out:

- The cultural heritage values represented in the landscape;
- Who holds these values; and
- How important they are to the groups involved.

This step may be relatively straightforward when dealing with a designed landscape, such as a garden or a park, but much more complex when, for example, the area in question is a vernacular landscape encompassing productive farmland, where uses are still evolving in response to technological improvements or economic pressures.

DEFINING TO WHOM A LANDSCAPE IS IMPORTANT

Some landscapes contain a range of components that may have different heritage values and be important to specific groups in the community for differing, possibly conflicting, reasons. Other places, while also representing a number of heritage criteria, may be valued in much the same way by a whole community.

Regional botanic gardens on the Victorian Heritage Register, such as those in Camperdown, Ballarat and Bendigo or Queen Victoria Park in Beechworth are recognised for their historical, aesthetic and scientific (botanical) values. They are commonly very highly regarded by the residents of the towns and cities in which they are located and by Victorians as a whole.

In contrast, some other landscapes, including the former Mayday Hills Hospital at Beechworth (VHR H1189), represent a much more complex and contested heritage story. Mayday Hills, including associated gardens and farmland is architecturally, historically, socially and aesthetically important to the State of Victoria, in large part because of its physical manifestation of changing approaches to dealing with mental illness in Victoria, from institutional confinement to treatment and rehabilitation. The significance of Mayday Hills would legitimately be seen quite differently by people who worked at the hospital (sometimes several generations of the same family) and those who were sent there as patients. Some may have very positive associations with the place and others may experience memories of misery or shame.

2.4.2 Refine Area & Documentation

Don't break up the landscape arbitrarily. Define a boundary that includes all of the elements of significance, in a meaningful and legible way. Depending on scale, the extent of the landscape assessed for cultural heritage significance could be determined by cadastral boundaries such as a Crown allotment, or on the basis of a topographic unit (for example, a river valley), or on the basis of historical information such as the land held as part of a rural property at a particularly important time in its history.

Things to consider during this step may include:

- How the landscape is experienced and understood, e.g. views and vistas that form part of the experience of the landscape; internal views within the boundaries of the place, and external views beyond the boundaries should be considered.
- The landscape context or surroundings of a building or other structure, as this may form part of its significance.
- Where the values of the place derive from or include particular species or assemblages of vegetation, either natural or introduced, these should be clearly identified.
- What happens below ground, for example, mining and archaeological sites.
- Spatial relationships between important components of the landscape, including spaces between built elements, and the location of all potentially significant fabric.
- Circulation systems and movement routes within the landscape.

2.4.3 Identify Type & Level of Significance

Undertake comparative analysis, comparing the landscape with other places that possess similar features or values.

Where similar places have already been recognised as worthy of listing in local planning schemes, on the Victorian Heritage Register, or on the National Heritage List, comparisons should enable conclusions to be drawn as to whether the place being assessed is of equal or greater significance.

The Heritage Council's *Criteria and Thresholds Guidelines* (refer subsection 1.1) describe the range of places and objects that may qualify as being of state significance under each heritage criterion, and provide examples from the Victorian Heritage Register.

Detailed criteria have been developed to assess the cultural heritage significance of places proposed for listing on the Victorian Heritage Register. The criteria can also be

used (with appropriate adjustments to the threshold level to be met) for most decisions relating to the identification and management of places under the Heritage Overlay in local planning schemes.

The following assessment criteria were adopted by the Heritage Council of Victoria on 7 August 2008.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Criterion A | Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history. |
| Criterion B | Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history. |
| Criterion C | Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history. |
| Criterion D | Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or objects. |
| Criterion E | Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics. |
| Criterion F | Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period. |
| Criterion G | Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions. |
| Criterion H | Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history. |

The levels of significance currently recognised in Victoria are:

- Local;
- State;
- National; and,
- Universal (World Heritage)

Areas of **local** significance are those that are perceived to be important to a specific municipality or a distinct district or suburb within a municipality.

