

Yarra's draft Heritage Strategy 2019-2030

FRA welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the draft Heritage Strategy 2019-2030.

Our members, along with many residents in Yarra, stress the importance of heritage management and protection.

We have selected a number of priority actions in the draft strategy which we believe are fundamental for Yarra to demonstrate its commitment to heritage:

- The importance of the rewrite of the Yarra Planning Scheme
- The need to enhance the culture and focus within Council so that heritage is seen to, and will, be given greater emphasis at a senior level with appropriate resources

and have made suggestions in relation to priority areas.

Heritage policy in Yarra Planning Scheme

Priority action 8

Strengthen YCC's Heritage Policy and municipal planning statement in the Yarra Planning Scheme so that they demonstrate a stronger emphasis in protecting and enhancing the significant heritage character of Yarra's neighbourhoods, industrial areas and activity centres

We recognise that the YPS rewrite is a significant undertaking and that there have been some delays to release it for public exhibition. This delay is of concern because it is clear that the heritage provisions need to be strengthened urgently.

The rewrite should endeavour to include strategic planning objectives and provisions that will provide a strong foundation for heritage protection and avoid Council decisions being overturned by VCAT.

Establish and resource a Heritage Department

Priority action 13

Establish and resource a heritage department within YCC with a clear remit enshrined in policy and the strategy

FRA strongly supports this action. The decision to appoint Senior Advisor, City Heritage was a welcome one. However, the level of concern in the community about heritage protection and the significant area in Yarra covered by Heritage Overlays, necessitates a dedicated unit established on a par with the other units in the Planning and Place Making Directorate.

The strategy will not deliver successful outcomes without improved resourcing. It would appear that a significant number of the priority actions fall, either wholly or in part, to the responsibility of the Senior Advisor City Heritage in the CEO's office. The draft notes (p2), "*Timely implementation of the previous strategy has been challenging.*"

As well as resourcing, this highlights a number of concerns:

- The number of priority actions
- The timeframe in which they will be initiated and completed.

Despite disclaimers such as “...available funding may influence the detail, scale and timing of implemented actions”, it is not good governance to include priority actions that have little or no chance of success without adequate resourcing.

A dedicated unit would demonstrate Yarra’s commitment to heritage and FRA urges Council to initiate its establishment with an appropriate allocation in the next budget.

Undertake a review of heritage outcomes in developments and projects

Priority action 11

Undertake a review of the heritage outcomes of selected recent developments and projects with a view to understand if there are any gaps to improve performance of the Planning Scheme or a need for process improvement

FRA supports this priority action.

We submit that an addition to qualifiable targets for this priority action is required:

- An outline of the review process be prepared with urgency to demonstrate that reviews can be undertaken with impartiality and effectiveness.
- That the outline be presented to the Heritage Advisory Committee for their feedback.

If implemented with a sound process, this initiative would demonstrate good governance.

Precinct citation reviews

Priority action 2

Review and upgrade the precinct citations for Yarra’s activity centres and sites that are being rezoned to allow for employment and housing growth

This priority action is supported but FRA submits it could be improved by including provisions to include community consultation in reviews to ensure the capture of local knowledge.

World Heritage

Priority action 19

YCC actively participates in the World Heritage ~~Enviroms~~Area Management Steering Committee. The steering committee is responsible for implementing and reviewing the World Heritage Management Plan (WHMP)

We submit that two additional quantifiable targets be added to this priority action:

- Integrating WHMP into the YCC new planning scheme and including the heritage guidelines
- In anticipation of the WHMP review in 2020 by Heritage Victoria, Yarra undertake a review of Yarra’s strategic and statutory planning policies and decisions, to assess the effectiveness of WHEA SP in protecting the World Heritage values including Royal Exhibition Building views, and to make recommendations for changes.

This action cross references with priority actions 8 and 11

It is suggested that a new goal be included to take into account **National Heritage** and include a priority action to ensure the protection of national heritage places in Yarra such as the Abbotsford Convent.

Natural Heritage

Priority action 7

Prepare Yarra River interpretation project in collaboration with the community and Melbourne Water

The State government has a new Yarra River Protection -Wilip-gin Birrarung murron - Act (2017) which sets up a new statutory authority, the Birrarung Council, with a range of responsibilities.

Given the breadth of the Act, it is suggested reference should be made to the Act in both the natural and heritage priority areas, and note City of Yarra responsibilities under the Act.

Conclusion

FRA is pleased to note an improvement in this draft strategy with inclusion of quantifiable targets.

As stated above, we have identified actions relating to the YPS rewrite and establishment of a Heritage Department having fundamental importance. We commend the proposal to conduct a review of developments and projects to identify heritage outcomes/impacts. However, overall we are concerned about resourcing for these and other priority actions. We urge that these priorities be examined quickly to scope resourcing required and more detailed timelines established so that initial allocations can be included in the next budget round.

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FRA Secretary

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6 October 2019

ii We attach by way of example a community member's summary of issues relating to the St Vincent's Private Hospital development. In attaching this summary, FRA wants to demonstrate the importance of this priority action given the range of issues that can arise in a development from a community member's experience.