

Heritage information series

Recommendations for local council heritage management



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Office of Environment and Heritage on behalf of the Heritage Council of New South Wales
59–61 Goulburn Street
PO Box A290
Sydney South 1232

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Introduction

The focus of heritage management has changed considerably since the Heritage Act came into force in 1977. From 1977–85, the Heritage Council was the principal body involved in the statutory listing of heritage items. In 1985, a Ministerial direction issued to local councils by the then Planning Minister, Bob Carr, made local government primarily responsible for managing local heritage in New South Wales.

Following the adoption of amendments to the Heritage Act in 1999, heritage management in NSW is now a two-tiered system where:

- items of local heritage significance are listed and managed by local councils, and
- items of State heritage significance are listed on the State Heritage Register by the Minister for Heritage and managed by the Heritage Council.

The principal tools that guide local government management decisions are the heritage study and the local environmental plan.

A **heritage study** identifies and assesses heritage items in accordance with the key historical themes for an area. It also makes recommendations on policies the local council should adopt to protect and conserve the identified heritage items.

The **local environmental plan** (LEP) translates the recommendations of the heritage study into a legal document that provides a broad framework for future management of the area's heritage. The LEP is prepared in accordance with principles laid down in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, and the heritage items identified in the heritage study are listed in a schedule to the LEP. The Department of Planning's website contains the latest information on LEP requirements. Visit www.planning.nsw.gov.au and go to 'LEP practice notes and planning circulars' for updates on LEPs.

This guideline provides a framework for proactive local government heritage management. It includes recommendations that have been used successfully by a number of councils. Some of them will be appropriate to your area.

NSW Heritage Grants funding is available from the Office of Environment and Heritage to assist councils with implementing recommendations 2–8 (see table 1 on the next page). For further information and guidelines, visit www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/funding/locgovheritagemgt.htm.

Table 1: Summary of recommendations and outcomes

Recommendation 1	Establish a heritage committee to deal with heritage matters in your area
Outcome 1	Increased community participation, awareness and appreciation of heritage in the local area
Recommendation 2	Identify the heritage items in your area and list them in your local environmental plan*
Outcome 2	Increased knowledge and proactive management of heritage in your local area
Recommendation 3	Appoint a heritage and urban design advisor to assist the council, the community and owners of listed items*
Outcome 3	Increased community participation, and proactive heritage and urban design management, in your local area
Recommendation 4	Manage local heritage in a positive manner*
Outcome 4	Proactive heritage and urban design management in your local area
Recommendation 5	Introduce a local heritage incentives fund to provide small grants to encourage local heritage projects*
Outcome 5	Increased community participation and proactive conservation and management of heritage in your local area
Recommendation 6	Run a heritage main street program*
Outcome 6	Councils, owners and the community actively participate in attractive and well-managed heritage main streets
Recommendation 7	Present educational and promotional programs*
Outcome 7	Increased awareness and appreciation of heritage by the council, owners and the community in your local area
Recommendation 8	Set a good example to the community by properly managing places owned or operated by the council*
Outcome 8	A council proactively conserves and manages its heritage assets
Recommendation 9	Promote sustainable development as a tool for heritage conservation
Outcome 9	Proactive heritage and sustainable development in your local area

* Funding is available from the NSW Heritage Grants Program to assist councils with some of these recommended strategies.

Preparing and updating local government heritage strategies

This guideline should be used to inform the preparation and updating of the local government heritage strategy. The heritage strategy is generally prepared and updated every three years.

The heritage strategy, once completed, should be adopted by the council and, along with the council's heritage policy, should be the main non-statutory strategic document for local heritage management.

Heritage strategy annual reporting template

This guideline provides the basis for the heritage strategy annual reporting template, which is available on www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/funding/locgovheritagemgt.htm.

All councils with heritage advisors funded through the Office of Environment and Heritage's NSW Heritage Grants Program must report annually to the Office of Environment and Heritage, using this template, on progress made against their adopted heritage strategy over the last 12 months. The heritage strategy annual reporting template should be completed by the local heritage advisor with assistance from the council's heritage officer or planning officer.

