

# SHARING OUR STORIES

## *Guidelines for Heritage Interpretation* (2007)

one  
story,  
many  
voices!

The National Trust of Australia (WA)  
&  
Museums Australia (WA)  
in partnership with Lottery West



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Published by The National Trust of Australia (WA) and Museums Australia (WA)

ISBN 1876507-43-8

Many people have given generous help and advice in the preparation of these guidelines. In particular I would like to thank:

Tom Perrigo, Sarah Murphy, Anne Brake, Joy Lefroy, National Trust of Australia (WA)  
Lorraine Fitzpatrick and Elizabeth Hof, Museums Australia (WA)  
Faye Overheu, Lotterywest  
Gil Field and Karen Shaddock, Department of Environment and Conservation  
Claire-Frances Craig and Greg Wallace, MAP Western Australian Museum  
Battye Library  
Christen Bell, History House Museum, City of Armadale  
Christobel Bennett, Subiaco Museum  
Paul Bridges  
Denise Cook, Claremont Museum  
Anne Delroy, Wendy Bradshaw and Stephen Anstey, Western Australian Museum  
Gail Dodd, Rottnest Island Authority  
Janey Dolan, Department of Indigenous Affairs  
Su Ferreira, Fire Safety Education Centre & Museum  
Melissa Harpley, Art Gallery of Western Australia  
Val Humphrey, *Revolutions*, Whiteman Park  
Andre Lipscombe, City of Fremantle  
Roz Lipscombe, Country Arts WA  
Brian Marshall and Trish Beaman, Mundaring Museum  
Museums Australia (WA) - Peel, Midwest and Wheat Belt Chapter members  
Sandy Murray, Fremantle Prison  
Leigh O'Brien, Museum of Childhood, Edith Cowan University  
Dawn Palm, Mt Flora Museum, City of Stirling  
Nicholas Reynolds, Mandurah Community Museum  
Philippa Rogers and Kate De Bruin, City of Wanneroo  
Glenys Russell, The Kodja Place; Kojonup  
Brian Shepherd  
Professor Paul Tacon, Griffith University

Each has contributed greatly to my learning about heritage issues in Western Australia during my brief visits. The analysis, recommendations and any errors that appear in this report are all my own work

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# 1

## Introduction

*Sharing our Stories* aims to provide guidelines for community groups, local councils, government agencies and funding bodies in:

- ◆ understanding the principles of heritage interpretation, and the role it plays in community development
- ◆ the processes of heritage interpretation
- ◆ the production of heritage policies, strategies and projects
- ◆ writing applications for grant funding to pay for the costs of skilled assistance and production.

If you manage a community museum or heritage site this booklet is for you. It will help you develop a clear vision and provides a series of steps to follow in undertaking a heritage plan or project whether you choose to employ expert help or volunteers undertake the work.

The guidelines are designed to

- ◆ develop in paid and volunteer workers a professional approach to the process
- ◆ empower volunteer steering groups to better select and brief suitable consultants
- ◆ assist volunteer interpreters in providing enhanced services for their audiences
- ◆ assist consultants in providing better services to their clients
- ◆ inform government officers about the principles and processes of heritage interpretation so that enhanced support can be offered to council and community initiatives.

It is recognised that different heritage organizations have diverse levels of competence and an attempt has been made to provide a holistic outline that will be useful on a number of levels.

It is important to address the different aspects of an interpretation plan or project in logical sequence. You cannot produce an interpretation project until you have developed your concept plan, prepared a design brief and drafted the text. This document provides a structure and a sequence for developing interpretation.

## 2

## Understanding heritage interpretation

### 2.1 What is heritage?

Heritage is defined as:

*... something inherited from the past and valued enough today to leave for future generations.*

National Trust of Australia (WA)

Heritage encompasses all the things we value:

**Natural heritage** includes all natural things, for example: Ningaloo and the Tingle forest within the Walpole wilderness area, wildlife communities, rare plants and animals.



#### **Ningaloo Marine Park**

*The Ningaloo Reef, stretching for 300 km from Exmouth Gulf to Red Bluff, is one of the rare places where it is possible to walk straight from a white sandy beach on to a coral reef teeming with more than 500 species of tropical fish and 220 species of coral. It is the closest coral reef in the world to a continental land mass and is protected as a marine park.*

*Image: Courtesy Tourism WA*

#### **Cultural heritage landscapes**

include any landscapes that have been modified by people, ranging from middens to whole towns, like York, the Round House in Fremantle, an early service station or any other structure. Built structures may be referred to as “built heritage”.



#### **Fremantle Round House**

*Built in 1830-1 as the colony's first gaol, Fremantle Round House is the oldest remaining building in Western Australia. It housed 8 cells and a gaoler's residence. When convicts were introduced into the colony in 1850, it was too small and the convicts built a larger gaol, Fremantle Prison, on the edge of the settlement. The Roundhouse continued in use as a police lock-up until 1900.*

*Image: Courtesy Tourism WA*



**Moveable heritage** includes all the objects we value from the past – paintings and photographs, an antique corkscrew, wedding clothes or working clothes.

#### **Bushells Tea Tin, c1930**

*Bushells sold tea in tins like this between 1930 and 1949. Originally opened in Brisbane in 1883, the company has been operating Australia wide since the 1920s and has become an Australian icon. The kangaroo depicted on the tin re-enforces the Australian character of Bushell's Tea.*

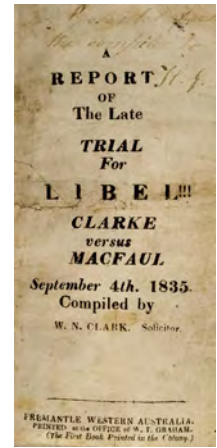
*Image: Courtesy Western Australian Museum*

**Documentary heritage** includes all forms of written text whether published or not. It can be anything from a letter to a diary or a rare book. It can include photographs and maps.

**The first book published in Western Australia**

This book, published in 1835, was printed at Fremantle by W. T. Graham using the Ruthven printing press which had been brought to the colony in 1831 from Hobart, Tasmania. It outlines a libel case relating to continued attacks on the character and competence of Captain Clark, master of the brig 'Skerne' by Charles Macfaull, editor of the 'Perth Gazette'. Clark declined to accept a letter of apology from Macfaull and won a libel case against him, including damages of £21.

Image: Courtesy Battye Library



**Shinju Matsuri Festival, Broome**

Broome has long been a multi-cultural community made up of Indigenous Australians, Anglo-Celtic settlers and the Japanese, Chinese and Malaysian divers who came to work on pearling boats. Traditionally, at the time of the August full moon, the Chinese celebrated the end of the pearling season with the festival of Hung Teng, the Japanese with the ceremony of O-bon and the Malaysians with the ceremony of Merdeka to honour the pearl divers and support crews who had lost their lives during the season. In 1969 these festivals were combined into Shinju Matsuri, a Japanese term meaning 'festival of the pearl'. This has grown into a ten day long cultural festival that draws people from all over the world.

Image: Courtesy Tourism WA

**Intangible heritage** includes all traditional and contemporary cultural expressions by all Australians, Indigenous or other communities alike, whether early settlers or recent arrivals. This includes expressions of our customs, values, ideas and language: oral and family histories, stories, performances, rituals and ceremonies.

Heritage is the embodiment of our memories - the vast collection of things, both tangible and intangible, that we choose to keep for the future as individuals, as a community and as a nation.

To do this, we need, first and foremost, to protect and conserve our significant heritage.

**2.2 What is significance?**

Significance means the importance and meaning we place on a landscape, site, building, object, collection or installation in the past, now and in the future.

Significance is not absolute. It's about value. Different people value different things at different times in their lives. Values can be personal, family, community, national and/or international.

Significance is assessed in terms of:

- ◆ historic
- ◆ aesthetic
- ◆ scientific
- ◆ social
- ◆ spiritual values.

Anyone can assess significance. Each of us has a heritage of things we find significant. Things of national or international significance are judged by experts to be significant to us all.

## 2.3 What is value?

Value is the amount of worth we place on something. Gold in the ground has no value until it is found, extracted and sold. The price someone is willing to pay determines its economic value.

We give value to things in terms of:

- ◆ **use** – whether we can find a useful function for them. Uses change over time because technologies change. No-one now uses scrubbing boards in the laundry because we have washing machines. Scrubbing boards are still, however, used by some musicians and many are used in museums, to explain how laundry was done in the past
- ◆ **exchange** - how much things are worth in terms of the amount of money we need to pay for them, or how much we can earn by selling them
- ◆ **rarity** - we often value things that are unique, rare and unusual
- ◆ **aesthetics** – although ideas of beauty differ for different people there are established ideas about beauty that are shared within different cultural groups
- ◆ **culture** – things that help us identify ourselves and our place in the world or things that enrich our lives have cultural value
- ◆ **symbolism/spirituality** – things that evoke or represent ideas and concepts of the spirit.

Some values are individual, for example: “I really love my torn T-shirt even though it’s got holes in it”. Others are shared, for example: people will pay a lot of money to buy a diamond because it is rare and beautiful.

Shared values are community values. Widely accepted values are usually determined by dominant groups in a society. However their ideas about cultural importance may not be shared by different minority groups and vice versa.

Heritage value lies in aesthetic, cultural, scientific, symbolic and spiritual significance rather than in use or exchange value. The continuing use of heritage places and objects does not affect their heritage value, provided that the qualities that make them significant are not compromised.



