

Australian Convict Sites Steering Committee

STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2020

OUR VISION

The Australian convict story is universally understood and valued.

OUR MISSION

To collaboratively conserve, protect, present and pass on to future generations the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property's Outstanding Universal Value.

OUR STORY

Over 165,000 men, women and children were transported from Great Britain to Australia as punishment for their crimes between 1788 and 1868. Together the Australian Convict Sites represent the experiences of these convicts and the shaping of modern Australia.



INTRODUCTION

Strategic objectives for the Australian Convict Sites were originally drafted in 2007 to guide the property through the World Heritage nomination process and to provide strategic direction for the property during its first years as a World Heritage property. A ten year review in 2017 found that the original objectives were no longer consistent with the operational realities of the serial property. As a result, new strategic objectives for the Australian Convict Sites were developed that focus on the core aims of the World Heritage Convention, specifically Article 5 of the 'Convention' which states that State Parties shall:

ensure that effective and active measures are taken for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage situated on its territory ... to adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community ... (and) to take the appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary for the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of this heritage.

Based on the core aims described above, the new Australian Convict Sites strategic objectives are:

To collaboratively manage the Property's Outstanding Universal Value

To conserve and protect the Property's Outstanding Universal Value for current and future generations

To present and interpret the Property's Outstanding Universal Value, emphasising each site's contribution to the whole

To give the Property a function in the life of the community.

These four objectives represent the core principles of effective heritage management and together represent the aim of the Convention; to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage sites for future generations.

The *ACS Strategic Plan 2017* identifies strategies to guide the Committee towards achieving the above objectives. The strategies listed in this document will guide Committee activity, and ensure that the work of the Committee effectively addresses the aims of the Australian Convict Sites' Mission Statement - ***To collaboratively conserve, protect, present and pass on to future generations the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property's Outstanding Universal Value.***

The 2017 review also identified the following Vision statement for the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property:

Vision - The Australian convict story is universally understood and valued

This *Strategic Plan 2017* will guide current and future work of the Committee with the aim of preserving the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property for future generations. The *Strategic Plan 2017* will be reviewed every three years and the associated *ACS Work Plan 2017* annually.

THE AUSTRALIAN CONVICT SITES WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

Criterion for Inscription

Criterion (iv)

Collectively, the Australian Convict Sites are an outstanding example of an architectural ensemble which illustrates a significant stage in human history, that of the forced migration of convicts. Through these buildings the Australian Convict Sites demonstrate the main features of the global systems of transportation and convictism.

Criterion (vi)

The Australian Convict Sites are of outstanding universal significance for their association with global developments in ideas and beliefs about punishment and reform of the criminal elements of humanity in the modern era.

Inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2010, the Australian Convict Sites collectively represent the global phenomenon of transportation and convictism, and its association with global developments in the punishment of crime in the modern era. The eleven sites are spread across Australia from Fremantle in Western Australia to Kingston and Arthur's Vale on Norfolk Island, a distance of 5,500 kilometres.

The sites which combine to form the serial listing are:

- Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area – Norfolk Island
- Old Government House and Domain – New South Wales
- Hyde Park Barracks – New South Wales
- Brickendon-Woolmers Estates – Tasmania
- Darlington Probation Station – Tasmania
- Old Great North Road – New South Wales
- Cascades Female Factory – Tasmania
- Port Arthur Historic Site – Tasmania
- Coal Mines Historic Site – Tasmania
- Cockatoo Island Convict Site – New South Wales
- Fremantle Prison – Western Australia

Each site represents key elements of the forced migration of convicts and the convict system which contributed to the settling and building of the colonies in Australia. Selected from more than 3000 convict sites around Australia, the eleven component sites are the pre-eminent examples of Australia's rich convict history.

The operating environment of the Australian Convict Sites includes heritage management, conservation of buildings and structures, tourism activities and visitor engagement. Each of the sites has differing levels of capacity. Some sites are relatively well resourced in terms of operating budgets and staffing levels, while other sites are comparatively under resourced and staffed. Most of the sites are owned by Government apart from Brickendon and Woolmers which are privately owned. Although the sites are governed by different State legislative regimes, the sites are uniformly protected by the EPBC Act 1999 and managed according to the *Australian Convict Sites Strategic Management Framework 2017*.