The heritage strategy annual reporting template has outcomes with key performance indicators and qualitative reporting to assist the council in assessing and monitoring their performance and their adopted heritage strategy.

The Office of Environment and Heritage collates this quantitative and qualitative data to produce a statewide report on the performance of local government heritage management for that year. This report enables the Office of Environment and Heritage to identify where councils are performing well and where additional support or other initiatives may be needed.

Recommendations and outcomes

Recommendation 1: Establish a heritage committee to deal with heritage matters in your area

Outcome 1: Increased community participation, awareness and appreciation of heritage in the local area

Heritage committees

What is the role of a heritage committee?

The primary role of a heritage committee is to advise the council on ways in which local heritage items can be conserved and promoted. The committee's responsibility should preferably encompass Aboriginal, built, movable and natural heritage.

How should the committee be structured?

The committee should be constituted under Section 377 of the Local Government Act so it has the support of the council and its advice can feed directly into council decisions.

Who should be invited to join the committee?

The committee should be chaired by a councillor, and include representatives from the community and council staff. Community representatives will be members of the various ethnic communities in the area, and come from local organisations with a specific interest in heritage or townscapes, such as:

- a historical society
- the National Trust branch
- the Aboriginal Land Council
- the Tidy Towns group
- the main street committee
- the chamber of commerce.

Council staff may include representatives from the Environment Services Division and library. Try to make sure that the interests of the major geographical areas and towns in the local government area are represented. It is important to choose people who are 'doers' rather than 'talkers', even if this means a smaller committee.

What should the committee's objectives be?

The committee should have well-defined and achievable objectives, such as to:

- prepare and monitor a heritage policy
- advise the council on its management of heritage, including reviewing council or government policies which affect heritage places in the area
- promote and raise community awareness of heritage conservation through publications, seminars, public displays and annual heritage awards

- make recommendations on the collection and recording of local heritage material and artefacts
- compile a register of local heritage suppliers and heritage consultants
- make recommendations on nominating and deleting items on the local environmental plan heritage schedule
- supervise funding submissions to other agencies, including requests for heritage grants from the Office of Environment and Heritage's NSW Heritage Grants Program
- comment on specific development applications before the council, when required.

It is essential to set down the rules of the committee in writing. The rules for the heritage committee could be based on those of other council committees.

Recommendation 2: Identify the heritage items in your area and list them in your local environmental plan

Outcome 2: Increased knowledge and proactive management of heritage in your local area

Heritage listing and studies

How does listing help heritage conservation?

Listing helps to conserve heritage by:

- legally protecting heritage items – proposals for change that may affect their heritage significance will need to be approved by the council
- providing certainty to owners and the community about the status of heritage items, encouraging their conservation
- enabling local environmental plans (LEPs) to contain clauses that allow a broad range of potential uses for heritage items and their floor space, and car parking concessions – these can financially benefit owners
- enabling owners of LEP-listed properties (including all properties in listed heritage conservation areas) to request a heritage-restricted valuation for land tax and local rate purposes – the Valuation Act was changed on 1 January 2001 to allow this to happen
- providing a basis for councils to provide incentives for owners, such as awards or small grants and loans (see recommendations 5 and 7 in table 1)
- being a pre-requisite for financial assistance from the NSW Government – national or state listing is already a requirement for assistance from the Australian Government
- providing basic information for promotional and heritage tourism projects, such as walking trails, site plaques and publications.

How does a council decide what to list?

A local council will undertake a heritage study to identify and assess heritage items in the area. This study will include specific recommendations on ways in which the council can list, manage and promote heritage conservation.

Keeping your list up to date – plan to review every 8 to 10 years

Every 8 to 10 years, council should look to review and update its heritage study and thematic history. This review may identify gaps and potential heritage items that have been previously looked or items that have gained in significance since the heritage study was completed.

What is a heritage study?

A heritage study investigates the historical context of a local government area and identifies and assesses items of heritage significance associated with this context. The study explains why the items are significant and recommends ways of managing and conserving them.

A heritage study supports:

- a community's sense of identity – its beginnings, its present and its potential
- the future management of heritage
- education programs which help make the community's heritage assets better known, understood and appreciated
- heritage tourism strategies
- a community's sense of ownership of its heritage assets.

