

**Melton City Council
Heritage Strategy
2017 - 2021**



175

Protected dry stone walls
in our municipality



112

Places & precincts
with a heritage overlay



5

Places improved with
funds from Heritage
Assistance Fund between
2011 - 2017



This strategy has been prepared by the City of Melton

Acknowledgements

The City of Melton would like to thank:

- Heritage Victoria
- Council staff and Councillors involved in consultation
- The Melton Heritage Advisory Committee
- The City of Melton community and stakeholders who responded to our survey

Disclaimer

This report is provided for information and it does not purport to be complete. While care has been taken to ensure the content in the report is accurate, we cannot guarantee that the report is without flaw of any kind, there may be errors and omissions or may not be wholly appropriate for your particular purposes. In addition, the publication is a snapshot in time based on historic information which is liable to change.

110

Heritage Week activities
run between 2008 -- 2017



CONTENT

Message from the Mayor 1

Message from the CEO..... 2

1. Introduction 4

2. What is a Heritage Strategy 5

3. How are we doing?..... 10

4. Challenges and Opportunities 12

5. Themes and Actions 14

6. Monitoring and Review 20

Acknowledgement of Country

Melton City Council acknowledges local Aboriginal Australians, recognising the people of the Kulin nation as the original custodians of the land now known as City of Melton. On behalf of the municipality, Council pays respect to their elders, past, present and future.

The land to the east of the Werribee River was the traditional home of the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung people, and to the west, the traditional home of the Wadawurrung.

Melton City Council embraces the rich cultural heritage that Aboriginal traditional knowledge and sites bring to the municipality.



Message from the Mayor



It is with great pleasure that I present the *City of Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021*; a document which recognises that the retention of our heritage is a high priority for Council and our community. Despite over a decade of sustained growth and development, our heritage remains top of mind. It helps shape our local identity, contributes to a strong sense of place and helps build local pride, something we want to maintain and nurture for generations to come.

This Strategy will provide a whole of Council document which will not only identify the framework for the implementation and monitoring of heritage features, sites and assets within our municipality, but also educate the community on what heritage is, why it's important and what it means for the City of Melton.

The City of Melton has a rich Aboriginal heritage which stretches back over 40,000 years, and more recently a heritage of European pastoralists who started settlements in the municipality in the 1830s and 1840s.

Melton was first incorporated as a District on 16 September 1862, and became a Shire on 24 May 1871. In the 1970'S, Melton township was declared a satellite city by the State Government and has undergone tremendous change from this time.

In September 2012, the Shire was granted City status in acknowledgement of the tremendous residential growth experienced in preceding years. This growth isn't expected to ease any time soon, and in fact, it is projected that the municipality's population will grow to over 400,000 in the next twenty years. This is why we believe celebrating and preserving our heritage is so vitally important to the development of our community.

Within this Strategy, Council has set a number of goals, objectives and actions that will assist us in knowing, protecting, supporting and promoting heritage across our community.

Consultation has been important in identifying what internal and external stakeholders, and the community, think about heritage within our City. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the residents and community groups who took the time to provide feedback and contribute to the development of this updated and robust Heritage Strategy for 2017-2021. Your input has been invaluable and we look forward to working together with you over the next four years, and more, to ensure our heritage is protected and celebrated.

Cr Sophie Ramsey, Mayor, City of Melton

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Message from the CEO



I am pleased to present the City of Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021. This document will provide guidance to Melton City Council to improve heritage outcomes, and demonstrate our long-term commitment towards identifying, assessing, documenting, protecting and promoting places of heritage.

The Strategy recognises that the City of Melton has been one of the fastest growing local government areas in Australia for over a decade. Amidst this change, the retention of our invaluable heritage is a high priority for Council, helping to preserve a sense of local identity as we move forward.

In preparing the *City of Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021*, we have reviewed the previous Strategy which was adopted by Council in 2013. We sought the views from across the organisation as well as the community. The result of which is a strategy that reflects the values and concerns of Council and its residents, and sets the direction for heritage goals, objectives and actions to be achieved over the next four years.

