



GREATER SHEPPARTON

HERITAGE ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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Greater Shepparton Heritage Advisory Committee 2020 MEMBERSHIP

Bangerang Cultural Centre	Miranda Edwards, Marlene Atkinson (Alt)
Community Representatives	Robyn Slee, David Gawne, Carrie Donaldson (to 2/9/2020), Andrew Morcom (Deputy Chair), Geoff Maynard (Chair to 1/3/2020)
Dookie Historical Society	Gaye Sutherland/Janet Batten, Norma Sutherland (Alt)
Greater Shepparton Councillor	Cr Seema Abdullah, Cr Shelley Sutton (to 20/10/2020)
Historical Society of Mooroopna	Barry Campbell
Katandra & District History Group	Marjorie Earl (Secretary to 1/3/2020, Chair from 2/3/2020)
Merrigum & District Historical Society	Anne Tyson (Secretary from 2/3/2020)
Murchison & District Historical Society	Kay Ball
Shepparton Heritage Centre	Peter Matthews, John Dainton (Alt)
Tatura & District Historical Society	George Ferguson, Evert Worm (Alt)
Toolamba Community Plan Steering Committee	Christine McKenzie
Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation	
GSCC Strategic Planning	Michael MacDonagh, Kate Clarke, Anne-Maree Michaelson
GSCC Heritage Advisor	Deborah Kemp



Greater Shepparton Heritage Advisory Committee Members 2020

2020: HERITAGE IN A YEAR OF COVID-19

In 2020 only two meetings of the Greater Shepparton Heritage Advisory Committee (the Committee) were held, on 3 February and 2 March 2020. With the invoking of Government regulations and Council measures relating to the Coronavirus pandemic, no subsequent meetings of the Committee were held during the year.

Despite the indefinite postponement of Committee meetings, a number of recurring and new items in the Committee's scheduled work program were able to be undertaken or progressed. In some cases, with the Council Offices largely closed, for ongoing work such as the organisation of the 2021 Cultural Heritage Awards, sub-committees met in the Queens Gardens or in other suitable venues, at all times observing the relevant COVID-safe restrictions.

1. Amendment C205 to the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme

Amendment C205 (the Amendment) further progressed in 2020. The Amendment seeks to give effect to the findings and recommendations of the *Greater Shepparton Heritage Study Stage II April 2020* (the Study) in the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme. The Amendment applies permanent controls to places of 'individual' heritage significance across the municipality, as well as five heritage precincts in Dookie and Murchison where interim controls currently apply. Numerous places identified in the Study as places of local cultural heritage significance and the associated updated historical information for these places was provided by members of the Committee. Council adopted the Amendment in April 2020 and submitted the Amendment to the Minister for Planning for approval.

2. Heritage Advisory Service

Council employs a qualified heritage advisor to provide architectural and technical best practice advice to Council and owners of property in the Heritage Overlay within the municipality. There was still significant demand for this service despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Greater Shepparton Heritage Strategy 2019

The Heritage Advisory Committee assisted Council officers and the Heritage Advisor in the development of Greater Shepparton's inaugural *Greater Shepparton Heritage Strategy 2019*, adopted by Council in November 2019. The Strategy seeks to promote and support heritage-related activities over the subsequent four years, with the aim of conserving and integrating significant reminders of our heritage for the benefit of current and future generations.

In 2020, some preliminary outcomes realised by the Committee included maintaining the continuity of the Heritage Advisory Service, protecting significant heritage places from adverse impacts (whether resulting from neglect or inappropriate development) and ensuring that Council's historical information is made available through Council's website.

4. Heritage Grants Program

Greater Shepparton is one of a very small number of regional councils in Victoria offering Heritage Grants. In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Program was again very successful, with Council receiving 47 grant funding applications, with 11 grants awarded (see below).

The ongoing success of the program had led to the increase of the program's budget for 2020-2021 to \$80,000.

In light of the success over the last four years, it is expected that an additional round of the Heritage Grants Program will be held in the 2021/22 financial year. The Committee will continue to support the Program, which to date has provided partial funding for conservation works to a variety of places of cultural heritage significance, with total works valued at up to \$220,000.