A study results in a report comprising:

- a historical analysis of the area, community or organisation, usually by using historic themes
- investigative research and field work
- an analysis of significance and a survey of items and areas identified during the study, to assess their condition
- inventory sheets of significant items
- management and promotional recommendations.

How is a heritage study undertaken?

Studies are usually carried out by a team of consultants, working with a local committee. The process usually involves some level of community consultation.

What is a community-based heritage study?

A major premise of the community-based approach is that it provides an affordable means for, so communities can contribute to the heritage study.

Members of the community work with a heritage consultant for the duration of the project, undertaking research, nominating items and considering recommendations for the future management and promotion of their local heritage.

Unlike other heritage study methodologies, ongoing community involvement gives the community an opportunity to understand heritage management and council processes and to take substantial ownership of the study and its findings. Involvement can also reduce the likelihood of community conflict when the study's list of heritage items is recommended for adoption by the council for inclusion in its local environmental plan.

When is the heritage study reviewed?

Every eight to ten years, the council should review and update its heritage study and thematic history. This review may identify gaps and potential heritage items that have been previously overlooked or items that have gained in significance since the heritage study was completed.

What funding is available?

The Office of Environment and Heritage provides funding through the NSW Heritage Grants Program to assist councils to prepare community based heritage studies, Aboriginal heritage studies, heritage development control plan studies, archaeological management plans, heritage main street studies and reviews of existing studies. Projects are generally funded over two years.

For more information, go to www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/funding/index.htm.

More information

The Office of Environment and Heritage has prepared a range of guidelines and templates for councils – visit www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/funding/locgovheritagemgt.htm.

For information about funding opportunities and application forms, visit <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/funding/index.htm>.

Recommendation 3: Appoint a heritage and urban design advisor to assist the council, the community and owners of listed heritage items

Outcome 3: Increased community participation, and proactive heritage and urban design management, in your local area

Heritage advisors

What is the role of a heritage advisor?

The heritage advisor works with the council to develop and deliver a heritage policy and heritage strategy, and advises the council, the community and owners of heritage properties on good heritage and urban design management in a local government area

Heritage advisors provide regular and ongoing expertise to councils, communities and owners of heritage properties and assist in promoting urban design and heritage in the area.

Many successful and ongoing partnerships between local and state governments and communities have been developed through the employment of heritage advisors. Most local councils across NSW have access to a part-time heritage advisor or employ a full-time heritage officer.

How does a heritage advisor operate?

Heritage advisors are appointed by, and report, to local councils. They are mostly appointed on a part-time basis. In rural areas, most advisors visit on a one-day-a-month basis; in urban areas more frequent visits are common. At the start of a heritage advisor program and during times of heavy workload, extra time may be needed to ensure the program operates smoothly.

Although accessible to all council staff, the advisor will normally report to one senior officer e.g. the Director of Environmental Services.

A heritage advisor will initially work with council staff and management to develop a heritage policy and heritage strategy to establish:

- the areas that the council and the heritage advisor will address
- who will be involved
- community interests and expectations regarding heritage outcomes
- resources needed to implement the strategy.

Depending on the council and its needs, the heritage strategy may be very simple or more developed.

With an agreed strategic and operational framework established, the advisor will normally spend the morning with council staff such as planners, health and building inspectors and engineers, looking at current building and development applications which include heritage items.

The afternoon will normally be devoted to inspecting sites and providing advice directly to owners, usually on an appointment basis. The advisor may also be required to attend committee meetings, especially when heritage committees have been established.

A very important part of the advisor's role is to ensure that the council and the local community have adequate access to heritage-focused education, management and promotion. It is expected, for example, that the advisor will arrange for special training sessions for council staff and local professionals, local councillors and the community.

Advisors can be very helpful in assisting committees to set up community education programs. They can also liaise with the council and the Local Government & Shires Associations in setting up training programs for staff and councillors (see recommendation 7).

How does the heritage advisor make a difference?