The next step is turning our attention towards implementing each action listed in the Strategy. Everyone has a role in protecting and preserving our heritage, thus it is important that we work alongside our stakeholders and all those who live, work and play in the City of Melton to achieve this.

Kelvin Tori, Chief Executive Officer, Melton City Council

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City of Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021 | 2



3 | City of Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021

1 . INTRODUCTION

The preservation of heritage provides communities with opportunities for engagement with, and understanding, of the past. These heritage assets create a sense of place and community focus in new urban environments. Heritage places provide opportunities for interesting design solutions and the creation of meaningful spaces for the community. The protection and promotion of the stories and heritage of the City of Melton is important to preserve connection and promote community pride in our municipality, and is a Council priority.

The City of Melton is the traditional home of the Kulin nation. The remnant grassland landscape, rivers, creek valleys and volcanic cones provide reminders of Indigenous stewardship and occupation of the land for more than 50,000 years. The names of places such as Djerriwarrh, Toolern and Kororoit are testament to the continuing relationship of Indigenous people with this area. Evidence of pre-contact Aboriginal occupation of the landscape is concentrated around watercourses and on the high rises above the plain, and is mainly demonstrated in artefact scatters.

The township of Melton was first settled by European pastoralists in the 1830s and 1840s, attracted to the extensive volcanic grasslands, its deep creeks and easy access to ports at Melbourne and Geelong. Most of the township and surrounding settlements were taken up by three large pastoral holdings, Exford, Greenhills and Rockbank. These properties left a legacy of elegant homesteads and outbuildings, dry stone walls, dams, historic road alignments, fords and bridges.

In the late nineteenth century smaller farmers moved into the area, as the large estates were broken up. These settlers created small dairy holdings, took up cropping and processed chaff, planted shelter belts, built wooden homesteads, and established small settlements, schools, churches and dry stone walls.

The dry stone wall landscape of the municipality is expressive of both the natural history of the volcanic creation of the area and the cultural history of its human modification. The dry stone wall landscape is of particular significance to the municipality which has undertaken to protect, educate and incorporate dry stone walls in existing and formerly rural areas.

In the 1970s Melton was identified as a Satellite City by the State Government. Between 1968 and 1978 the population of Melton quadrupled in size to 16,500 people. In the 21st Century, the City of Melton is again facing a period of enormous population growth and extensive urban development. As in the 1970s, preserving our heritage becomes more urgent as development progresses into previously rural areas.

Our Vision

That the City of Melton celebrates and protects its heritage, providing connection to the past and sense of place and identity for current and future communities.

2. WHAT IS A HERITAGE STRATEGY

Everyone has a role in protecting and preserving the heritage of a place be it through the sharing of stories, protecting of artefacts and objects or the care of buildings, structures and landscapes that reflect the past.

The *Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021* (the Strategy), addresses all aspects of post-contact heritage within the City with a focus on Council's role and obligations in respect of the protection and preservation of our City's post-contact heritage.

The Heritage Strategy is arranged thematically. The four themes relate to the ways and means that we understand, protect and know heritage. The four themes are based on those developed by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning in, *Municipal Heritage Strategies: A guide for Councils*.

The themes are:

- Knowing
- Protecting and Managing
- Supporting
- Communicating and Promoting

Each theme is underpinned by a goal, objectives and implementation actions





There are a number of key legislative and policy frameworks that apply to heritage at a national, state and local level that guides how we manage heritage in the City of Melton.

The relevant legislation and policies have been considered in the preparation of the Strategy:

NATIONAL

- Australia is a signatory to the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). In 1979 Australia ICOMOS adopted the Burra Charter to provide a practice standard for managing cultural heritage places in Australia.
- The Burra Charter (updated 2013) outlines best-practice guidelines and principles for heritage practice in Australia. Membership of ICOMOS, is recommended for all conservation practitioners and heritage advisors.
- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999.