### Case Study Multiple layers of value

*Some things are valuable in more than one way. A house has a use value because people need it to live in. It also has an exchange value because it can be bought, sold or bequeathed. It may have aesthetic value because of its beauty. And it may have a symbolic value because people see it not just as a financial asset but as home and a source of well-being.*

*The house depicted, Woodbridge, was built at Guildford between 1833 and 1835, by Charles Harper, a successful local businessman and parliamentarian, as a home for his family.*

*It was a splendid Victorian mansion that also demonstrated his status as a successful man. In 1896 he started a school in the billiard room for his children and others living in Guildford. The school developed into Guildford Grammar. In 1968 the house was given to the National Trust and opened as a museum in 1970. We value it today as a historical document that can give us evidence about domestic life and social attitudes of the time.*

*Images: Courtesy National Trust of Australia (WA)*



## 2.4 What is interpretation?

*Interpretation is a means of communicating ideas and feelings which help people enrich their understanding and appreciation of their world, and their role in it.*  
(Interpretation Australia Association)

Heritage interpretation is about sharing memories and experiences. It respects the connections between people and place whether a place is natural landscape or one modified by use, for example: the development of farms and gardens or the construction of buildings. It involves partnerships between interpreters and a range of different stakeholders, including Indigenous and other communities, scientists, historians and artists.

Interpretation:

- ◆ is based on sound information, thematically organized, but it is much more than simple information
- ◆ is communication, a three way connection between interpreter, audience and the heritage resource
- ◆ builds on the experiences, knowledge and interests of expected audiences to engage their active participation
- ◆ is an interactive learning experience that invites audiences to share the excitement of thinking about the past, the present and the future
- ◆ celebrates the significance of heritage by promoting the exploration of knowledge and ideas and by encouraging reflection and debate
- ◆ is not absolute - there is no single right way to interpret anything. It depends on the different perspectives, different people, both interpreters and audiences, and approaches will change over time
- ◆ may, at times, be controversial. This should not be seen as a bad thing. Indeed controversy may be a way to engage audiences by provoking thought and debate.



*Contemporary Indigenous Art at Marra Gallery, Western Australian Museum, Geraldton*  
Image: Courtesy Tourism WA

# 3

## Why should we interpret our heritage?

Federal and state governments and agencies, local communities and councils, community organizations, tourist operators and visitors alike can benefit from heritage interpretation.

Good interpretation:

- ◆ attracts, engages and inspires visitors leading to repeat visitation and word-of-mouth advertising
- ◆ identifies what is unique and special about specific places and things by answering questions for example: "What is special about this place?" or "What is special about this particular object?" This is important when an object is something quite common-place, like a Sunshine harvester. What makes it interesting is the stories about people who used it or where and how it was used
- ◆ makes sense of places, structures and collections by linking them to people
- ◆ minimises environmental and cultural damage by explaining the impacts of various actions, thus encouraging visitors to care about the places they visit and to behave responsibly
- ◆ acts as a substitute for things we cannot experience directly (for example: what it was like to live in Kalgoorlie before piped water was supplied)
- ◆ helps to meet the increasing demand for educational visitor experiences
- ◆ provides a vehicle for developing understanding and enjoyment of objects and art works
- ◆ encourages social cohesion by giving communities a sense of place and belonging
- ◆ brings social, environmental and economic benefits.



**Members of the Wheat Belt Chapter of Museums Australia at an interpretation workshop, April 2006**

Volunteer workers are empowered through the development of skills in preparing interpretation projects and in communicating with visitors.  
Image: Courtesy Anne Brake



### **Interactive interpretation**

*Monkey Mia Visitor Centre, officially opened to the public in June 2001, provides a focal point for visitors to a magic place where dolphins and humans have interacted for many years. The Centre houses static and interactive displays that engage visitors and provide insight into the lives of bottlenose dolphins and the world around them. This includes the DolphinCam where people can view live images of dolphins on the foreshore*  
Courtesy Department of Conservation and Land Management

## 3.1 Social benefits

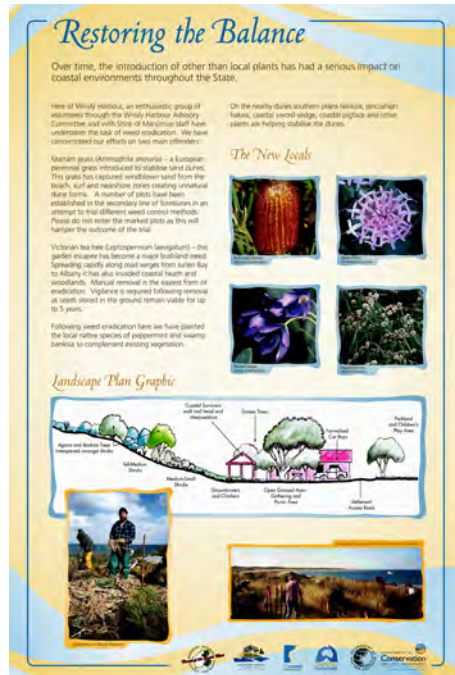
Heritage interpretation offers:

- ◆ enjoyable leisure time experiences and entertainment for all audiences whether they are local people or visitors
- ◆ life long learning opportunities for audiences and workers alike through diverse media
- ◆ empowerment for volunteer and paid workers through the development of skills in preparing interpretation projects and in communicating with visitors
- ◆ opportunities for participation in thinking about how a place or a community has been formed, what is unique about it, the significance of families in this process, and the ongoing role of ordinary people in communities over time. This can help to develop a sense of belonging and pride in place that is vitally important in a time of regional decline. It is a proven factor in urban and regional renewal
- ◆ the building of bridges between different marginalised groups in a community through shared involvement in working towards a common goal. This can result in the enhancement of mutual understanding and appreciation of the differences and commonalities we all share.

### 3.2 Environmental benefits

Natural heritage interpretation will increase appreciation of natural and cultural landscapes and broaden understanding of the environmental issues that are now affecting all our lives, for example: climate change, water management, salination and loss of biodiversity.

In doing so it can help protect ecosystems, biodiversity and natural resources by changing attitudes and promoting appropriate behaviour that will minimize impact.



#### Restoring the balance.

This is a graphic example of the environmental benefits that can be achieved through an understanding of the long term damage caused by plant species introduced to stabilise sand dunes. It demonstrates the work of Land Care volunteers in restoring the natural balance by eradicating introduced plants and planting species native to the area.

Image: Courtesy Department of Conservation and Land Management

### 3.3 Economic benefits

Heritage interpretation utilises environmental and cultural resources that offer economic benefits to Government, business and communities alike. Our natural and cultural heritage already attracts domestic and international tourists. Tourism is Australia's fastest growing industry and there are opportunities for a substantial increase in visitation, provided that authentic and area-specific experiences can be provided to an increasingly discerning visitor market.

Tourism offers great economic opportunities and a stimulus for urban and regional renewal, particularly important in regional communities that are declining with the increasing centralization of population and services in the 21st century. Visitors will come and stay longer in a place if attractions and features are available, well marketed and have added value through interpretation. Visitors demand a range of other services, particularly meals and accommodation. The expansion of hospitality and business outlets to meet this demand will create jobs and increase rateable income, enabling Councils to expand their range of services.

#### WA Tourism Facts

Tourism put \$4.2 billion into the economy in 2005

Tourism provides jobs for between 73,000 and 80,000 people a year

There were 635,200 international visitors in 2005

The forecasted growth rate suggests that 1,043,900 international visitors will visit WA by 2013

Tourism benefits many WA businesses both directly and indirectly. Money spent by visitors travelling around WA has flow-on benefits, creating work and revenue for a wide range of industries

Information from Tourism WA website



#### Busselton Jetty attracts 400,000 visitors a year.

It is the longest wooden jetty in the southern hemisphere and extends almost two kilometres into Geographe Bay. Begun in 1865, it was built over a 95 year period and used until 1974. After this time, there was no regular maintenance. The jetty fell into disrepair and was ravaged by fire and cyclone, wood borers and rot. It was saved by community activism and fund raising. The Jetty Preservation Society has raised over \$9m since it was formed in 1974. Today 400,000 tourists a year visit the jetty and its associated attractions, the Interpretive Centre, the Jetty Train and the Underwater Observatory.

Image: Courtesy Tourism WA

## 4

## Who should interpret heritage?

Everyone's individual, family and community histories are an important part of our national heritage and may interest visitors to a place. Anyone who has the information, the time to do the work and the skill to do it can interpret heritage.

But while group heritage is made up of the things that individuals and families value, there is a clear difference between personal heritage and community or group heritage. Community heritage is about community rather than private values and its interpretation needs to:

- ◆ be based on the application of established principles and procedures
- ◆ resonate with a wide audience.

For this reason teamwork, partnerships and different viewpoints are needed.

Interpretation needs a range of skills including:

- ◆ the ability to apply planning and design principles and procedures
- ◆ good ideas
- ◆ research
- ◆ story development
- ◆ writing
- ◆ design, fabrication and presentation
- ◆ evaluation.

Interpretation is a complex task and, even if you have a really good team of volunteers, it is likely that you will probably need outside help at some stage of the process. Where can you get help?