The heritage advisor can educate councils, heritage owners and the community about heritage in a positive, thoughtful and knowledgeable way. They can offer solutions and positive leadership to help councils manage their heritage, by providing advice on and input into heritage strategies and policies and by providing site-specific detailed heritage advice on heritage development applications.

The advisor can liaise with owners about heritage and urban design issues before development proposals are initiated, at pre-development stage and before the project is finalised. These consultations can save money and help avoid potential conflict with the council.

The advisor can also advise on colour schemes for, and minor repairs to, heritage items.

If the council runs a local heritage fund (see recommendation 5), the advisor can assess the applications to help the council decide on funding priorities. The advisor can also suggest or promote projects which might not otherwise occur, e.g. preparing an application for main street program funding, heritage awards schemes or heritage interpretive plaques or brochures.

How can the council apply for funding assistance for a heritage advisor?

Councils can apply for funding under the NSW Heritage Grants Program – see www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/funding/index.htm , email heritage@heritage.nsw.gov.au or phone (02) 9873 8577.

More information

Visit www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/funding/locgovheritagemgt.htm and look under 'Heritage advisors', email heritage@heritage.nsw.gov.au or phone (02) 9873 8577.

Recommendation 4: Manage local heritage in a positive manner

Outcome 4: Proactive heritage and urban design management in your local area

Managing heritage

Development applications involving heritage items

When heritage items are listed in a local environmental plan (LEP), a development application may be required so works can be undertaken. This may mean additional charges for an owner. Where possible, these charges should be waived to encourage owners of listed properties to regard the listing as a positive rather than a negative factor.

Planning requirements for heritage sites

Heritage provisions in LEPs should enable councils to vary their requirements regarding heritage items for uses, floor space ratio and car parking. If these provisions have not been adopted, councils must use the standard heritage clauses in their LEPs.

The Department of Planning website contains the latest information on LEP requirements. Visit www.planning.nsw.gov.au and go to 'LEP practice notes and planning circulars'. Then search for the latest update on standard LEP instruments, PN11-001.

Building requirements for heritage buildings

Heritage buildings do not always meet modern building regulations, especially in regard to fire safety. Building Code of Australia requirements can impact too greatly on a building's heritage significance, particularly on a building that is valued for its architectural or aesthetic qualities. As long as public safety requirements can be met, reasonable discretion can be applied in meeting other requirements.

The Heritage Council's Fire, Access and Services Advisory Panel advises on ways of achieving adequate fire safety without damaging the character and architectural detail of heritage buildings. The panel's membership includes a representative from the Board of Fire Commissioners.

For more information on building requirements for heritage buildings, email the heritage grants advisor on heritage@heritage.nsw.gov.au or phone on (02) 9873 8577.

Reducing expenses

Heritage projects can be expensive, relying on the commitment and energy of the owner. A flexible approach by the council may enable a project to proceed. Sensible compromises

and waiving or reducing fees are positive ways in which councils can help to assist the continuing life of listed heritage assets. They can also result in a lower project cost.

Recommendation 5: Introduce a local heritage incentives fund to provide small grants to encourage local heritage projects

Outcome 5: Increased community participation and proactive conservation and management of heritage in your local area

Local heritage funds

What is the role of a local heritage fund?

A local heritage fund:

- helps councils and the community to deliver good heritage and urban design management in a local government area
- provides regular and ongoing funding for councils, communities and owners of heritage properties
- assists in promoting urban design and heritage issues
- helps successful and ongoing partnerships between local and state governments and communities to be developed.

How are local heritage funds established?

Section 356 of the *Local Government Act 1993* provides the legal basis for establishing local heritage funds. Councils can also apply for grants from the NSW Heritage Grants Program, administered by the Office of Environment and Heritage, to establish such funds.

Councils can then offer small grants to heritage owners and the community for heritage projects. As a priority, funding should be used to assist heritage owners and managers of listed items in local environmental plans before funding is used for non-listed heritage items.

Councils should promote and publicise their local grants program to heritage owners and managers. Many owners and managers say they are unaware of available funding opportunities.

What size of local heritage fund is recommended?

Generally, local heritage funds can be established and run with a small budget. The suggested minimum total budget for a local heritage fund is \$10,000. As councils can afford to contribute more funding, the local heritage funding budget can increase accordingly.