STATE LEVEL

- Aboriginal Heritage Act, 2006.
- Planning and Environment Act, 1987.
- Heritage Act, 1995.
- Heritage Act, 2017 (will come into operation 1 November 2017).
- Plan Melbourne 2017-2050.

LOCAL LEVEL

- Melton Planning Scheme.
- Melton City Council and Wellbeing Plan, 2017-2021.
- Melton Heritage Study, 2007.
- Melton Dry Stone Walls Study, 2011.
- Western Plains North Green Wedge Management Plan, 2014.
- Significant Landscape Features Strategy, 2016.



7 | City of Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021





73%
of survey respondents thought
a lack of knowledge and
appreciation of heritage
was the biggest challenge to
heritage in the City of Melton

58%
of survey respondents thought
that recording local stories
would most improve heritage
outcomes

3. HOW ARE WE DOING?

A review and assessment of the *Melton Heritage Strategy 2013-2017*, current legislation and current strategies and plans was undertaken to inform the preparation of revised Strategy in addition to internal and external consultation. The information gathered through this review and consultation process is detailed in the *Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021: Background Report* with the key issues, challenges and opportunities summarised below.

The review of the previous Heritage Strategy assessed the effectiveness of its actions, and considered whether any of the actions should be rolled over into the new Heritage Strategy.

During the review of the previous heritage strategy, comments were sought from internal and external stakeholders on its content, and general views on heritage matters in the City of Melton.

Council prepared an online survey which was sent to Heritage Overlay owners and advertised during Heritage Week and at community events, and 58 responses were received to the survey. Council officers then conducted four workshops with internal stakeholders, the Melton Heritage Advisory Committee, and Councillors.

Through Consultation, responses were sought on the following matters:

- Attitudes to heritage;
- Understanding of heritage in the City of Melton;
- The formatting and content of the *Melton Heritage Strategy 2013-2017*;
- Understanding of what Council is doing in regards to heritage; and
- Opportunities for improvement in the way heritage is managed and promoted.

Most stakeholders agreed that Council should do more to increase education, knowledge and understanding of heritage places, heritage values and the reasons that heritage is important to us. The implementation of education, engagement and interpretation objectives is therefore the key focus in this strategy.

The review of the Melton Heritage Strategy 2013-2017 revealed that most of the actions had been commenced or completed.

Below is a list of key achievements during the life of the previous Heritage Strategy:

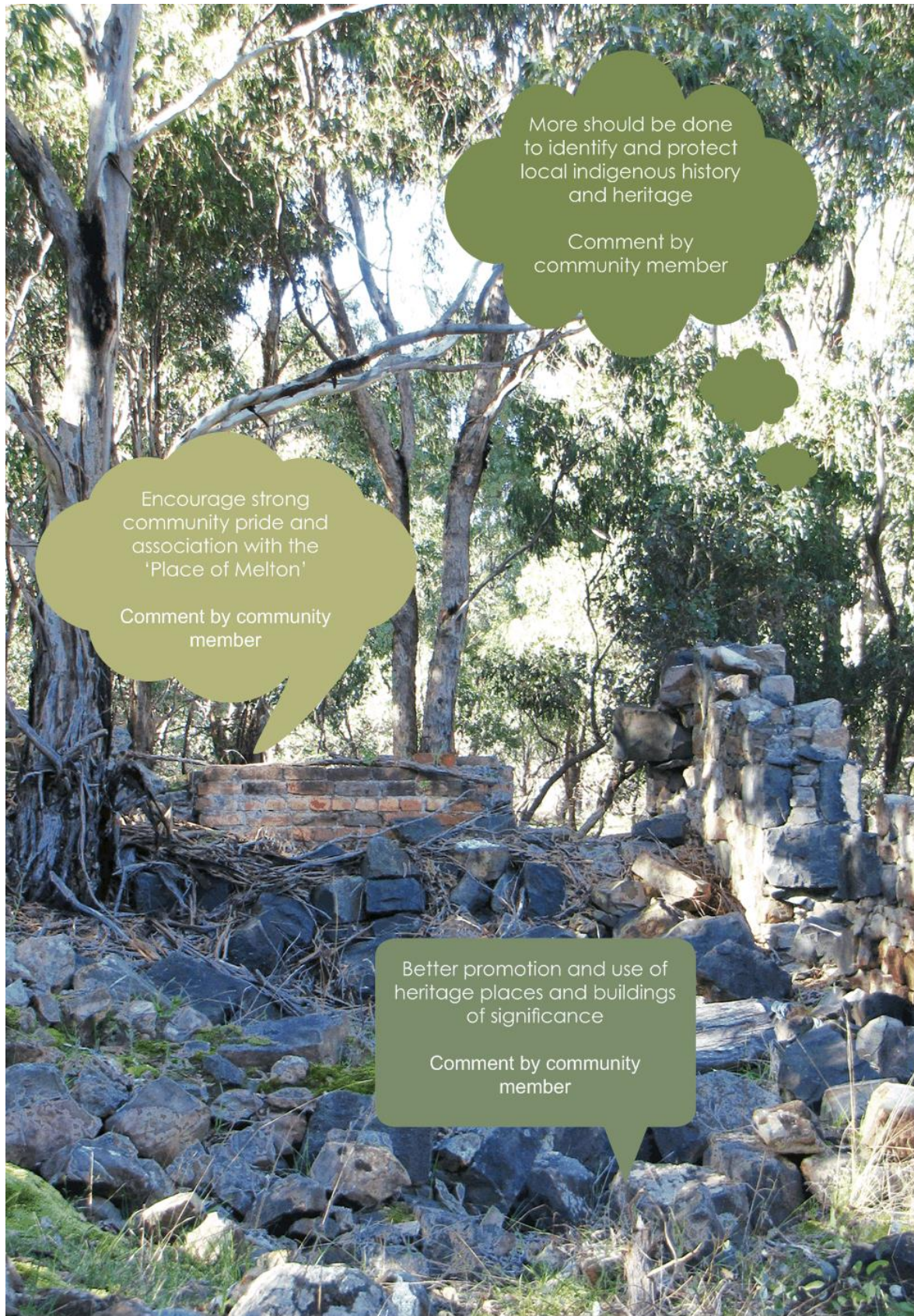
- In 2013 the community successfully undertook a campaign for the conservation and recognition of the architectural and social significance of Mowbray College in Kurunjang. With Council's help, the community then successfully nominated the buildings to be listed on the Victorian Heritage Register in 2014.
- The Melton and District Family History Group won an award for cultural heritage in the Keep Victoria Beautiful Awards in 2014, and then won the City of Melton Heritage Award in 2016 for 'Just Another Pair of Socks,' a website commemorating the lives of people from the City of Melton who served during World War One.
- Council has undertaken numerous asset renewal works including:
 - Conservation and adaptation works to the Melton Courthouse as part of the Melton Town Centre Project;
 - Repairs to verandahs, roofing and the conservation of interiors at The Willows, Melton Township; and
 - Repairs and adaptation of the dairy buildings at Morton Homestead in Taylors Hill.
- In 2015 and 2016 Council successfully undertook Amendment C100 to the Melton Planning Scheme which added 125 dry stone walls to the Heritage Overlay, and inserted a new local policy for dry stone walls. Subsequently, the Melton Dry Stone Wall Study and Amendment C100 project won the Best Planning Idea – Large Project at the 2016 Planning Institute of Australia Awards (Victoria). It then received a Commendation for the Best Planning Idea – Large Project at the 2017 Planning Institute of Australia Awards (National).
- Since 2013 Council has given \$14,560 to landowners to assist with the conservation of properties in the Heritage Overlay under the Heritage Assistance Fund.
- Council has conducted four successful dry stone walling workshops at Mount Cottrell that trained over 100 participants in traditional dry stone walling and repaired over 100 metres of Council walls.
- For the last four years the annual Heritage Week activities, which are run collaboratively by Council and community, have educated and entertained hundreds of people.



4. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Informed by the review of the *Melton Heritage Strategy 2013-2017*, relevant legislation and policy, and input from consultation, a number of challenges and opportunities have been identified which have informed the development of the *Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021*. These challenges and opportunities have been aligned with the relevant themes supported by objectives and have identified actions to implement them:

CHALLENGE	OPPORTUNITY
Lack of Councillor and staff awareness of heritage in the City of Melton, including statutory protection.	To improve Councillor and Council staff's awareness in regards to the understanding of heritage in the City of Melton, including statutory protection.
Lack of community understanding and importance of heritage within the City of Melton.	To enhance the community's understanding of heritage and increase awareness and appreciation of heritage with new and existing residents.
Lack of a formal process for the collection and management of artefacts and stories in the City of Melton.	To develop a structured process for the collection of significant artefacts and stories of the local area.
Lack of guidelines which demonstrate how heritage sites can be integrated into new urban areas.	To create guidelines that demonstrate how heritage places can be integrated into new urban areas.
There are gaps in existing heritage studies which results in sites and objects in the City of Melton not being provided adequate protection.	To conduct additional research to ensure all sites and objects of heritage significance in the City of Melton are identified and managed.
People in heritage and history groups in the City of Melton are ageing. There is a concern that these groups may not be viable into the future if no new members join.	To investigate recruiting new members to existing heritage/history groups in the City of Melton to ensure they remain viable and information isn't lost.
Information about the heritage and history of the City of Melton is hard to find online	To improve online information about the history and heritage of the City of Melton, to enhance a local sense of pride and recognition of our heritage
Lack of an understanding and appreciation of the City of Melton and its heritage places.	To enhance Melton's cultural tourism which would encourage celebration of local identity and attract visitors to the area and deepen the community's understanding of heritage within the City.
Many buildings of heritage significance in the City of Melton are deteriorating but very few people are applying for the Heritage Assistance Fund.	To explore promotion of Council's existing heritage initiatives and services to increase uptake of the Heritage Assistance Fund which would result in improvements to heritage buildings.



5. THEMES AND ACTIONS

THEME 1: KNOWING

Goal:

All heritage places, significant objects and collections, stories and traditions are documented, understood and appropriately interpreted.

Objectives:

- To improve understanding within the community of the breadth of the City's heritage.
- Celebrate significant heritage places which are important to the community.
- Improve interpretation of the City's heritage.

Actions:

- Review and update the environmental history of the *Melton Heritage Study (2007)* to be consistent with *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes 2009*, which now forms the basis of heritage studies being developed in Victoria.
- Investigate, identify and assess thematic gaps and underrepresented places in existing heritage studies and the heritage overlay schedule such as Indigenous, Post WW2 and Industrial places.
- Continue to document heritage places that are identified by the community as being of significance.
- Develop strategies to improve documentation and interpretation of the municipality's own heritage assets.
- Engage with local history groups, indigenous groups, and traditional owners and draw on their expertise when undertaking research on local heritage places, people and events.
- Develop better tools (online, printed and event based) to educate the community about our heritage places and stories.
- Work more closely with user groups of Council's heritage assets to improve understanding and interpretation of these significant places.
- Provide information at community facilities and other locations across the City to provide residents with an understanding of the heritage of the area they reside in.
- Provide more signage and information of heritage significant places within the Green Wedge area.

THEME 2: PROTECTING AND MANAGING

Goal:

Ensure that all heritage places are protected and properly managed.

Objectives:

- Improve planning scheme protection for heritage sites and places.
- Ensure the conservation and adaptation of heritage places in new urban areas.
- Encourage the conservation and restoration of heritage places.
- Continue to lead and demonstrate best-practice in the protection and management of dry stone walls.