### *One Story, Many Voices The Kodja Place Visitor Centre*

*The Kodja Place at Kojonup is the storytelling place of the peoples of the Kojonup area. It portrays the area in a contemporary way and explains the cultural, and economic influences that formed its community. It examines the significance of Noongar and Wadjela cultures and the impact on them of English and Italian settler cultures. The main building is shaped like a kodja – the stone axe from which the town name comes. Here the collective story – Noongar and European – is told in the Rose Maze. Three fictional, pioneer women Yoondi (Noongar), Elizabeth (English) and Maria (Italian) share their lives, loves, joys and sorrows, strength and resilience. Because there was equal input from Noongars and European volunteers, the “original inhabitant” status of Noongars is acknowledged and their heritage is strongly represented. The development of Kodja Place was a Centenary of Federation project underwritten by grant funding. Hundreds of volunteers from each of the three groups were involved, many of them strong personalities. The way was not smooth. However, ongoing dialogue and mutual respect overcame every obstacle. The result is a vibrant Visitor Centre that has become a tourist attraction, a community meeting place, a source of local pride, an important element in the reconciliation process, and an expression of what Kojonup means to all the people of the area.*

*Image: Courtesy The Kodja Place, Kojonup*

## 4.1 Partnerships for interpretive programs

### Who do you know in your region?

You may know of other community organisations already engaged in heritage interpretation. It is useful to find out what they are doing or discuss their successes and problems – including the difficulties of engaging a consultant or contractor. You can do this either through personal contact or by joining a group like a regional chapter of Museums Australia.

### Multiple voices for interpretation

Often projects or stories you want to tell relate to specific individuals and/or groups. At the beginning of any plan or project you will need to work in partnership with anyone whose story you plan to tell so that the voices of the people involved can be heard and their viewpoints on their own heritage presented. Too many community projects interpret only one individual or group's experience and other narratives, sometimes the key to understanding the interpretation, are not considered.

Extending your project to include the history and experiences of Indigenous and ethnic groups or families in your area will result in an authentic and meaningful interpretation. Some of these people may have traditionally been marginalized and forgotten. The stories of Indigenous and ethnic people, women, labourers and felons have as much or more relevance and interest as the stories of history's winners, those with power and wealth.

People should tell their own stories from their own points of view. Wherever possible multiple voices should be heard in different ways. For example: artists have a role in heritage interpretation by provoking a different kind of response, a sense of wonder or visual and sensual understanding.



## 4.2 Getting outside help

Although you can choose to do your own interpretive work there are times when you will need advice and/or skills that cannot be provided by your group. You need to be realistic about the huge amount of:

- ◆ background information needed to develop interpretation
- ◆ the time needed to do the work.

As a volunteer group you will know that people are busy and cannot give unlimited time to your organisation.

If you do decide to go it alone you will need to:

- ◆ be realistic about what your group can achieve. It's better to do a small project well than to bite off more than you can chew. You should plan to do things in stages over a number of years
- ◆ seek advice.

Outside help may be needed, in the form of financial assistance or people with the skills and the time to do the work. If this is the case, you may need to seek grant funding assistance and employ one or more people to do the work.

### Associations and support organizations

There is a range of professional associations and government funded agencies in all states of Australia that support community organizations. While they are not able to do the work for you or even specify which consultant from a list is the most suitable, they can offer sound advice that will point you in the right directions.

Western Australian community heritage organisations are supported by:

- ◆ the state branch of Museums Australia through the branch office and the chapter system. If you are not already a member it will be well worthwhile to join
- ◆ the Museum Assistance Program (MAP) offered by the West Australian Museum
- ◆ the National Trust of Australia (WA)
- ◆ the Heritage Council of WA
- ◆ Forum for Advocating Cultural and Eco Tourism (FACET)
- ◆ Department of Environment and Conservation (DECWA)
- ◆ (Interpretation Australia Association (IAA).

### Consultants

There is a wide range of consultants with time, specialist knowledge and skills to meet your needs. You may need to employ one or more of the following:

- ◆ a scientist to give you up to date and detailed information on an environmental issue for example: an endangered plant species in your area
- ◆ an historian to research a particular theme
- ◆ a writer to develop your themes
- ◆ an interpretation specialist to develop an interpretation plan or a particular project such as an exhibition
- ◆ a designer to design static or interactive displays, publications, signs and labels
- ◆ a producer to create films, videos, audio programs
- ◆ carpenters and electricians to fabricate a display
- ◆ a market research specialist to undertake visitor study and/or evaluation.

### Contractors

Services can be provided by people with specialist skills, for example: builders, electricians, plumbers, museum cataloguers.

#### Services provided by Museums Australia (Western Australia)

The state branch office is located at the Western Australian Museum. The branch maintains an active program that includes:

- ◆ advocacy on behalf of museums
- ◆ policy development
- ◆ professional development activities, including support for interpretation planning
- ◆ publications including chapter museum brochures and the newsletter 'Musing'
- ◆ a museum award program
- ◆ a Reconciliation Working Group
- ◆ regular meetings of eight regional and metropolitan chapters
- ◆ opportunities to meet with colleagues.

# 5

## Tools for heritage interpretation

The tools you will need to develop heritage interpretation plans and projects are outlined below, followed in the next section by the order in which you should use them for planning, employing people with skills or applying for grant funding. Like any good worker you make sure you have all your tools ready to use before you begin.

### 5.1 Management structure and planning

Interpretation should not be seen in isolation from other important aspects of managing a heritage organisation. It is one link in a chain of policies and plans that guide your work. Because it encompasses all aspects of communication between heritage organisations and their audiences it is a vital part of any business or management plan. In preparing a business plan you will need to address the way in which interpretation fits into the long-term objectives and strategies of your organisation.

Before undertaking an interpretation plan you will need to be guided by federal, state and local government legislation and have the following management structures in place:

- ◆ a legal framework for your organization eg. Incorporated association, sub-committee of Council
- ◆ organisational aims and objectives
- ◆ management or business plan
- ◆ conservation strategies and plans
- ◆ collection policy
- ◆ education policy
- ◆ marketing plan.

#### Setting objectives

*It's easier to get where you want to go if you know where it is that you want to go.*

Setting objectives is **SMARTER** if the outcomes are:

<b>Specific</b>	<i>outline precisely what you want to accomplish</i>
<b>Measurable</b>	<i>describe it in ways that will enable you to measure results</i>
<b>Action oriented</b>	<i>outline the steps you need to take to meet objectives and the people responsible for each</i>
<b>Realistic</b>	<i>know your limitations and don't stretch them too far</i>
<b>Timed</b>	<i>set completion dates</i>
<b>Evaluate</b>	<i>review your objectives and see them as outcomes</i>
<b>Review</b>	<i>start all over again and ask how you could do it better.</i>

### 5.2 Steering Committees and working parties

To ensure the best possible planning and development it is important to form a steering committee of diverse members, with different skills and ideas.

While the group does not have to be large it is needed to guide and direct all aspects of the interpretation process by:

- ◆ brainstorming ideas
- ◆ providing a sounding board
- ◆ hiring and supervising consultants and /or contractors
- ◆ organising and co-ordinating work
- ◆ ensuring that a project is well managed and able to acquit any grant funding.

You will need people who have good ideas, background knowledge and the ability to work as part of a team. The steering committee should, ideally, include people with management and accounting experience.

A steering committee should be formed before you start any interpretive work.

Members of the steering committee may also do some of the work. However it will almost certainly be necessary to form working parties for different stages of a project, for example: if you are mounting an exhibition with volunteer labour you may need to find pro-bono help with research, text writing, carpentry and electrical work. Some of these helpers may not want or need to be on the steering committee. You will need to form a working party. This may be a simple working bee or a group that stays together until the work is completed.

### 5.3 Accurate information

Accurate information is essential for meaningful interpretation which encompasses:

- ◆ making connections between the natural environment and people, their places, things and stories
- ◆ significance assessment of heritage assets
- ◆ compiling inventories of significant places, buildings and collections
- ◆ selecting and developing themes and stories.

It is important to get the facts straight by careful research and to be honest about presenting unsubstantiated stories. Wherever possible you should record your sources of information so that they can be checked later if necessary.

A range of different sources can be used to verify stories.

#### How to do research

Proceed from the general to the specific – start with general reading to provide a context for stories and a general indication of the connections between people, places and things. It is these connections, rather than simple lists of facts that will ensure interpretation engages audiences.



**The importance of research  
Aboriginal Rock Art  
at Moochalabra Dam near Wyndham**

The writer of these guidelines planned to use this image as an example of traditional Aboriginal Rock Art done thousands of years before white settlement. However, an expert in the field, Professor Paul Tacon of Griffith University, advised that it is “probably a post-contact painting, likely a depiction of a European or a Maccassan with baggy pants. It certainly is no more than a couple of hundred years of age maximum, given the clear white outline around the red body and the excellent state of preservation. The style is definitely reflective of the very recent art of the region” (Personal Correspondence 2006)  
Image: Courtesy of Tourism WA

#### Primary research sources

To assess community values and meaning and to get the stories that connect people to places, consult the people who make up a community. Ask them what they think about their places and things. Find out how they were used and why they were kept. Collect their stories.

Other primary research sources that may be useful include letters, diaries, oral histories, photographs, illustrations, maps etc.

Oral history provides first hand eye-witness accounts told from the viewpoint of people involved. It is a primary source for writing history and records personal experiences, including how people felt about things, rather than straight facts.

You will need to follow primary research up by checking secondary research sources.

#### Secondary research sources

Include official reports, books, newspapers and journals, publications and reports.

Where can you find information?