How can a council apply for a grant to establish a local heritage fund?

Funding is available through the NSW Heritage Grants Program.

For more information, visit www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/funding/locgovheritagemgt.htm, email heritage@heritage.nsw.gov.au or phone (02) 9873 8577.

How does a local heritage fund operate?

The operation of and decisions about the fund are made locally, according to local council processes. Where a heritage committee exists, it can make recommendations to the council on applications for funding. Otherwise, the heritage advisor or the designated heritage planner can make these recommendations.

What type of funding is offered through the local heritage fund?

Generally, project funding should be offered on a dollar for dollar basis. Using this formula, the project applicant will need to contribute a dollar for every dollar dispensed from the local heritage fund.

Councils may decide to waive the dollar for dollar requirements for seniors over 65, pensioners and self-funded retirees. Feedback on grants programs shows that older people own and manage heritage items, are interested in undertaking works, would like funding to assist them in undertaking the works, and cannot always afford to contribute their own matching funds.

For local council-owned projects, funding may still be approved, but in these circumstances, project funding should be offered on a \$1 from the fund for \$3 from the applicant basis.

Generally, the amount of project funding offered must be enough to encourage the applicant to undertake the project

Councils with an annual local heritage fund of \$16,000 will generally fund between 6–8 projects, each valued at \$4,000, with grant of around \$2,000 per project.

Cumulatively, across NSW in 2011–12, more than \$3 million was spent on local heritage fund projects. This sum included contributions from owners and more than \$600,000 in contributions from state and local government funds.

What types of projects are funded?

The Office of Environment and Heritage is flexible about ways in which a council decides to implement a local heritage fund. Funding can be used for a wide range of projects that will deliver good heritage and urban design outcomes that fit within the scope of these guidelines.

Projects funded through a local heritage fund may include, but not be limited to:

- conservation works and maintenance works projects
- adaptive reuse projects
- urban design projects that support heritage
- interpretation projects
- development of conservation management plans.

How have local funds been used in other local government areas?

The most striking use of local funds has been in concentrated areas such as main streets. Main streets in Adelong, Braidwood, Canowindra, Carcoar, Coolamon, Corowa, Lockhart, Rockley and Sofala have benefited from this approach with very little outlay of grant funding.

In the case of Lockhart, every one of the 30 buildings in the main street was conserved in three years following a \$5,000 dollar for dollar grant for a main street study in 1987. A \$15,000 NSW heritage grant was allocated by way of \$500 to each owner for work. The estimated total cost of the project was in excess of \$65,000, i.e. a multiplier effect of 4.33:1. The whole project was managed by Lockhart Shire Council.

More information

For more information, visit www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/funding/locgovheritagemgt.htm, email heritage@heritage.nsw.gov.au or phone (02) 9873 8577.

Recommendation 6: Run a heritage main street program

Outcome 6: Councils, owners and the community actively participate in attractive and well-managed heritage main streets

Heritage main street programs

Which government agency provides funding for main street work?

Information on funding assistance for regional communities is provided by the Department of Trade and Investment (visit www.business.nsw.gov.au/assistance-and-support/grants/regional-communities), which helps community and regional development organisations undertake planning activities and implement projects which have broad-based local support and the potential to generate economic benefits. However, funding for the heritage aspects of a main street remains with the Office of Environment and Heritage.

What is a heritage main street study?

Main street studies provide specific advice on heritage and design matters and assist private owners and councils to carry out appropriate conservation and enhancement work on main streets.

Who can apply for the funding for a heritage main street study?

The preference is for councils to lodge applications because they:

- have the resources to run a main street study
- approve or encourage appropriate changes to heritage buildings
- have a large stake in physically implementing the program as they own all the public spaces, including the roads, footpaths and street furniture
- have the ability to establish local heritage funds to encourage physical improvements to the main street (see recommendation 5).

What funding is required for a heritage main street study?

The amount of funding will depend on the size of the main street, the complexity of the work, the distance to be travelled by the consultant, other work that has already been carried out and the information the local council, the local historical society and other community groups and individuals can supply to the consultant. Studies can cost as little as \$10,000 or more than \$30,000.