Heritage Grants 2020

The Log cabin restoration at 195A Pogue Road, Toolamba	\$15,000.00
Brickwork repairs at the Royal Mail Hotel, Mooroopna	\$13,681.00
Timber repairs and painting at the Mooroopna Grandstand	\$9,104.00
Replacement gutters and downpipes, painting, at 138-140 Nixon Street, Shepparton	\$9,753.00
Lead lighting repairs at 137 Waverley Avenue, Merrigum	\$2,250.00
Roof and verandah repairs at 815 Crawford Road, Tatura	\$6,947.00
Roof and verandah repairs at 21 Watson Street, Murchison	\$10,553.00
Painting at 915 Springvale Road, Harston	\$2,831.00
Restumping at 90 Corio Street, Shepparton	\$4,472.00
Verandah and weatherboard repairs at 17 Gladstone Street, Dookie	\$1,341.00
Restumping at 55 Ross Street, Tatura	\$4,068.00
Total	\$80,000.00

The completion of works resulting from these successful grant applications will assist in the conservation of places of heritage significance for future generations to enjoy.

5. The State of Local Heritage Review (see Attachment)

In late 2018, the Heritage Council of Victoria commenced its *State of Heritage Review: Local Heritage* (the Review) to review local cultural heritage recognition, protection and management arrangements across the state to:

- to establish a clear picture of local cultural heritage protection and management arrangements to identify what support is required to improve local cultural heritage management;
- to identify examples of best practice local cultural heritage management and how this may be shared and celebrated; and
- to provide tangible and practical opportunities for enhancing the way State and local governments work together to recognise, protect and manage local heritage.

The Review found that since the formation of the Heritage Advisory Committee, Greater Shepparton has vastly improved its management of local heritage, highlighting how the Committee, Council officers and Council's Heritage Advisor have worked to identify, protect and support better local cultural heritage outcomes (see Attachment). These initiatives were also especially highlighted in a related online seminar, reflecting the increased recognition given by State heritage authorities to heritage work within Greater Shepparton.

6. Cultural Heritage Awards

These biennial Awards, conducted by Council and the Committee, recognise outstanding contributions to cultural heritage conservation, research, education, promotion, interpretation, training and awareness-raising within the Municipality.

Commencing in 2012 as a cost-effective way of raising awareness in Council and in the general public of cultural heritage issues within the municipality, as well as recognising good conservation practice and promoting community participation in cultural heritage issues, the Awards have been successfully held in 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2019. They are also seen as a means to celebrate the people who contribute to and promote our diverse culture and places of significance.

Nominations for the Cultural Heritage Awards 2021 were to be launched in August 2020 but due to COVID-19 this plan had to be revised, with calls for public nominations beginning on 16 November 2020. There was no formal launch and advertising was both online and in the local print media, with the nominations closing on Monday 22 February 2021.

7. Heritage signage

In late 2020 the Heritage Advisory Committee's Signage sub-committee developed a limited program of heritage interpretive signage.

The sub-committee also began development of a long-term strategy and policy for heritage signage (both interpretive signs and plaques) across the municipality, and consideration of a heritage plaques program.

8. HAC Newsletter

To ensure that Committee members were kept up to date with Committee activities and could share heritage and history news and information, online Newsletters were produced in September, October and November 2020.

9. Events and activities postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic

- a. The Biennial Bruce Wilson Heritage Lecture. This Lecture honours Bruce Wilson, the inaugural Chair of the Heritage Advisory Committee, and both sessions are usually well-attended. The 2020 Lecture, scheduled for 23 April 2020, was to be delivered by Ms Christine Johnston, one of Australia's foremost heritage professionals, whose extensive contribution over decades includes the leading role she has played in the acceptance of 'people's heritage.' It is hoped that the Lecture will be delivered in 2021, and Ms Johnston has expressed her willingness to participate then.
- b. Heritage Open Days 2020. This very popular event was planned to be held on 16-17 October 2020. The Committee looks to the possibility of reinstating the Open Days in 2021, possibly in a reduced form, but this is dependent on the COVID-19 situation.
- c. Educational Visits. An Educational Visit for Committee members to familiarise themselves with the work of three local museums/historical societies had been proposed for mid-May 2020, but COVID-19 rendered this tour impossible.
- d. Master Classes. As in previous years, a program of bi-monthly Masterclasses was proposed, these routinely being delivered after the Committee meeting. One such Masterclass took place, 'The History of the Australia Hotel' by former publican Don Phillips, in March 2020, but with the cancellation of Committee meetings after March 2020, no further Masterclasses eventuated.



*Planning for HAC activities goes on despite COVID-19!
The Cultural Heritage Awards sub-committee meets in the Queens Gardens on 17 September 2020*

OUR COMMITTEE

1. Background

Council authorised the formation of the Greater Shepparton Heritage Advisory Committee on 17 January 2012. The primary purpose of the Committee is to provide the best possible advice to Council on how to conserve and promote the unique cultural heritage of Greater Shepparton, and to act as an advocate for all cultural heritage matters within the municipality.

