



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2022-2023

Mr James Milligan MLA (Chair), Mr Andrew Braddock MLA (Deputy Chair),  
Dr Marisa Patterson MLA

## Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into  
Appropriation Bill 2022-2023 and Appropriation  
(Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2022-2023

**Submission Number:** 004.1

**Date Authorised for Publication:** 16 September 2022

**2022**

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**2022-23 Budget Estimates**

**OPENING STATEMENT**

**Rebecca Vassarotti MLA  
Minister for Heritage**

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting, the Ngunnawal people, and pay my respects to their elders, past and present and acknowledge their long connection to this land and their continuing contribution to the life, culture and wellbeing of our city. I also pay my respects to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are with us today.

I am pleased to present some of the work done over the last financial year to conserve and manage our heritage, as well as outline the key continuing projects for the coming year.

As Canberra grows and changes, it is important to reflect on the past and trace the path to the present. Our recognition of heritage is the way we achieve this.

The 2022-23 budget continues to recognise, register, conserve, promote and celebrate the ACT's places and objects of historic, Aboriginal and natural heritage significance.

The government continues its work to protect, conserve and enhance the ACT's heritage which focuses on the following areas:

- recognition and involvement of traditional custodians in the management of Aboriginal heritage;
- supporting the ACT Heritage Council in its functions to recognise, conserve and celebrate places and objects of historic, Aboriginal and natural heritage significance; and
- supporting the community to celebrate and conserve the heritage in their care.

ACT Heritage continues to provide advice and assistance to heritage property owners and other members of the community on all aspects of heritage in the ACT, including the conservation and management of heritage places in relation to proposed works and development. For example, in the last year this has included conservation management plans for iconic heritage places such as the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings and the Yarralumla Brickworks, which will create a heritage conservation framework for these places ahead of development pressures.

There has been a notable increase in workload for the Heritage Council and Unit. In 2021-22, ACT Heritage assisted the ACT Heritage Council in issuing 741 pieces of advice and/or approvals on Heritage Act applications, submissions and referrals.

Managing the pressures of the considerable increase in workload remains a challenge and I am working closely with the directorate to clearly identify the current and future resourcing needs. I have also commissioned an external review into the operations of the Council, the relationship of the Council and ACT Heritage unit, and workflow and capacity of the unit. The review will provide me with recommendations on courses of action to address the findings, with a focus on ensuring effective functioning and resourcing of the Council and Heritage Unit to meet the growing demands for Heritage advice and approvals, and progress an ambitious forward agenda of work.

A concentrated focus for additional resourcing in 2022-23 is to create and establish conservation management plans for landmark heritage places that will help achieve greater clarity and streamlining of advice for these places in future.

Conservation Management Plans are important documents in managing heritage places and objects, by setting out policies and management actions that will conserve the heritage values of a place. These plans also explore opportunities for adaptive reuse and change at heritage places and define development opportunities that will not diminish heritage values. These plans also provide certainty to heritage owners in their management of heritage places, and can approve conservation works at a heritage site.

Other priorities for Heritage in 2022-23 include:

- Returning cultural heritage objects back to Country, including the development of a policy and operational plan. This work is well advanced with consultations ongoing.
- Progressing upgrades to the current Heritage database and undertaking forward design of a new database
- Planning for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the much-loved Canberra and Region Heritage Festival
- Expanding and enhancing the Canberra Tracks Heritage Interpretation program.
- Announcing successful recipients of the 2022-23 Heritage Grants program.

I am pleased to provide this update for the Committee on the considerable work and progress across the Heritage Portfolio.