Is government funding available for a heritage main street study?

The NSW Heritage Grants Program offers funding to undertake a study, backed up by funding to assist councils to implement the study's recommendations through the appointment of heritage advisors and the establishment of local heritage funds.

The main street must be clearly of heritage significance. The town centre may be listed as a heritage conservation area or may contain many heritage items.

How do councils apply for grants?

Guidelines for applying for funding from the NSW Heritage Grants Program can be found at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/funding/locgovheritagemgt.htm.

More information

The guideline *How to undertake a heritage main street study* is available on www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/funding/locgovheritagemgt.htm. Alternatively, email heritage@heritage.nsw.gov.au or phone (02) 9873 8500.

Recommendation 7: Present educational and promotional programs

Outcome 7: Increased awareness and appreciation of heritage by the council, owners and the community in your local area

Heritage promotion

Awards scheme

Many councils already run garden awards. Heritage awards are based on a similar idea. The usual practice is to have a panel of judges to adjudicate on the heritage projects carried out in an area in the last year. The awards presentation could be held during the National Trust of Australia (NSW) Heritage Festival, which is usually held in April or May each year.

The award could be a simple certificate, a plaque, a monetary gift or other gift. Conservation work categories must be included, but promotional projects, heritage tourism, interpretation projects, or historical projects or education activities could also be considered. Some councils also present awards for building or urban design projects that enhance the built environment.

Awards recognise people who look after heritage properties and have improved the heritage potential of the area, and encourage others to undertake heritage projects.

Heritage training courses

The Office of Environment and Heritage began a program of heritage short courses for local government staff and local professionals which is now managed by the Local Government & Shires Associations of NSW (LGSA) (visit <http://www.lgsa.org.au/events-training>). The LGSA offers short training heritage courses for local government staff and professionals. Training is offered in Sydney and rural centres and can be tailored to meet staff needs in the larger councils. For further information, contact Local Government Learning Solutions (visit www.lgsa.org.au/member-services/learning-solutions) or email learning@lgsa.org.au.

Some councils also run seminars for their local community targeted at suppliers, tradespeople and owners of heritage items. Successful seminars of this type have been held in Goulburn and Broken Hill.

Websites and printed brochures

Most people will look to the council's website for heritage information, and the website is an easy and accessible place for a council to provide a one-stop online source for heritage information and brochures that can be downloaded.

Provide links from your council's website to the following Office of Environment and Heritage web pages:

- heritage publications – www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/publications/index.htm
- the heritage consultant's directory – www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/HeritageConsultantsDirectory.aspx
- the services and suppliers directory – www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/HeritageConservationDirectory.aspx.

Encourage your consultants, heritage tradespeople and suppliers to list themselves on these directories so you have local people available and accessible.

Councils can also distribute printed information such as brochures through council offices, public libraries and other information outlets.

All website and printed brochures should be kept up-to-date.

Advertising and direct mailing can be expensive. Consider including a small brochure in the next mailout of the council rates notice. If your council circulates a full or summary annual report or letter from the mayor, include some coverage of recent heritage matters in your area in this document.

Heritage DVD

Professional production of a DVD may be too expensive, but a local group or enthusiast may be prepared to produce a low cost but effective DVD. The DVD can be used in schools and tourist information centres in your area, and in the council's foyer.

Ashfield City Council produced a video advising heritage owners of their responsibilities, and advising them on researching the history of their property.

Heritage walking trail

Marked walking trails through the town or local area are a popular way of encouraging interest in local history and local heritage tourism. These projects can make good use of employment program funding, both during the research stage and for the building of trails and signposts. The Department of Planning also has considerable expertise in this area and may be interested in fully or jointly funding trail markers and brochures.

See *Guidelines for heritage trails* (NSW Heritage Office, 1995) – visit www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/heritagebranch/heritage/infoheritagetrails.pdf for advice on carrying out heritage trail projects.

It is the council's responsibility to provide funding for local heritage trail projects.