Actions:

- Develop a new local heritage policy in the *Melton Planning Scheme* that provides clear guidance to property owners applying for a planning permit for a place listed in the Heritage Overlay.
- Adopt and use best practice heritage management principles when upgrading, adapting or maintaining Council heritage assets.
- Continue to develop a collaborative approach to management and maintenance of Council's heritage assets.
- Continue to implement recommendations from the *Melton Heritage Study 2007*, including:
 - Review schedules of heritage places identified for further investigation in the *Melton Heritage Study 2007*.
 - Undertake documentation and assessment of places listed in the Conservation Desirable Schedule in the *Melton Heritage Study 2007*.
- Continue to implement the recommendations from the *Melton Dry Stone Wall Study 2011*.
- Implement the recommendations, requirements and guidelines contained within Precinct Structure Plans as they relate to heritage.
- Continue to work across Council business units to achieve good design, repair, conservation and adaptation outcomes for heritage places, dry stone walls and landscapes.
- Continue to advocate for protection, adaptation and conservation of heritage places, dry stone walls and landscapes in growth areas with State government departments and agencies.
- Promote the advantages of retaining heritage places and features in newly developed areas and encourage their use.
- Ensure there is support for the Geographic Information System (GIS) team to continue to input data into the GIS system.

THEME 3: SUPPORTING

Goal:

That individuals, developers and organisations, including Council, that own or manage heritage places are able to care for and appreciate their heritage assets, understand the value of them, know their legal obligations and where to go to get advice, support and assistance.

Objectives:

- Provide information to heritage owners that improve their perception of heritage.
- Ensure owners of heritage assets are aware of their responsibilities as heritage custodians.
- Ensure that landowners are supported to preserve and enhance their heritage assets.
- Continue to support and educate Council business units to make good heritage decisions.
- Provide support and information to community groups who advocate for heritage.

Actions:

- Continue to advocate and advertise Council's Heritage Assistance Fund to landowners and community groups responsible for heritage places in the City of Melton.
- Continue to provide free heritage advice and financial incentives to property owners to assist them to conserve and manage their heritage properties.
- Ensure the ongoing development of Council's website and other tools as a means of disseminating information on heritage programs, activities and events to the community.
- Continue to support Council staff, Councillors and the Heritage Advisory Committee to make good heritage decisions with best practice advice and support.
- Provide annual educational and professional development opportunities tailored to Council staff/ business units wanting to develop their knowledge of heritage practice and principles.
- Identify mechanisms and initiatives to support land owners to allow the adaptive reuse of heritage places and features.
- Council will collaborate with the community to provide appropriate venues, promotion and support for local history groups.
- Facilitate and support local heritage groups in their endeavours.



City of Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021 | 16



17 | City of Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021

THEME 4: COMMUNICATING AND PROMOTING

Goal:

Our diverse heritage is respected and celebrated and our heritage places, objects and stories are known and appreciated by all residents, providing a strong and enduring sense of community identity.

Objectives:

- Support community organisations and individuals in recording and interpreting our local stories.
- Communicate the value of heritage to our community in diverse and meaningful ways.
- Promote the City of Melton's role in protecting, managing and conserving heritage.
- Continue to celebrate our heritage and the custodians who care for it.

Actions:

- Promote the City of Melton's heritage achievements through the Heritage Awards.
- Promote annual Heritage Week activities and other events, to encourage local pride and visitation.
- Continue to keep up to date information on heritage matters on Council's website.
- Assist the Melton Library with their Melton history publications including accessing local stories and information on local heritage places.
- Support the community desire for access to local venues to display local stories and historical collections.
- Develop guidelines for developers/owners and communities, to encourage interpretation and engagement with heritage places.
- Develop guidelines/factsheets that demonstrate how dry stone walls should be retained and incorporated into the design of new developments.



City of Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021 | 18



19 | City of Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021

6. MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is important to monitor the implementation of the objectives and actions of the strategy to ensure that the goals are being achieved. Key elements of the monitoring and review of the strategy are outlined below:

- The actions within the themes will be reviewed annually.
- Progress reports will be created every 12 months and presented to the Heritage Advisory Committee. These reports will then be attached to the Heritage Advisory Committee minutes which are reported to Council.
- The *Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021* will be reviewed in 2020-2021 and a new Heritage Strategy will be prepared.



City of Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021 | 20

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