The assistance provided by the Heritage Advisory Committee is consistent with the objectives, strategies and actions outlined in the Environment section of the *Greater Shepparton 2030 Strategy (2006)*, and Objectives 2.6, 2.7 and 4.3 of the *Greater Shepparton City Council: Council Plan 2017-2021*.

2. Terms of Reference and Committee Composition

The Greater Shepparton Heritage Advisory Committee acts in an advisory role to Council on the future development of cultural heritage matters across Greater Shepparton. It has no executive authority and operates in accordance with the Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference are reviewed biennially and were last adopted by resolution of Council at the Ordinary Council Meeting held in February 2021.

The Committee's Terms of Reference provide for a voting membership consisting of up to two Councillors, along with one representative from each of the ten identified member organisations listed and six community representatives unaffiliated with any of these organisations, and a non-voting membership comprising Council's Heritage Advisor and up to two members of Council's Strategic Planning Team. Member organisations nominate an alternate delegate to ensure continuity of representation.

Office-bearers for 2020 were:

1 January 2020—2 March 2020

- Chairperson: Geoff Maynard (Community Representative)
- Deputy Chairperson: Andrew Morcom (Community Representative)
- Secretary: Marjorie Earl (Katandra and District History Group)

2 March 2020—31 December 2020

- Chairperson: Marjorie Earl (Katandra and District History Group)
- Deputy Chairperson: Andrew Morcom (Community Representative)
- Secretary: Anne Tyson (Merrigum Historical Society)



Heritage Advisory Committee Executive 1/1/2020–2/3/2020: Marjorie Earl, Andrew Morcom and Geoff Maynard

3. Meetings

The Committee generally meets on the first Monday of each month with the exception of January, and also November when the meeting takes place on the second Monday. As noted, no meetings were held after March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. Committee Agendas

Standard inclusions on all Committee agendas:

- A briefing on all active Planning Permit Applications within the Heritage Overlay;
- A report from the Heritage Advisor on relevant projects and updates;
- A report from the Strategic Planning Team on relevant matters;
- Member reports regarding local historic/heritage activities; alternating monthly with updates from sub-committees; and
- Suggestion and consideration of items for presentation as Short Discussion Sessions (SDS) for the Councillors.

5. Sub-committees

The Heritage Advisory Committee is of the view that despite the limitations resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, it fulfilled its core advisory functions during 2020 and that its professional Strategic Work Program was again successful in focusing the Committee's heritage activities to the extent possible in these unusual times.

The Committee's Strategic Work Program was divided amongst a number of sub-committees:

1. HAC Operations
 - a. Administration: Annual Report, Budget, Heritage Guidelines, Grant Coordination
 - b. Terms of Reference Review
 - c. Master Classes
2. Heritage Promotion and Education
 - a. Heritage Signage
 - b. Heritage Lecture (2020)
 - c. Cultural Heritage Awards (2021)
 - d. Heritage Open Days (2020)
3. Heritage Planning
 - a. Victorian Heritage Register
 - b. Marketing and Communication
 - c. Publications
4. Heritage Projects
 - a. Internment History Scoping Study, 20th Century Places Study, Aboriginal and Shared Cultural Heritage Study, Thematic Environmental History Review (to be undertaken in stages as budget and time permits)

Other ongoing activities were curtailed somewhat, but included

- Representation on the Calder Woodburn Memorial Avenue Advisory Committee.
- Support for the proposed Heathcote to Murchison 'Rail Trail' and its possible extension within our municipality.
- Support for the proposed Goulburn River Trail from Murchison to Shepparton.

6. Leave of Absence

The Bangerang Cultural Centre requested a leave of absence for the 2020 calendar year and was not able to attend any Committee meetings.

2021 WORK PROGRAM

- **Cultural Heritage Awards 2021** – The Awards process will be completed, with nominations due on 22 February 2021, site visits to be held during the week of 8-13 February 2021, and judging on 19 February 2021. The results will be presented to April's Ordinary Council meeting, with presentation of the Awards taking place on 1 May 2021 during the Australian Heritage Festival.
- **The Bruce Wilson Memorial Heritage Lecture** – The Committee is now planning for the postponed Biennial Bruce Wilson Memorial Heritage Lecture 2020 to be held on 18 August 2021 at the Senior Citizens' Centre, Shepparton at 1pm and repeated at 6pm, with light refreshments available.

Ms Christine Johnston, one of Victoria's leading heritage practitioners, will explore people's attachments to place, and how these are incorporated into heritage today. The free Lecture is always an interesting and informative event which has been very well-attended in the past, and the rescheduled Lecture is expected to be no exception.