Heritage plaques

Informative heritage plaques can attract interest in heritage items from owners, visitors and the general community. The design and placement of plaques are important considerations. If you use historical photos, make sure you clearly show how they relate to the contemporary scene. Digital plaques offered as phone apps are becoming popular ways of delivering information.

The placement of plaques provides a photo opportunity for the owner and local politicians – yet another occasion to promote the heritage through the media.

Guidelines for heritage trails provides some advice on plaques.

A local or regional heritage tourism strategy

The Office of Environment and Heritage encourages councils to prepare and adopt a local heritage tourism strategy that identifies and develops strategies for local and state heritage items in their local government area.

Councils may also choose to work with adjoining local government areas to prepare a regional cultural heritage tourism strategy.

Once the strategy has been adopted, the council tourism information office can use and implement it to work with heritage site owners and promote local heritage sites to tourists.

A local government heritage network

The Office of Environment and Heritage encourages councils to join or establish a local government heritage network in their region. Regional heritage networks have been successfully operating in some sections of NSW for many years now and provide a networking forum for local councils to discuss heritage issues and council management.

The Office of Environment and Heritage offers grants for funding regional heritage networks through the Local Government Heritage Management Program – visit www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/funding/locgovheritagemgt.htm. Regional networks should become self-funding over time.

More information on education and promotion is available on www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/funding/locgovheritagemgt.htm, or email heritage@heritage.nsw.gov.au or phone (02) 9873 8500.

Recommendation 8: Set a good example to the community by properly managing heritage places owned or operated by the council

Outcome 8: A council proactively conserves and manages its heritage assets

Managing assets

All councils own heritage assets, including:

- town halls, schools of arts, museums, showgrounds, museums, parks and gardens
- streets and roads dating back to the early development of the area that may have remnant vegetation, avenue planting, stone guttering, historic signs or street furniture

- archival records, e.g. rate books and minutes of meetings, which are valuable in their own right as archival material and provide a sound foundation for historical research.

Councils' conservation and management of these heritage assets ensures they are preserved and provides an appropriate setting for heritage items owned by other community members.

Good council heritage management provides a model for the community to follow. Good heritage management is achieved through:

- asset management planning – prepare a conservation management plan
- asset maintenance planning – prepare a heritage asset maintenance plan with indicative timeframes and costings
- securing resources to implement the plans through annual budget allocations and employing appropriate staff or contractors to undertake the works.

North Sydney Council has restored its own heritage buildings. It also has an excellent record in preserving its streets and public areas, providing an appropriate setting for the hundreds of heritage items in the council's area. It also has a best practice local history collection in its library.

Recommendation 9: Promote sustainable development as a tool for heritage management

Outcome 9: Proactive heritage and sustainable development in your local area

Heritage and sustainable development

Sustainability is about minimising environmental impacts. Heritage is about understanding current and future development trends. Heritage management is an ongoing and dynamic process, balancing conservation and human change.

Heritage and sustainable development are intimately linked. The outcomes of sustainable development are continually assisting heritage conservation internationally. Heritage sits perfectly within the philosophical context of sustainability – recycle, reuse and minimise environmental and socially negative impacts.

Sustainable effects are measured and reported on through their social, economic and environmental benefits or positive impacts on the community.

In implementing best practice heritage management in local government, councils should aim to demonstrate the social, economic and environmental benefits of heritage management to the community.

Education on sustainable heritage development

It is important that stakeholders understand the relationship between heritage and sustainable development and encourage changes in heritage practice that meet sustainability criteria.

Education on heritage and sustainable development is essential to train decision makers and professionals working in heritage and related fields. Educating heritage owners and managers and the broader community will lead to greater awareness of, support for and actions to value heritage and embrace sustainable development.

Implementing sustainable heritage development

Some examples of ways in which sustainable development and heritage can be implemented locally include:

- promoting and encouraging regeneration of urban towns, places and fabric
- encouraging and supporting compatible adaptive reuse, or infill or sympathetic additions to heritage places
- encouraging sustainable heritage tourism commercial ventures and council tourism information centres
- sensitively applying BASIX requirements for new design to a heritage precinct or conservation area
- incorporating energy efficient design solutions into heritage places for water, energy and waste.