- ◆ direct observation. Visit sites and collections. Look, wonder, enquire and surmise
- ◆ read books and journals, conservation plans, management and business plans, reports and strategies
- ◆ ask local experts
- ◆ local museums, libraries and archives, including collection records in museums
- ◆ local publications
- ◆ State Records Office
- ◆ State Library
- ◆ corporations and cultural centres
- ◆ State and federal departments (such as the Department of Indigenous Affairs, Heritage Council). Some of these will have an office in your town or region and will be able to give you assistance in a number of ways. For example, they might provide information, get involved in your project or give you names and addresses for other businesses/departments that can help. It is not always apparent by the name of the Indigenous organisation that it can help. You can get information, in some instances, by researching annual reports and searching websites. Alternatively, approach the organisation directly

## 5.4 Significance assessment

A significance assessment is needed to:

- ♦ explain why a place, building, artefact or collection is valued as heritage
- ♦ provide further information for its management and interpretation.

The assessment process outlined is based on: *Significance: a guide to assessing the significance of cultural heritage objects and collections*, downloadable at ([http://sector.amol.org.au/publications\\_archive/museum\\_management/significance](http://sector.amol.org.au/publications_archive/museum_management/significance)).

In undertaking significance assessment two inter-related sets of criteria should be examined.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Primary Criteria</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Comparative Criteria</b></p>
<p><b>Historic significance</b> Does it demonstrate or is it associated with people events, historical processes, places and themes?</p>	<p><b>Provenance</b> What is its history; is there a documented chain of ownership, a recorded context of origin and use?</p>
<p><b>Aesthetic significance</b> Does it demonstrate craftsmanship, style, design or technical excellence, innovation, beauty, skill, workmanship and quality of execution?</p>	<p><b>Representativeness</b> If it's a cultural resource: is it typical of a particular class or category of material, style or design, way of life, activity or theme?  If it's a natural resource: does it represent natural values – eg a species, or habitat?</p>
<p><b>Scientific/research significance</b> Does it demonstrate potential for examination, study or research?  Is it an important type specimen or reference point for study?</p>	<p><b>Rarity</b> Is it unique, unusual or fine example of a type?</p>
<p><b>Social/spiritual significance</b> Is it held in community esteem or does it have social, cultural or other bonds that demonstrate community structures, beliefs and cohesion?</p>	<p><b>Condition, completeness, intactness</b> Is it complete and in good or original condition?</p>
	<p><b>Interpretive potential</b> Does it demonstrate aspects of particular themes, processes and people that can be used in interpretive programs?  Does it present opportunities for visitor activities, interests and services?</p>

### Steps in the Process

- ♦ compile a folder of available details
- ♦ analyse and record the fabric of the place, building, collection or object(s)
- ♦ research its history and provenance
- ♦ talk with donors, users and relevant community associations to see what importance they place on the place, building, collection or objects
- ♦ assess significance by asking the questions outlined in the two sets of criteria (see above). The four primary criteria are used to identify specific **types of significance** and the five comparative criteria are used to evaluate the **degree of significance**
- ♦ use all the resulting information to write a succinct statement of significance and retain it in the information folder.

### **What's so special about Mrs Efford's Iron?**

*There are thousands of old irons in museum collections throughout Australia. This one is in the Claremont Museum Collection. Why is this one significant? The available details are as follows:*

#### *Fabric of the item*

*The iron is in excellent condition. It is described in the museum catalogue as a charcoal box iron with smoke spout & hinged top opening (of spout & handle). Wood handle with brass protective plate (for hand) curved under. Hinge closed by metal bar with wood knob which swings across under brass plate to open & close.*

#### *History and provenance*

*It is inscribed with the maker's details  
LAESPERANZ A REGISTERED W LYNG C [Trademark].*

*It is dated to the 1900s.*

*The museum's collection records indicate that it was used by Mrs Connie Efford (nee Fisher), the donor, in the 1930s and that she collected driftwood from Freshwater Bay to make charcoal to burn in it. The Efford family settled in Claremont after arriving in the colony in 1863. Mrs Connie Efford was married to Samuel Efford, grandson of the original settler Samuel who was a pensioner guard.*

*Suggestions for further research to establish significance:*

*Charcoal burning irons are comparatively rare (unlike flat irons) and more research will be needed to find out:*

- ◆ *where charcoal irons sit in the development of iron technology*
- ◆ *whether this iron is a rare or unique example of its type.*

*What sort of irons were used in the 1930s?*

*Did Mrs Efford do ironing for other people?*

*When did she stop using it and did she replace it with a different sort of iron?*

*When the research is completed there will be enough information to prepare a Statement of Significance, using the criteria outlined. Then we will know what's special about Mrs Efford's iron and the museum will be able to interpret it in a range of different ways.*



*Images: Courtesy Claremont Museum*

## 5.5 Thinking and asking questions

When you have completed some detailed research and made a significance assessment you will know what's special about your area and its heritage assets. This will give you a basis for interpretation.

You will also need to think about what approach you might take to using this information. For example: heritage interpretation is not simply about commemorating the successes of the past. One of Australia's worst military disasters, the Gallipoli campaign, on the other side of the world, has become vitally important to our sense of national identity. So many Australians, young and old, make a pilgrimage to the battlefield each year that the Commonwealth government has been working with the Turkish government to ensure that the heritage values of the site are not destroyed by the crowds.

You should not be afraid to present provocative issues in interpretive programs but care should be taken to ensure these are based on facts and bias towards a particular direction should be avoided.



### *Ways of seeing*

#### *The opening of the Croquet Lawn at Subiaco by Mrs Edith Dagleish, wife of the Mayor, in 1904*

*The label for this photograph on display in the Subiaco Museum offers rich possibilities for interpretation by suggesting that interpreters communicate the questions they may ask of material rather than simply identifying it by a title and a date. These questions will include: Whose meanings? Whose memories? Whose past? Who is remembered? Why are some people not remembered?*

*The label teases meaning out of the image by pointing out that:*

- ◆ *the croquet club was opened on land that was once the home of the Noongar people*
- ◆ *the citizens enjoy the opening of their croquet club in 1904*
- ◆ *croquet is associated with wealth and leisure, transplanted from the UK, to a suburb that now prides itself on its working class roots*
- ◆ *women had little real power but were considered essential decoration*
- ◆ *water was a luxury at the time but had to be committed to keeping the lawn alive.*

*Image: Courtesy of Subiaco Museum*

## 5.6 Area, site, building, collection or object inventory

An examination of your existing services to assess whether they meet objectives will enable you to make plans that build on what has already been done. It should include an outline of:

### Interpretation resources

- ◆ themes and messages
- ◆ interpretive media, including use of guides, print and electronic etc
- ◆ signage
- ◆ publications
- ◆ guides and personal contact
- ◆ products and merchandise
- ◆ links to other sites and/or community groups

### Interpretation facilities

- ◆ buildings – size and layout of rooms
- ◆ outdoor spaces

### Visitor management

- ◆ physical access – parking, entry and exit, orientation space, disabled access
- ◆ visitor comfort – rest stops, seating, toilets, refreshment, cloakings, sales outlets

### Risk management

- ◆ condition of heritage resources – some may be too fragile or too dangerous to permit open access
- ◆ security of heritage items – visitor supervision
- ◆ visitor security and safety, including identification of hazards, emergency procedures (eg fire and accident)
- ◆ public liability cover.

## 5.7 Interpretation Analysis

Your inventory will enable you to undertake an analysis of existing services to assess whether they meet objectives

- ◆ their strengths and weaknesses - what works well for audiences? What measures should be taken to fix those things that do not work?
- ◆ what further development is needed?



### *Is this good interpretation?*

*In giving reasons for your answer think about some of the following issues:*

- What does this display interpret?*
- Do you think any of the artefacts on display are significant? If so, state why*
- What is the display about?*
- What stories does it tell?*
- Do you care?*

*Image: Courtesy Shar Jones*

## 5.8 Presentation methods

Interpretation programs can come in many different forms, some of which do not cost very much, including guided tours or small exhibitions. Others, particularly electronic media, are expensive both to produce and to maintain. All are inter-related and none should be used exclusively. You should plan for a mix. The important thing to remember is that the method of presentation is not an end in itself but simply a vehicle for:

- ◆ communicating your stories and messages effectively to audiences
- ◆ enriching visitor experience
- ◆ meeting learning objectives.

There are two main categories. Each has strengths and limitations.

### Guided experiences

Guided interpretation experiences include:

- ◆ walks
- ◆ talks
- ◆ demonstrations and observations
- ◆ performance – re-enactments, role playing, plays, poetry readings, dance and music
- ◆ any other activity programs
- ◆ special events.

Guided interpretation offers personal contact between interpreters and their audiences. Different activities can be tailored to specific audiences. If well planned and delivered, they will provide entertaining and memorable experiences and allow immediate feedback.

However, guided interpretations are labour intensive and need ongoing resources. While volunteer interpreters can be used, they will need training and co-ordination. It is said that some guides never let the truth get in the way of a good story. Proper training and careful research will ensure that all the good stories are accurate.

Many guided programs activities are dependent on good weather.



#### **Guided interpretation at Darngku, near Fitzroy Crossing**

Darngku (Geikie Gorge) features steep rock walls where the river has cut through 14 kilometres. The cliffs are rich in fossil remains and there is an abundance of wildlife, including freshwater stingrays and crocodiles.

The traditional owners of this area are the Bunaba people who call the gorge Darngku. They interpret its heritage through guided tours, explaining how the gorge was created in the 'Dreaming,' and offer Indigenous perspectives on the landforms and wild-life.