- **Heritage Grants Program** – Given its success over the last four years, it is expected, as indicated, that another round of the Heritage Grants Program will be held in the 2021/2022 financial year. The Committee sees the Grants as a prime vehicle for raising awareness of the municipality's heritage.
- **Heritage Open Days** – A reduced Heritage Open Days program is envisaged for October 2021. The usual visits to private homes of heritage significance are unlikely if COVID-19 still presents problems, and the free bus tours, walking tours and opportunities for independent visiting of public, commercial and similar sites will also be dependent on the pandemic situation. The Committee, in association with Council, nevertheless hopes to present a limited program, including some new venues and activities.

As in previous years, an informational catalogue on the venues will be prepared by the Committee, in itself a valuable guide to Greater Shepparton's Heritage Places.

- **Victorian Heritage Register** – Greater Shepparton's heritage is under-represented on the state's heritage list (the Victorian Heritage Register or VHR); it was most pleasing to see that the Italian Ossario at Murchison, Australia's only war cemetery for Italian internees and Prisoners of War, was added to the VHR during 2020.

The Committee will further progress the nomination to the Victorian Heritage Register of heritage sites recognised as being of state significance in the *Greater Shepparton Heritage Study Stage II 2020*.



Greater Shepparton heritage places included on the Victorian Heritage Register

Left: NEW INCLUSION. Italian Ossario, Murchison (VHR H2405), the final resting place of all Italian internees and POWs who died in Australia during wartime.

Centre: Tatura World War II Internment and POW Camps Collection (VHR H2373). Puppets constructed by German internees during incarceration at Camp One, conserved in 2020 under a Victorian Government Living Heritage Grant.

Right: Thornebridge, former Gregory's Bridge Hotel, Murchison (VHR H0963).

- **Heritage Signage** – Greater Shepparton, unlike many municipalities, has had no policy in relation to the recognition of heritage places by heritage signage such as building plaques or interpretive signs. The Signage sub-committee will continue with its work to develop such a strategy and policy, and institute pilot programs to assess possible approaches.

An introductory program comprising the installation of plaques on a limited number of heritage buildings and structures will be commenced as part of these new initiatives.

- **Heritage Strategy** – The Heritage Strategy, which outlines the Council’s vision and priorities for heritage protection within the municipality over the medium and longer term, has been completed, endorsed by Council and is available on the Council website. The adopted Strategy may provide a guide to any future realignment of our current sub-committee structure, and point the way to future Committee activities.

- **Scoping study of the prisoner of war and internment history of the region** – The Committee is keen to support the preservation of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage values of our unique group of local camps and the related collections. The Committee will consolidate information held by its members, and assess available resources to initiate a scoping study.

- **Increase public access to local histories** – The Committee will investigate ways to share heritage information and stories with the community, including exploring possible sources of funding to develop a bank of digital heritage stories.

The Committee will also ensure that copies of local histories that relate to our municipality, and to specific historical societies, are provided to the Prahra Mechanics’ Institute, the state’s premier repository of local history publications and materials.

- **Resourcing Member Organisations** – The Committee will continue to pursue its role in assisting member societies with training, policies, and information sharing.

- **Committee Educational Visits** – Members recognise the need to develop greater knowledge of, and exposure to, a number of heritage places across the region. They will participate in further educational visits, broadening knowledge of heritage assets in localities beyond their own familiar area.

- **Master Classes** – The Committee plans to continue to hold Master Classes following Committee meetings every second month to hear from experts in the field, local and other historians, business owners and others.

- **Heritage Advocacy** – The Committee continues to pursue all opportunities to raise the profile of heritage throughout the municipality.

ATTACHMENT

CASE STUDY

How to turn it around – Greater Shepparton City Council

Classification: Rural City

LGA size: 2,422km²

LGA population: 66,007

Number of HOs: 378

Greater Shepparton City Council is a regional LGA located approximately 180km north of Melbourne. It comprises Shepparton and its surrounds. Over the past decade, Greater Shepparton City Council has embarked on an extensive program to improve the identification, protection, support and communication of local heritage in the municipality.

Issue

Shepparton was a place that did not recognise and protect its heritage, despite its history of over 150 years as the agricultural and associated manufacturing centre of the Goulburn Valley. A push to modernise the city in light of the 1960s and 1970s post-war boom saw the loss of many of its historic buildings, including the old Shepparton Post Office in 1973. It was not until the early 2000s that the Council undertook its first heritage studies, the *City of Greater Shepparton Heritage Study Stage I* (Soma Design Partnership Pty Ltd, 2001) and *Stage II* (Allom Lovell and Associates Pty Ltd, 2004). Council officers recalled that the implementation of these studies was a fraught experience, with affected residents questioning why they had to conserve their properties when civic ‘historic’ buildings had consistently been demolished. There was little interest in local heritage.

