

# PROTECTING CANBERRA'S HERITAGE

**HERITAGE CAN HELP US TO UNDERSTAND OUR HISTORY, CELEBRATE WHERE WE HAVE COME FROM AND SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE.**

Heritage provides us with an opportunity to engage with our history as a community, and honour the places, people and things that have made our city today. But for too long, heritage has been seen as a barrier to progress, rather than an opportunity to enhance it.

In Government, we've already reformed the ACT's heritage system to make it more efficient, accessible and inclusive. Over the past four years, we have worked to ensure First Nations traditional owners form the focal point of heritage preservation in Canberra.

Canberra's foundational stories belong to the Ngunnawal People and other groups connected to these lands and waters. These groups have cared for the land since time immemorial and deserve proper recognition through our heritage system.

The ACT Greens are committed to creating a heritage system that helps us understand the truth of our history, celebrate the culture of those who have lived here long before us, and shape a better future for all Canberrans.

## THE ACT GREENS WILL:

- ▲ Establish a legislated Cultural Heritage Body
- ▲ Develop a Heritage Strategy for the ACT
- ▲ Increase funding to the ACT Heritage Council and ACT Heritage branch
- ▲ Continue work to deliver a better, usable heritage register and database
- ▲ Establish and fund a Heritage Hub at Cargill's Cottage

# FIRST NATIONS POWER TO MAKE DECISIONS ON CULTURAL HERITAGE

The ACT occupies unceded land that has had people living and passing through this place for millennia before European settlement.

Much of this heritage is not yet adequately recognised, protected or celebrated. Traditional owners must have stewardship and decision-making power over their cultural heritage. Without adequate protections for Aboriginal cultural heritage, we risk the devastating destruction of sites and objects.

The ACT Greens will establish a legislated Cultural Heritage Body. This Body will return power to traditional custodians to determine their own cultural heritage. This Body will complement the work of the Elected Body, specifically recognising the role of traditional owners in caring for this country. Its structure and operational functions will be co-designed with local traditional owners, and will be an independent body with the authority to determine Aboriginal cultural heritage decisions and outcomes. The Body will also make recommendations to the Heritage Council and ACT Heritage on improving policies and processes to remove barriers to the active participation of First Nations in heritage

in the ACT. The Body will also advise on reforms that support the protection of cultural heritage – which could include the introduction of developer-funded cultural impact surveys, to minimise harm to cultural sites and ensure accountability by developers for any impacts.

As part of this work, we will resolve the role of Registered Aboriginal Organisations, and work towards a process that enables Traditional Owners and knowledge holders to be central to the identification, protection and management of First Nations heritage. We recognise that this process needs to be led by community and may take time to realise, and the journey will be as important as the final outcome.

## INVESTMENT

Initial consultation on the establishment of the Body will be supported by increased staff funding to ACT Heritage branch

## A SHARED VISION FOR HERITAGE IN THE ACT

There are great opportunities to engage with the community to develop a shared vision about the place of heritage in our current lives and what role it can play in the future.

We believe that heritage should celebrate and be inclusive of the community's diverse interests and needs, supporting adaptive reuse and social equity through ensuring heritage buildings meet contemporary building standards for accessibility and energy efficiency.

Heritage can come hand in hand with building more housing, protecting the climate and environment, or major infrastructure to support a growing city – and ensure a consistent DNA through the development of our city’s built environment. Emerging examples such as the Cultural Trail in Denman Prospect, show that development and liveability can be enhanced by integrating an area’s heritage into new developments.

In government, the ACT Greens have improved the functioning and efficiency of the Heritage Council and directed the Council to consider climate change and environmental impacts on heritage decisions through a statement of expectations.

But we need a broader vision and plan. The ACT Greens will develop a Heritage Strategy for the ACT. A strategy can do so much more – it must articulate a clear, long-term vision is needed for a heritage system that complements our goals for people and the planet.

## INVESTMENT

\$100k for the development of a Heritage Strategy.

## QUICKER, BETTER HERITAGE DECISION-MAKING AND GOVERNANCE

A fit-for-purpose heritage system, that is adequately resourced and has good systems in place can assist the evolution of our city. .

ACT Greens in government have funded additional capacity to reduce heritage

request and conservation management plan backlogs, but there remains more work to do.

The ACT Greens will increase funding to the Heritage Council and the ACT Heritage branch to support the development of this strategy and the establishment of a Cultural Heritage Body..

This will include continuing work to deliver overdue upgrades to the heritage database, funded from existing resources, to assist decision making and enable the community to engage better with the ACT’s heritage places and objects. This will promote greater transparency and community ownership of heritage in the ACT. We will work with First Nations to ensure the Register respects First Nations data sovereignty and cultural protocols around Aboriginal men’s and women’s business. By improving the accessibility of public information on places and objects with heritage significance in the ACT, the community can support the adaptive reuse of built heritage.

We will continue to support the Council’s work in providing greater guidance to assist heritage asset owners to ensure these are accessible, climate-wise and sustainable. This in turn will future proof these important parts of our city’s character and story.

## INVESTMENT

\$9.9m over 4 years

## **PROMOTING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN HERITAGE**

The ACT community is at the heart of heritage, which represents places and objects that the community values and wishes to protect. We have a range of passionate, knowledgeable and committed community heritage volunteers who can assist the government in identifying, protecting and celebrating the heritage of our region.

The ACT Greens will establish and fund a Heritage Hub, to provide a stable and affordable home for community heritage organisations across the ACT, as a place for the community to be able to engage regularly with our community heritage organisations' events and initiatives. The Hub will be located at Cargill's Cottage, as part of the East Lake development. The ACT Greens will continue government funding to the National Trust ACT to enable a coordination point for heritage organisations across the ACT. We will also continue to support the ACT Heritage Grants Program, and the Canberra and Region Heritage Festival.

The ACT Greens will support the development of a new conservation management plan for Haig Park, using this as a pilot to explore ways to better reflect the First Nations heritage of key heritage sites and how to integrate both First Nations and settler heritage values.

## **INVESTMENT**

The cost for developing Cargill's Cottage will be offset by revenue collected from selling land. The developer of East Lake

will be responsible for any works on the Cottage, which will be included in their contract.