Image: Courtesy Tourism WA

## Self-Guided Programs

Many visitors to heritage sites and collections prefer self guided interpretation programs. These include:

- ♦ publications – books, brochures, flyers, illustrations and worksheets
- ♦ exhibitions
- ♦ information panels and site specific interpretation boards
- ♦ signage – banners, flags and special signs
- ♦ graphic illustrations- artworks, photographs, maps, and other visual material
- ♦ computer interactives and video games.

Self guided interpretations are diverse and many can be highly stimulating.

Publications do not need to be site specific and may be used to market the attraction.

However, self guided interpretations:

- ♦ may not allow for an immediate audience response. For example: questions cannot be asked on the spot.
- ♦ may be expensive to develop and not easily modified once they have been produced.



**The Southern Forest Sculpture Trail**  
This piece, by Katie Thamo, is one of a series of contemporary artworks used to interpret the natural and cultural heritage of the Northcliffe forests.  
Image: Courtesy Country Arts WA



Visitors driving through Dryandra Woodland can tune their car radios into an advertised frequency for an audio guide of the attraction.

Image: Courtesy Department of Environment and Conservation



**A Sense of Place.** Permanent exhibition at Avon Valley Visitor Centre, Northam  
Image: Courtesy Tourism Western Australia

## 5.9 Signs, symbols and text panels

Interpretive communication does not have to be verbal to be effective.

In an exhibition, careful selection and juxtaposition of objects, for example: a collection of laundry, kitchen and lighting appliances from the beginning of the 20th. century alongside a similar collection from the present time, can communicate changes in lifestyle through time far more effectively than pages of written information. It can also provoke sensual or emotional understanding in audiences that maybe more effective than simple written information.

However the importance of text should not be under estimated because:

- ◆ most interpretive programs rely, to a significant extent, on written text
- ◆ signs and labels are needed to direct and inform visitors even when directional signs are visual symbols rather than text.

Care is needed to ensure that interpretive and directional texts and symbols communicate effectively. To do so signs and labels must:

- ◆ attract audiences through good design and use of graphic images
- ◆ be legible. This is affected by typeface, colour, size and placement
- ◆ be written in language suitable for diverse audiences. Communication is most effective when text is aimed at a reading age of 12 years. Most visitors will turn away from jargon or technical language
- ◆ be written simply and directly. Each should contain a limited number of ideas and words.



Left: **Clear messages**

There are two entirely unrelated messages in this defaced sign. The original safety sign has two words and a symbol which are clearly recognisable to drivers. A strong political message has been super-imposed over it by the addition of only one letter to the existing words and minor modifications to the symbol.


Image: Courtesy Shar Jones

### Our Hybrid Toilet System is special


This toilet protects the environment from human waste pollution by using less water.

You can help maintain this toilet:

- Please close the toilet lid after use to remove smells.
- Please push the lever down three times to flush the toilet.
- Take all rubbish with you
- If you haven't eaten it, please don't drop it down the tube.  
Toilet waste needs to decompose.



*More thinking ... less stinking!*



#### Communication and learning through signs

This sign aims to inform and educate through direct, simple language and an easily recognisable visual symbol based on Rodin's famous sculpture *The Thinker*. Humour has been used to good effect.

Image: Courtesy Department of Environment and Conservation



#### Adding layers of meaning through exhibition text

These extended labels have structured information into headings, sub-headings and text that is punctuated by images. Such a structure allows viewers to go to the level of detail they need. It is clear, focused and easily readable.

Image: Courtesy Department of Environment and Conservation

## 5.10 Themes and stories

Stories provide the basis for the development of themes (or more general subjects). Many stories can be told about each and every heritage site, building or object. The different people who have been involved at different times will have a range of different perspectives.

The task of the interpreter is to make sense of all these possibilities, and create a enjoyable learning experience for visitors. This can be done by selecting one or more appropriate themes before selecting specific stories.

Themes and stories can be identified and selected, based on:

- ◆ research and heritage significance
- ◆ the messages the interpreter wants to transmit, for example, preserving an endangered species
- ◆ working with partners
- ◆ potential visitor interest, identified by visitor study.

While it is clear that the interpreter's point of view is likely to prevail, the presentation of more than one perspective may encourage audiences to think, thus promoting active engagement and better learning outcomes. It is the responsibility of interpreters to confront rather than to avoid difficult issues.



### *Multi-layered approach to interpretation*

*The display in No 1 Pumping Station at Mundaring Weir on the Golden Pipeline skillfully presents a number of interlinked themes in a display that relates to the building and uses its spaces.*

*It interprets the building as the primary artefact in the exhibition. The black exhibition structure reflects the shape, colour and size of the machinery that was formerly in the building and the unrestored wall of the building can be seen behind. It is used as a setting to examine a variety of themes related to the construction of the Golden Pipeline. These include information about C.Y. O'Connor, who designed the pipeline, its engineering and construction and the lives of the workers and their families who built it. It places local issues in a broader regional, state and national issues context by examining the political situation that resulted in a pioneering engineering achievement, provision of water to the goldfields.*

*Image: Courtesy National Trust of Australia (WA)*

## 5.11 Learning objectives

In an interpretation program visitors can be excited and entertained through a range of learning activities. Interpretation is a learning activity and it is important to work out ahead of time what key messages you want audiences to take away with them.

Interpretation works by provocation rather than simple instruction. How can a program engage audiences and provoke them to think and to learn?

To set learning objectives you need to know who your audiences are and to be aware that they will respond and behave in particular ways. Although they provide learning opportunities, museums, heritage trails and national parks are not schools. They are places for life long, informal learning. Visitors may come in family, friends or school groups. This means that programs need to connect with people of different ages and interests. For example: when children visit in school groups, they are with others of the same age and level of knowledge in a context of formal curriculum-based learning. When they are in family groups, where the focus is on entertainment, they are with parents and siblings with different levels of knowledge and interest. If you want to attract school visits you will need specific programs.

You should also consider which interpretive media will be most effective for different learning styles. People learn effectively in different ways, including:

- ◆ looking and/or reading
- ◆ listening and/or discussing
- ◆ touching
- ◆ doing.
- ◆ asking questions (why, what, how, what if)

By setting learning objectives you will be able to evaluate your success in meeting them.

**Buttermaking** for a class of boys at Claremont Museum  
Image: Courtesy Claremont Museum



### *A hands-on approach to understanding history*

*Claremont Museum offers a range of school programs that bring the past to life by offering students direct experiences through classroom sessions in the original Freshwater Bay schoolroom and involvement with domestic work as it was done in the past. The program is student centred and linked to the key learning outcomes for Technology and Enterprise and Society and Environment in the Curriculum Framework.*



**Wash day** for a class of girls at Claremont Museum  
Image: Courtesy Claremont Museum

## 5.12 Audience Profile

Meaningful interpretation is based on the experiences, knowledge and interests of audiences.

In order to design specific programs to meet visitor needs, you need to know:

- ◆ who your visitors are
- ◆ who you'd like to attract in the future.

It may be helpful to break the market down into identifiable categories. This is called market segmentation. What percentage of your visitors are:

- ◆ families
- ◆ school groups
- ◆ tourist groups
- ◆ pensioner groups.

Visitor studies will establish current patterns of use and tell you:

- ◆ how many visitors and research enquiries you have each year
- ◆ what percentage of your visitors are tourists, families, school or other special interest groups
- ◆ what is the age range
- ◆ whether the interests and learning needs of the groups identified
- ◆ whether there seasonal changes in visitation. Do your visitor numbers rise in holiday periods? Is the market segmentation consistent through the year?

You can do this by:

- ◆ counting the number of full and concession tickets sold
- ◆ taking details when tickets are sold, for example: home area code of each individual or group
- ◆ listening to visitor comments and observing responses to programs
- ◆ outreach services by staff, including talks to schools and other special interest groups, travelling exhibitions etc
- ◆ talking to agencies who are already familiar with audiences eg. coach companies, Tourism WA, the local tourist office and tourist attractions
- ◆ visitor surveys and interviews.

## 5.13 Evaluation

Evaluation is needed to ensure that your projects connect with target audiences. It is worth doing this consistently during all stages of program development.

Before working on any detailed plans you can use the knowledge, interests and attitudes of potential visitors to help shape the scope and content of the proposed program by asking small invited groups what they think of your ideas. Suitable questions are:

- ◆ what do you know about ...?
- ◆ would you like to learn more about it?
- ◆ would you be interested in an interpretive program about...?
- ◆ rate the following themes/stories in order of interest
- ◆ do you prefer exhibitons/displays, guided or self guided tours, computer interactives, films/audio-visuals etc ?

During planning you can save costly mistakes by asking small groups whether they think your proposals will work. Suitable questions are:

- ◆ does this interest you?
- ◆ are the main themes and messages appropriate?
- ◆ can you read and understand the signs and labels?
- ◆ does it all make sense?
- ◆ what did you learn from it?
- ◆ what do you like or dislike about it?

When a program is running, you can see how visitors respond by simply watching them and by reading comments in your visitors' book. You can get more specific information by interviewing visitors or asking them to fill out a questionnaire.

Suitable questions are:

- ◆ what are the main themes and messages of this program?
- ◆ what elements of it did you particularly like or dislike and why?
- ◆ how long did it take you to complete it? Is this too short/too long/just right?
- ◆ how does it compare with similar experiences?
- ◆ is it original? If so, how?
- ◆ are there any changes that would increase your enjoyment and understanding?
- ◆ will you recommend this program to your family and friends?