Action

Greater Shepparton’s turnaround came about in 2010. Driven by the Strategic Planning Team and the Heritage Advisor, the Council undertook the *City of Greater Shepparton Heritage Study Stage IIB* (Heritage Concepts Pty Ltd, 2010, revised 2013). This study eventually resulted in the protection of scores of heritage places. It was, however, one recommendation within the study that really turned the tide for local heritage in the LGA: the formation of the Greater Shepparton Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC).

The HAC was established in January 2012. It currently consists of 10 members from various historical societies and cultural groups (including two Aboriginal groups), and up to six members of the community, two councillors, strategic planning staff and Council’s Heritage Advisor. The HAC meets 11 times a year to provide advice to the Council on the identification, conservation, preservation and promotion of places of cultural heritage significance in the municipality. Importantly, the Greater Shepparton HAC has played a key



Corio Street, Shepparton, part of the Shepparton Residential Precinct North.
Image supplied by Greater Shepparton City Council

role in many of the heritage improvements since its creation, particularly those around celebrating and promoting local heritage; here the commitment and enthusiasm of the volunteer members has been crucial. The most notable of these are:

- The biennial Greater Shepparton Cultural Heritage Awards event. Established in 2013, the Awards recognise outstanding contributions to cultural heritage conservation, research, education, promotion, interpretation, training and awareness-raising within the LGA.
- The biennial Heritage Lecture, since named the Bruce Wilson Memorial Heritage Lecture, after the former mayor, long-time councillor, history and heritage enthusiast, and inaugural Chair of HAC. Established in 2016, the event sees a distinguished heritage expert invited to present a lecture to the public.
- The biennial Heritage Open Day event. Inspired by Open House Melbourne, the Open Day event was established in 2017 and offers Greater Shepparton residents and tourists

the opportunity to visit various heritage places free of charge. Bus and walking tours are also provided free of charge. The 2017 event was so popular that the 2019 Heritage Open Day was expanded to two days, and future events may be held annually.

The Council complements this communication and promotion with a comprehensive section on the council website dedicated to local heritage, and through various media releases and advertising materials. Information about heritage places and events is shared through the Visitor Information Centre, which also offers guided heritage and art tours.

Leading on from the work of the HAC, the Greater Shepparton City Council sought to improve the identification and protection of local heritage. The Council, with strong background research undertaken by HAC members, began preparing the *City of Greater Shepparton Heritage Study Stage IIC* (Heritage Concepts Pty Ltd, 2017), which identified places primarily in the rural environment and smaller townships. A total of 178 interim HOs were applied to these places, while permanent controls were sought through Amendment C205. At the time of writing, the amendment was unanimously adopted by the Council in April 2020 and is under active consideration by the Minister for Planning. In 2019, the Council also developed the *Heritage Strategy 2019*. The document provides direction to Council for the ongoing work that is required to protect and manage heritage within the LGA. For example, the Strategy provides plans to investigate 20th-century heritage places, particularly those post-World War II, and to develop a thematic environmental history focusing on post-war migration to the region.

Coinciding with the 2017 study were efforts to support the owners of local heritage places. The Council, inspired by the HAC, created the Heritage Grants Program, a supportive measure designed to help owners improve the physical condition or appearance of a property within the Heritage Overlay. For the 2017–18 and 2018–19 financial years, the Council grants were worth up to \$5,000 for each successful applicant. For 2019–20, the HAC worked with the Council to increase that amount up to \$15,000. These grants provide 50% of the cost of works, with grant recipients providing the other 50%. Council officers describe it as ‘one of the best

initiatives [they] have ever undertaken’, as it communicates the message that Council is supportive of heritage property owners. The Council has also operated a free heritage advisory service since 2010.

Outcome

Greater Shepparton has greatly improved its local heritage management since 2010 and increased awareness of the municipality’s heritage and its value. It has identified and protected a wide variety of heritage, with plans to do even more in the future. It has provided advice and financial support to owners of local heritage places and developed an extensive platform to communicate, promote and celebrate local heritage in the local community and even beyond.

Lessons

The Greater Shepparton case highlights that the heritage focus of a council can be changed. Over the past decade, the work of council officers, the Heritage Advisor and volunteers through the HAC has seen Greater Shepparton embrace the importance of its local heritage. It has increased the identification and protection of heritage, and introduced measures to support the custodians of heritage places and celebrate the local heritage of Greater Shepparton. All of these contributions are considered crucial to the integrated best-practice management of local heritage.

References

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