Areas of **state** significance are those that either represent a notable example of the relevant cultural heritage values at a state level, or are associated with a period or event or a group or person that was important to the development of the state as a whole.

2.4.4 Prepare a Statement of Significance

A Statement of Significance must be prepared that describes how and why the landscape is of cultural heritage significance and at what level. A Statement of Significance is required when drafting a Heritage Overlay, a Significant Landscape Overlay (another control available for use in local planning schemes) or nominating a place to be included in the Victorian Heritage Register.

This should include a description that clearly establishes the importance of the place and addresses the heritage criteria.

More detailed information on what to include in a Statement of Significance may be found in the Planning Practice Note, *Applying the Heritage Overlay* (2012), or in the guidance section of the "Application to nominate a place or object for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register" form available on Heritage Victoria's website: www.dtpli.vic.gov.au/heritage/heritage-registration-and-certificates/registration.

2.4.5 Identify Appropriate Recognition/Protection Mechanisms

Once the nature and level of significance is assessed and documented, a decision can be made about the appropriate protection mechanism(s).

The protection and management of landscapes of state or local cultural heritage significance may occur through local planning schemes, specifically planning scheme overlays including the Significant Landscape Overlay, Heritage Overlay, Environmental Significance Overlay and/or the Vegetation Protection Overlay (or a combination of these). Landscapes of particular state significance may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register.

Landscapes whose importance derives overwhelmingly from an association with traditional Aboriginal beliefs, values or uses may be best protected under the Aboriginal Heritage Act. Where the place is of ongoing importance in Aboriginal culture, or where there are values shared with later communities. Protection through other mechanisms may also be appropriate.

The level of supporting material needed for the consideration or nomination of cultural landscapes varies and depends on the mechanism that is proposed to be used to recognise its significance.

The process for changing a planning scheme is set down in the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. When utilising planning scheme overlays, the documentation required varies according to the schedule specified in the Victorian Planning Provisions. For example, a Significant Landscape Overlay requires a 'Statement of nature and key elements of landscape' and a list of the landscape character objectives to be achieved.

The Heritage Victoria / Heritage Council "Application to nominate a place or object for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register" form provides a simple explanation of the information required before a nomination can be processed. It can be downloaded from Heritage Victoria's website: www.dtpli.vic.gov.au/heritage/heritage-registration-and-certificates/registration.

IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE PROTECTION MECHANISMS

The most appropriate mechanism for protecting a landscape of cultural heritage significance will depend primarily on the level of significance attributed to the place. If it is assessed as of state significance, the preferred method of protection may be through the Victorian Heritage Register.

The Heritage Act poses some procedural and management challenges in registering extensive areas, particularly those in mixed tenures or a variety of ownerships. In some cases, this can be resolved by registering the 'core' parts of the landscape and applying planning scheme controls – a Significant Landscape Overlay or Heritage Overlay – to adjacent contributory areas.

This approach was adopted for the Tower Hill State Game Reserve (VHR H2114), which is of aesthetic, historic, scientific, social and architectural significance. The public land – covering the crater and its immediate surrounds – was placed on the Victorian Heritage Register and a Significant Landscape Overlay was applied to the private land around the rim of the crater and within significant viewlines to it.

Places of local significance are appropriately protected through the planning scheme, although several options exist for how to achieve this. For a designed landscape or an organically evolved landscape in which constructed fabric is important (for example, consistent built form in traditional materials, or a rural landscape containing extensive dry stone walls) a Heritage Overlay will provide the most appropriate form of protection. For areas that are predominantly natural but also have cultural heritage values – such as spiritual or cultural associations – a Significant Landscape Overlay may be appropriate. Where the focus is on heritage trees, a Vegetation Protection Overlay or Environmental Significance Overlay could be considered.

3

Reference Material

3.1 Legislation

Heritage Act 1995

Planning and Environment Act 1987

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

3.2 Other Sources

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