# 6

## Steps in heritage interpretation

There are several phases in interpretation, each of which is listed in a sequence. Following these steps in sequence will enable you to plan effectively by addressing all aspects of the work. The previous chapter provides detailed information on each of the tools, or ingredients, you need to plan interpretation. The section that follows outlines how to put them together.

### 6.1 The Brief – a basis for action

Successful development of any interpretation plan or project depends on working out exactly what you want to do.

A brief is an outline of your intentions, used to:

- ◆ clarify and structure your ideas
- ◆ help you decide if you can do the work yourselves or if you need to employ a consultant
- ◆ inform project partners and/or consultants
- ◆ secure grants.



The process of writing a brief forces you to be clear about the goals of your project and exactly how you plan to go about achieving them. A well-prepared brief is the first step in ensuring the success of any planning and you should avoid taking “short cuts” at this stage. It should be a clear and concise document that is comprehensive enough to enable a contractor or consultant to supply specified goods/services of a defined quality on time and within budget. It may also be useful to include how the evaluation could be implemented.

### 6.2 Employing consultants and contractors

Anyone who has employed workers will know that the key to getting a good job done is finding the right person for a particular job. There are many consultants available to work for you. If you succeed in finding the right one for the task the results can be inspiring. If you employ the wrong person you may end up thinking you’ve wasted your money. Finding the right consultant may be one of your most challenging tasks.

It is much easier if you know:

- ◆ exactly what you want the person to do
- ◆ who you want to employ
- ◆ that they are available to work for you.

## Finding a consultant

You may not have all the skills needed for an interpretation program and it is unlikely that any consultant will either. In seeking a consultant you need to find out the particular skills of the person you are considering. If you need a heritage interpretation plan, you should employ an interpreter rather than a researcher or an architect. Remember that researchers are trained and experienced in hunting for information and architects in designing or restoring buildings. Designers are trained to turn the plans of an interpreter into a physical reality. Researchers, architects, designers and other specialists may need to be included on an interpretation team if their specific skills are needed.

You will need to find a consultant who:

- ◆ has demonstrated experience in interpretation planning. You can check this by asking to see examples of their previous work
- ◆ is sympathetic to the aims and objectives of your organisation
- ◆ will accept briefing and direction from your steering committee. The first step is to use your contacts and ask for advice from people you know who have used consultants.

Alternatively, professional organizations like Museums Australia (WA) and Department of Environment & Conservation (DECWA) can supply listings but do not make recommendations.

You can also consult on-line listings, including: Interpretation Australia (<http://www.interpretationaustralia.asn.au/>)

Museums and Galleries NSW (<http://www.mgnsww.org.au/>)

Professional Historians Association(WA) (<http://www.phawa.org.au/resources.html>)

Do not be deterred by the distance of the consultant from your project. Many consultants from Perth and the eastern states work in regional Western Australia and may be available to help you. It will cost a little more but may be worthwhile. A number of good consultants from the east already work in Western Australia and visit regularly and travel costs may sometimes be shared.

However, some Local Government authorities specify the use of local people and give a percentile rating to local tenders. In this case you may need to make a strong argument for the expertise of any non-local consultant you want to employ.

Interested consultants need information. You cannot expect consultants to give you what you want on time and within budget unless you can tell them in detail exactly what you want from them and when you want it. A detailed brief should be supplied to every applicant for the job.

## Recruiting a consultant

The most common methods of employing consultants are:

- ◆ **Expressions of interest.**  
Select at least three from a list. Write to each, outlining what you need, enclosing a brief and asking for an expression of interest, an outline of relevant work experience and at least three references from previous clients
- ◆ **Tenders**  
Advertise in a professional journal, eg MAWA Newsletter, asking applicants to submit a tender. If the job is a large one you may need to advertise nationally

## Selecting a consultant

Preparing selection criteria will help you make an informed choice between two or more applicants for your consultancy. This is easier than it sounds if you have taken the trouble to prepare a comprehensive brief. Read through the brief to see what it is asking the consultant to do and think about what key skills someone would need to do the job, then make a list of what you need. Some of these things will be essential and other desirable. You will come up with

### Example of Selection Criteria for Consultants

<i>Essential</i>	<p><i>Degree or qualification in appropriate discipline</i></p> <p><i>Proven experience in preparing heritage interpretation plans</i></p> <p><i>Excellent written, oral and analytical skills</i></p> <p><i>A high level of negotiation skill in dealing with funding agencies and volunteer groups</i></p> <p><i>Computer literacy</i></p>
<i>Desirable</i>	<p><i>Knowledge of the history of the Wheat Belt</i></p> <p><i>Experience in developing interactive displays</i></p> <p><i>Driver's Licence</i></p>

something like the following:

Before making an offer you will need to:

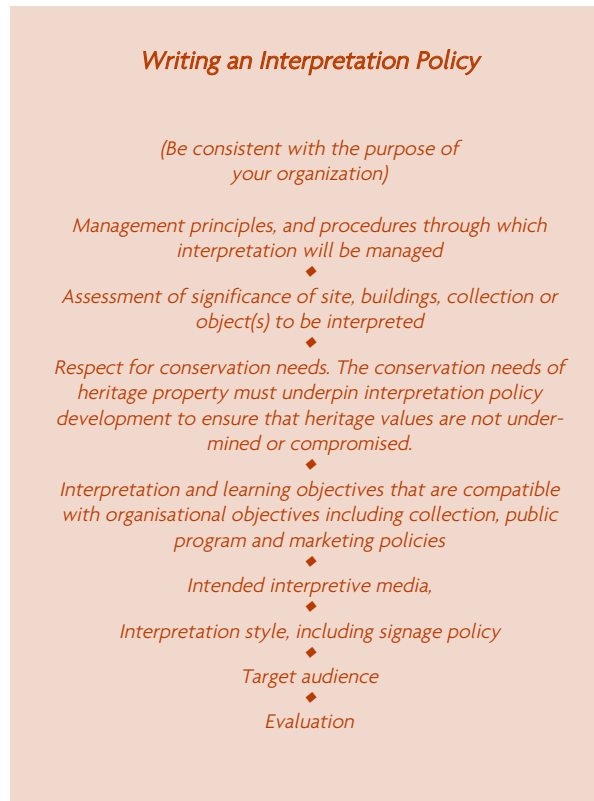
- ◆ assess all tenders and expressions of interest on the basis of your selection criteria
- ◆ speak to your preferred applicant. It is preferable to have a site visit, particularly for a site-specific project but this may be beyond the means of small and distant organizations and you may need to supply photographs.
- ◆ speak to previous clients to find out if the applicant's previous projects worked well
- ◆ check that your preferred consultant has an ABN number and appropriate insurance, usually Public Liability and Professional Indemnity cover
- ◆ if you wish to consult an expert ask MAWA for advice. They'll refer you to someone who can advise you.

### 6.3 Interpretation policy

An interpretation policy is a broad philosophical statement that is an essential part of managing heritage assets. It creates a framework for action by focusing on the general rather than the specific. Policies are used to guide the development of plans and specific projects.

#### Who should make interpretation policy?

All the people who have a role in the organization should be involved in writing policy.



### 6.4 Interpretation Plan

An interpretation plan is a comprehensive long-term strategy, a management tool, for ensuring that the heritage significance of places, structures, objects or traditions can be communicated in specific programs. This is the step that follows after you have prepared a policy.

Based on detailed knowledge and research it is designed to:

- ◆ identify and present the most significant themes and stories about sites, buildings and collections
- ◆ outline the most suitable way of presenting themes and stories so that visitors have stimulating experiences
- ◆ ensure that the heritage values of places, structures and objects are preserved
- ◆ provide a framework for managing visitors,
- ◆ provide general costings and a timetable for implementation.
- ◆ be practical, achievable and realistic but above all, flexible and open to further development
- ◆ outline a prioritized list of achievable projects and measurable targets
- ◆ ensure the evaluation of the objectives.

Because knowledge and needs change over time, the plan should not be rigid, too long or too detailed. It is not set in stone and will grow as you complete each stage.

## Who should develop interpretation plans?

Anyone with the skills to do the work can write an interpretation plan. If you decide to get expert help there are grant funding programs to underwrite the employment of a consultant.

The three steps in developing an interpretation plan are:



## 6.5 Interpretation Projects

When you have completed a comprehensive interpretation plan you will be ready to develop a number of specific projects. The basis for action is an idea or concept which can be developed into a design brief for each project.

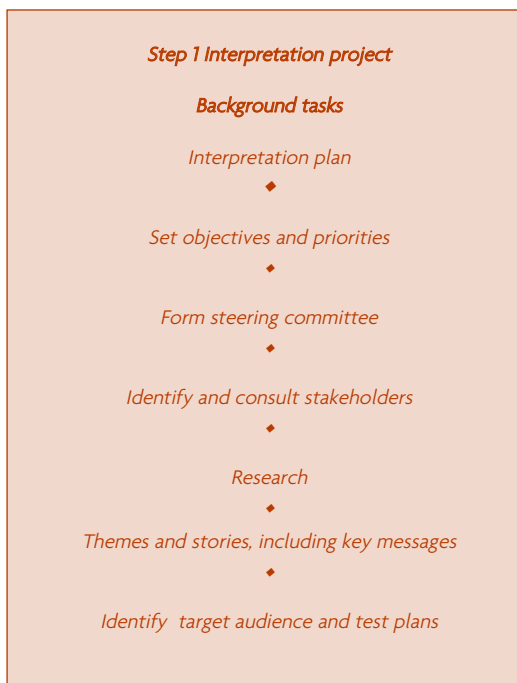
This can be used to inform either:

- ◆ a group of volunteer workers or
- ◆ specialist consultants including researchers, writers, graphic designers, artists, architects, landscape architects and engineers who will be able to develop the idea into a viable program.