AUSTRALIAN CONVICT SITES STEERING COMMITTEE

The Australian Convict Sites Steering Committee (ACSSC) was formed as a result of the successful nomination of the Australian Convict Sites to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2010. The Terms of Reference for the ACSSC state that the Committee is responsible for managing, protecting, conserving and presenting the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property.

Representation on the Australian Convict Sites Steering Committee is composed of site representatives from the eleven component sites, delegates from the State jurisdictions including New South Wales, Tasmania and Western Australia, as well as two Commonwealth delegates from the Department of Environment and Energy – Heritage Branch. Each representative or delegate actively contributes ‘towards achieving the strategic objectives of the ACS as identified in the *Strategic Management Framework (2017)*’.

The Australian Convict Sites Steering Committee is tasked with ensuring that a collective approach to managing the property’s Outstanding Universal Value is achieved. The *Australian Convict Sites Strategic Management Framework 2017* further states that ‘(t)he Australian Convict Sites Steering Committee (ACSSC) will investigate and consider a range of opportunities to conserve and present the Australian Convict Sites.’

While World Heritage listing does not impact individual site ownership or management structures, the *Australian Convict Sites Strategic Management Framework 2017* encourages site managers and owners to share information and expertise across the property, to collectively manage the property’s OUV, and to work collaboratively to benefit the Australian Convict Sites as a whole.

KEY OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Objective 1

Conserve and protect the Property's Outstanding Universal Value for current and future generations

Strategies

- Individual sites have current statutory Management Plans or equivalent
- Share expertise, advice and resources

Objective 2

Collaboratively manage the Property's Outstanding Universal Value

Strategies

- All sites and jurisdictions engage in the work of the Australian Convict Sites Steering Committee
- Develop governance documentation to guide the work of the ACSSC
- Contribute to UNESCO's periodic reporting program

Objective 3

Present and interpret the Property's Outstanding Universal Value, emphasising each site's contribution to the whole

Strategies

- Establish interpretive programs that connect the eleven sites
- Celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the ACS World Heritage listing in 2020

Objective 4

To give the Property a function in the life of the community

Strategies

- Foster community engagement with, and visitation across, the eleven sites
- Encourage broader interaction with other related sites
- Understand and promote the social and economic value of the Property

OUR PRIORITY ACTIONS

Within 12 Months

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK 2017 - Review and revise the 2008 *Strategic Management Framework*

MEETING AND MEMBERSHIP GUIDELINES 2017 - Develop *ACS Meeting and Membership Guidelines 2017*

ACS WORKPLAN 2017-2018 - Adopt and implement the *Australian Convict Sites Work Plan 2017-18*

JOINT WEBSITE - Develop and implement a joint web site

EXECUTIVE OFFICER FUNDING - Seek ongoing funding for the employment of an Executive Officer to support the work of the ACSSC

MANAGEMENT PLANS - Update the status list for management plans or equivalent in Govdex and review annually

HERITAGE PROFESSIONALS CONTACT LIST - Create and publish on Govdex a contact list of heritage professions employed at each site / jurisdiction

Within 3 Years

OUV MONITORING AND REPORTING - Develop and implement an annual monitoring and reporting process on the status of the Property's Outstanding Universal Value

ICOMOS GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2020 PARTICIPATION - Develop a project plan, including exhibitions and participation in the ICOMOS General Assembly 2020

INTERPRETATION STRATEGY - Develop and implement an Interpretation Strategy for the ACS (to be informed by the Linkages Strategy).

COMMUNICATION PLAN - Develop an *Australian Convict Sites Communication Plan*

EXPERTISE SHARING - Create regular opportunities for expertise sharing, including face-to-face meetings

COLLATE SITE INFORMATION - Collect and collate all relevant site-based information such as visitor numbers