The identification of manageable and measurable objectives, followed by careful sequencing of the different stages will result in a project that:

- ◆ opens on time and within budget
- ◆ is consistent with organisational objectives, interpretation policy and the interpretation plan.

The three steps in an interpretation project are:



Skilled artisans provide demonstrations of processes as in this program that shows how gold is formed into ingots.  
Image: Courtesy Tourism WA



## 7

## How to secure grant funding

Applications for grant assistance are always competitive because funding agencies have a finite amount of money to hand out and there are always more applications than money available. This means that only the best will succeed. These are selected by a committee who examine them on merit.

### 7.1 Why grant applications succeed

The following information should help you work to work out what steps you need to take before submitting a grant application.

Assessment of successful grant applications to the 2005 Lotterywest Interpretation of Cultural Heritage Grant Program indicate that for:

#### Interpretation plans

The reasons for success included:

- ♦ a highly significant site or building
- ♦ a demonstrated need for an interpretation plan
- ♦ a well thought out plan, with enough detail given
- ♦ a plan that will assist in promoting enhanced heritage practice
- ♦ community interest demonstrated by visitor numbers
- ♦ support from a Shire
- ♦ demonstrated willingness to take advice after a previously unsuccessful application.

#### Interpretation projects

The reasons for success included:

- ♦ good planning based on or already given priority by an interpretation plan
- ♦ an innovative and interactive approach
- ♦ a unique approach that breaks stereotypes
- ♦ strong support from Indigenous consultants on the assessment panel
- ♦ development of outreach programs.

### 7.2 Before you prepare a grant application

Do not leave your preliminary work until the last minute. Make sure you have:

- ♦ thought things through carefully so that you are clear about your objectives
- ♦ completed all the pre-planning outlined in this document
- ♦ checked the grant funding program guidelines to ensure that it matches what you want to do. If you go for any old fund simply to get money you are unlikely to succeed. Even if you are successful you may end up working on a project that is not suited to your objectives
- ♦ selected a consultant if you wish to do so. If you have done this you can ask the consultant to help you with the pre-planning and the grant application. Do not leave employing a consultant to the last minute or you may find that the person you want is unavailable
- ♦ secured letters of support from your community, your Shire and/or the Museum Assistance Program (WAM).

### 7.3 Preparing a grant application

If you want to secure funding assistance you will need to persuade an assessment committee that your project is worth supporting.

You can do this by reading through the application form carefully and:

- ◆ answering all the questions asked
- ◆ providing copies of all documentation that is requested
- ◆ demonstrating that you have done all the preliminary work needed to ensure success of the project
- ◆ proposing a project that is both realistic and exciting
- ◆ including your contact details.

Funding application forms are complex. They take considerable time and effort to complete. If you do not have the time or the resources to work the project out in some detail and complete the application you are wasting everyone's time, particularly your own.

You will have a better chance of success if you complete the background steps needed for your plan or project before submitting a grant application.

The Museum Assistance Program (MAP) at Western Australian Museum may provide letters of support to community museums seeking grant assistance.

You should also seek advice from the Grants Officer or a professional association (for example: Museums Australia (WA)). If you discuss your application with them before submitting it you are less likely to make errors and omissions that may cost you a grant. If you do not succeed it is worthwhile to ask why and to try again the following year.

#### **Lotterywest**

*Lotterywest provides grants to not-for-profit organisations and local government authorities to assist them to turn their ideas into reality.*

*Interpretation of Cultural Heritage Grants aim to help communities to develop an understanding of the significance of their cultural heritage places and objects, as a way of maintaining their sense of identity and heritage.*

*Priority is given to proposals that:*

- ◆ *interpret and communicate the cultural heritage significance of objects and places*
- ◆ *engage communities with their cultural heritage in active and creative ways*
- ◆ *enhance community identity and sense of place*
- ◆ *enhance the social and economic development of communities.*

## 7.4 Grant funding agencies (2007)

In the first instance you will usually apply to the Lotterywest Interpretation of Cultural Heritage Grants program for funding assistance for interpretation programs in Western Australia.

Interpretation of Cultural Heritage Grants Program  
 Lotterywest  
 PO Box 1113  
 Osborne Park WA 6917  
 Ph: (08) 9340 5270  
 Fax: (08) 9340 5274  
[www.lotterywest.wa.gov.au](http://www.lotterywest.wa.gov.au)

There is a range of other programs available both locally and interstate. A complete listing of Western Australian grant assistance agencies is published each year in Grants Directory: *Grants and Assistance Programs for Regional and Metropolitan Communities and Local Governments*, Perth. Department of Local Government and Regional Development.  
 Downloadable at:  
[www.grantsdirectory.dlgrd.wa.gov.au](http://www.grantsdirectory.dlgrd.wa.gov.au)

Department of Local Government and Regional Development  
 PO Box R1250  
 Perth WA 6844  
 Ph: (08) 9217 1500  
 Fax: (08) 9217 1555  
 Freecall: 1800 620 511 (Country Only)  
 Email: [info@dlgrd.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@dlgrd.wa.gov.au)  
<http://www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au/>

### Commonwealth Government Agencies

Community Heritage Grants  
 National Library of Australia  
 Parkes Place  
 Parkes ACT 2600  
 Ph: (02) 6262 1111  
<http://www.nla.gov.au/chg/>

National Heritage Trust  
 Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry  
 GPO Box 858  
 Canberra Act 2601  
 Ph: (02) 6272 3933

### Companies in the Resource and Financial Sector

National Australia Bank Community  
 Link <http://www.national.com.au>  
 NAB is committed to making a contribution to Australian Communities by providing donations, partnerships and gifts in kind at branch level.

## Foundations

Australian Business Arts Foundation  
 State Manager  
 C/- Freehills  
 Level 36 QV1 Building  
 250 St Georges Terrace  
 Perth Western Australia 6000  
 Ph: 08 9211 7923  
 Fax: 08 9211 7878  
 Email: [wa@abaf.org.au](mailto:wa@abaf.org.au)  
<http://www.abaf.org.au/>

AbaF promotes private sector support for the arts by connecting business, the arts, donors and foundations through partnering, volunteering and giving programs.

George Alexander Foundation  
 3rd Floor, 111 Collins Street  
 Melbourne Victoria 3000  
 Ph: 03-9650 3188  
 Fax: 03-9650 7986  
 Email: [admin@gafoundation.org.au](mailto:admin@gafoundation.org.au)  
<http://www.gafoundation.org.au>

The George Alexander Foundation supports “hands-on” local community environmental projects where there is a strong volunteer component.

Ian Potter Foundation  
 Level 3, 111 Collins Street  
 Melbourne Vic 3000  
 Ph: (03) 9650 3188  
 Fax: (030) 9650 7986  
 email [admin@ianpotter.org.au](mailto:admin@ianpotter.org.au)  
<http://www.ianpotter.org.au>

The Potter Foundation makes grants for general charitable purposes in the areas of the arts, education, environment and conservation, health, social welfare, science and medical research. They also have a small travel grants program.

Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal  
 Audrey Alston, Grants Manager  
 FRRR  
 PO Box 41  
 Bendigo Victoria 3552  
 Grant enquiries 1800 170 020  
 Ph: 03 5443 7300  
 Fax: 03 5443 8900  
 Email: [info@frrr.org.au](mailto:info@frrr.org.au)  
<http://www.frrr.netconnect.com.au/>

FRRR champions the economic and social strength of Australia's regional, rural and remote communities through partnerships with the private sector, philanthropy and Governments.

## 8

## Useful addresses (2007)

## Western Australia

Department of Environment and Conservation  
 Locked Bag 104  
 Bentley Delivery Centre  
 WA 6983  
 (08) 9334 0481 or (08) 9334 0437  
 Email: [info@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@dec.wa.gov.au)  
 Web: [www.dec.wa.gov.au](http://www.dec.wa.gov.au)

Department of Indigenous Affairs  
 PO Box 7770,  
 Cloister's Square,  
 Perth WA 6850,  
 (08) 9235 8000  
 Email: [info2@dia.wa.gov.au](mailto:info2@dia.wa.gov.au)  
 Web: <http://www.dia.wa.gov.au>

The Heritage Council of Western Australia  
 PO Box 6201  
 East Perth WA 6892  
 (08) 9221 4177  
 Fx: (08) 9221 4151  
 Freecall: 1800 644 177  
 Email: [heritage@hc.wa.gov.au](mailto:heritage@hc.wa.gov.au)  
 Web: [www.heritage.wa.gov.au](http://www.heritage.wa.gov.au)

Museum Assistance Program  
 Western Australian Museum  
 Locked Bag 49  
 Welshpool DC A 6986  
 Perth WA 6000  
 (08) 9427 2700  
 Email [map@museum.wa.gov.au](mailto:map@museum.wa.gov.au)

Museums Australia WA  
 PO Box 224  
 Northbridge WA 6865  
 (08) 9427 2770  
 Email: [ma\\_wa@museum.wa.gov.au](mailto:ma_wa@museum.wa.gov.au)

The National Trust of Australia (WA)  
 PO Box 1162  
 West Perth WA 6872  
 (08) 9321 6088  
 Email: [ntrustwa@ntwa.com.au](mailto:ntrustwa@ntwa.com.au)

Professional Historians Association (WA) Inc  
 PO Box 8381 Perth Business Centre  
 Perth WA 6849  
 (08) 9272 3308  
 Email: [kristy@sbdservices.com.au](mailto:kristy@sbdservices.com.au)  
 Web: [www.phawa.org.au](http://www.phawa.org.au)

Tourism WA  
 GPO Box X2261  
 Perth WA 6847  
 (08) 9262 1700  
 Email: [info@westernaustralia.com](mailto:info@westernaustralia.com)

Western Australian Local Government Association  
 PO Box 1544  
 West Perth WA 6872  
 (08) 9321 5055  
 Fx: (08) 9322 2611  
 Email: [info@walga.asn.au](mailto:info@walga.asn.au)

## Other States

Interpretation Australia Association  
 PO Box 1231  
 Collingwood Victoria 3066  
 Email: [carolyn@ironstonesoftware.com.au](mailto:carolyn@ironstonesoftware.com.au)

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## Useful websites (2007)

If you're not on the internet, you can use the local tele-centre or library

**Western Australia**

Department of Environment and Conservation <http://www.dec.wa.gov.au>

The National Trust of Australia (WA) <http://ntwa.com.au>

Department of Culture and the Arts <http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/>

Department of Indigenous Affairs <http://www.dia.wa.gov.au/>

Heritage Council of Western Australia <http://www.heritage.wa.gov.au/> and  
<http://trails.heritage.wa.gov.au/>

Tourism Western Australia <http://www.westernaustralia.com/en/>

Dept of Local Gov and Regional Services <http://www.grantsdirectory.dlgrd.wa.gov.au>

FACET <http://www.facet.asn.au>

**Commonwealth**

Australian Heritage Commission  
<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/register/index.html>

Australian Libraries Gateway <http://www.nla.gov.au/libraries/>

Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts  
<http://www.dcita.gov.au>

Department of the Environment and Heritage <http://www.deh.gov.au/>

National Archives of Australia <http://www.naa.gov.au>

National Library of Australia <http://www.nla.gov.au>

ScreenSound Australia <http://www.screensound.gov.au>

**National Associations**

Australian Council of National Trusts <http://www.nationaltrust.org.au>

Australian Cultural Network <http://www.acn.net.au>

Australian Tourism Network <http://www.atn.com.au>

Australia ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites)  
<http://www.icomos.org/australia>

Collections Australia Network <http://www.collectionsaustralia.net>

Heritage Collections Council [http://www.amol.org.au/about\\_amol/heritage\\_collections\\_council.asp](http://www.amol.org.au/about_amol/heritage_collections_council.asp)

Interpretation Australia Association <http://www.interpretationaustralia.asn.au/>

Museums Australia (National) <http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au>

**International**

Canadian Heritage Information Network\_ <http://www.chin.gc.ca>

English Heritage <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk>

ICOM (International Council of Museums) <http://www.nma.gov.au/icom/>

ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) <http://www.icomos.org/>

UNESCO <http://www.unesco.org/culture/heritage>

**Signage**

School of Learning and Professional Studies, Queensland University of Technology  
<http://www.interpretivesigns.qut.edu.au/index.cfm>

# 10

## Further reading

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CALM (1998) *Best recipes for interpreting our heritage activities for ecotour guides and others*. Perth, Conservation and Land Management

CALM (2000) *Developing ecotours and other interpretive activity programs – A guide-book for planning, designing, promoting and conducting activity programs*. Perth, Conservation and Land Management.

CARTER, J (1997) *A Sense of Place : An interpretive planning handbook*. Inverness Scotland. Tourism and Environment Initiative

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA (2001) *Significance: a guide to assessing the significance of cultural heritage objects and collections*. Canberra, published on behalf of the Heritage Collections Council (ed. K. Winkworth and R. Russell) Can be downloaded at: [http://sector.amol.org.au/publications\\_archive/museum\\_management/significance](http://sector.amol.org.au/publications_archive/museum_management/significance)

FALK, John H & DIERKING, Lynne D (1992) *The Museum Experience*. Washington DC Whalesback Books

HAM, Sam (1992) *Environmental Interpretation : a practical guide for people with big ideas and small budgets*. Golden, Colorado (new edition forthcoming)

HAM, Sam (2002) *Meaning Making – The Premise and Promise of Interpretation*. University of Idaho Press

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA (2006) *The Heritage Tourism Strategy for Western Australia*. prepared by the Heritage Council of Western Australia in partnership with Tourism WA. Perth.  
Can be downloaded at: [http://www.heritage.wa.gov.au/e\\_pub\\_list.html](http://www.heritage.wa.gov.au/e_pub_list.html)

HOWARD, P (2003) *Heritage: management, interpretation, identity*. London, Continuum

KERR, James Semple (2000) *The Conservation Plan 5th ed*. Sydney, National Trust of Australia (NSW)

MARQUIS-KYLE, Peter & WALKER, Meredith (2004) *The Illustrated Burra Charter: Good Practice for Heritage Places*. Sydney ICOMOS Australia

MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA INC.(1999) *Competitive Tendering: Choices for Local Government, Museums and Galleries*. (Ed. Dana Rowan) Canberra, Museums Australia

MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA INC (2005) *Continuous Cultures, Ongoing Responsibilities Principles and guidelines for Australian museums working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage*. Canberra, Museums Australia Inc. Can be downloaded at: [http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/dbdoc/ccor\\_final\\_feb\\_05.pdf](http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/dbdoc/ccor_final_feb_05.pdf)

MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA INC (2000) *Cultural Diversity Policy*. Canberra, Museums Australia Inc. Can be downloaded at: <http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/dbdoc/culturaldiv.pdf>

MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA INC (2000) *Women's Policy for Museum Programs and practice*. Canberra, Museums Australia Inc.  
Can be downloaded at: <http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/dbdoc/women.pdf>

MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA INC (2002) *Museums and Sustainability Guidelines for policy and practice in museums and galleries*. Canberra, Museums Australia Inc.  
Can be downloaded at <http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/dbdoc/sustainability.pdf>

NSW HERITAGE OFFICE (2005) *Heritage Information Series. "Interpreting Heritage Places and Items Guidelines* (M Walker and E Lawson) Sydney, NSW Heritage Office

PRENTICE, Richard(1993) *Tourism and heritage attraction*. London, Routledge

SILBERT, C & BOWRA, T (2000-1) "Parks for People" *Landscape*, Summer

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CENTRE, CURTIN UNIVERSITY (2005) *Assessment of the economic value of heritage tourism in three Western Australian locations*. Perth Heritage Council of Western Australia

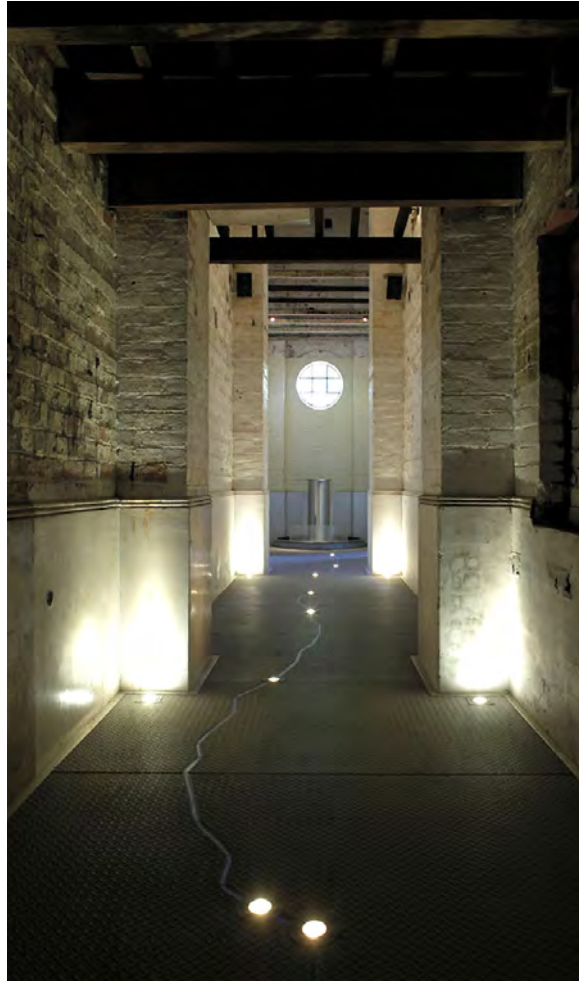
TE PAPA ATAWHAI (2005) *Interpretation handbook and standard. Distilling the essence*, Wellington. Te Papa

#### ***The National Trust of Australia (WA)***

*The National Trust of Australia (WA) works with communities to conserve and interpret Western Australia's unique heritage. The organisation was established in 1959 and is a not-for-profit membership enterprise. Members gain FREE entry to over 1000 heritage places in 24 different countries.*

*The National Trust's vision is to be the pre-eminent independent community body promoting the conservation and interpretation of Western Australia's unique heritage and educating the community about the use of cultural heritage (built, natural and Indigenous) for the long-term social, economic and environmental benefit of the community.*

*To find out more about the work of the National Trust visit [www.ntwa.com.au](http://www.ntwa.com.au) or phone 08 9321 6088*



*At the beginning of the Golden Pipeline in the No. 1 Pump Station, Mundaring Weir, a map showing its extent is inscribed on the floor of the building.*

*Image Courtesy of National Trust of Australia (WA)*