

**BELLINGEN SHIRE COUNCIL**  
**BELLINGEN SHIRE HERITAGE STRATEGY**  
**2017 - 2020**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This Heritage Strategy has been prepared to set the future direction for heritage initiatives in the Bellingen Shire. It is also prepared to meet the requirements of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) as part of Council's 2 year funding agreement under the Local Heritage Places program for the 2017-2019 financial years.

The strategy has been prepared in accordance with the OEH and Heritage Council's *Recommendations for Local Government Heritage Management* and in consultation with Council's Heritage Advisor.

## **2.0 AIMS**

Bellingen Shire Council aims to achieve the following in the timeframe nominated by this strategy:

### ***2.1 Increased community participation, awareness and appreciation of heritage in our local area***

- a) In the 2018-2019 financial year, pending on confirmation of grant success, Council will engage suitably qualified heritage consultants to undertake a review of the current Bellingen Shire Heritage Study (1992). Community engagement is a key part of this process. The process is expected to result in the following beneficial effects:
- Increased community awareness and appreciation of the history and cultural heritage of the Bellingen Shire,
  - Greater community ownership of heritage listed items and places of the Bellingen Shire, and
  - Increased community awareness of the benefits of heritage listing and the availability of the Heritage Advisory Service and the Bellingen Shire Local Heritage Assistance Fund.
- b) Once the revised Bellingen Shire Heritage Study is adopted by Council, an electronic copy will be made available to view online for the first time. Increased access to such information will enhance community knowledge and awareness of significant items and places of the Bellingen Shire.

### ***2.2 Increased knowledge and proactive management of heritage in our local area***

- a) Council officers will continue to record items of potential heritage significance as identified during development assessment processes and site inspections in a centralised spreadsheet for future review of the significance of such items by a suitably qualified heritage specialist. Note: This has been an ongoing project since commencement of the current Bellingen Local Environmental Plan (BLEP) in 2010.

- b) Council officers will continue to make record of identified errors or gaps in the State Heritage Inventory (SHI) sheets and Schedule 5 - Environmental Heritage of the BLEP 2010 to inform a future review of the Bellingen Shire Heritage Strategy.
- c) In the 2018-2019 financial year, pending on confirmation of grant success, Council will engage suitably qualified heritage consultants to undertake a review of the current Bellingen Shire Heritage Study (1992). This review is expected to achieve the following outcomes:
- Updated SHI records for all current heritage items that are recommended by the Study for retention and all proposed heritage items,
  - A revised Schedule 5 that has been amended to rectify errors and that includes new items that have been assessed as being of local heritage significance, and
  - Correction of LEP heritage maps to ensure that they match up with Schedule 5.

This review and subsequent planning proposal to amend Schedule 5 of the BLEP 2010 as recommended by the revised Bellingen Shire Heritage Study will enhance existing measures to protect the Shires cultural heritage.

### ***2.3 Increased community participation and proactive heritage and urban design management in our local area***

- a) Council will continue to offer a Heritage Advisory Service. The Heritage Advisory Service offers free professional advice from Bellingen Shire Council's Heritage Advisor who visits Bellingen monthly or bi-monthly, as demand dictates. The advisory service is available to people who are planning on restoring, renovating, extending or redeveloping heritage listed buildings including non-listed buildings that are located within the Bellingen Conservation Area.

This advice can include appropriate colour schemes, best practice methods of undertaking conservation work, suitable ways of extending or renovating heritage listed buildings as well as more comprehensive advice on the integration of new development in heritage conservation areas.

Advice is available at all stages of a project from the feasibility stage through to the design stage. Council encourages owners to use this service during the initial design stage.

### ***2.4 Proactive heritage and urban design management in our local area***

- a) Council officers will continue to issue exemptions from the need to obtain development consent for work that is of a minor nature or is for the maintenance of a heritage item and will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the heritage item or the Bellingen Conservation Area in accordance with Clause 5.10 (3) of the BLEP 2010.
- b) In the 2018-2019 financial year, Council officers will develop illustrated fact sheets that illustrate best practice techniques and approaches for common types of works to heritage listed buildings based on the controls within Chapter 15 – Heritage of the Bellingen Shire Development Control Plan 2017 such as:

- Installation of modern technologies ie. solar panels and hot water systems,
- Colour schemes for heritage listed houses,
- Routine building maintenance works,
- Signage for buildings located within the Bellingen Conservation Area, and
- Roof replacement.

These fact sheets will be available in hard copy at Council's Administration Office and to download from Council's website.

### ***2.5 Increased community participation and proactive conservation and management of heritage in our local area***

- a) Council will continue to operate the Local Heritage Assistance Fund each year to encourage property owners to undertake conservation and maintenance works to their heritage listed buildings. Interpretative projects can also be funded under this program.
- b) Increase community awareness of the availability of the Local Heritage Assistance Fund prior and during the application period by using a variety of techniques that could include:
  - Leaflet drop off to targeted premises such as in the main street of Bellingen,
  - Letters to property owners of heritage listed items that require restoration or conservation,
  - Media Releases,
  - Inclusion of information in news section on Council's website,
  - Advertisements in the local paper,
  - Inclusion of information about the LHAF in the community newsletter, and
  - Mayor's column in the local newspaper.

### ***2.6 Council, owners and the community actively participate in attractive and well-managed main streets.***

- a) Council's current Main Street Study, which covers a total of 64 buildings within Hyde Street Bellingen, is over 20 years old. The study requires updating to include details of modifications undertaken to each building since the study was published, a current photo of each building and to provide a new set of recommendations that reflect best practice in heritage conservation and take into account the current condition of each building. The OEH offers funding for Main Street studies on an annual basis. If Council's grant application for a review of its current Heritage Study is not successful, Council officers will make application for funding towards a new Heritage Main Street Study under the next OEH Local Government Heritage Planning Studies grant program when it opens for applications in late 2018.
- b) Council's Heritage Advisor will continue to provide conservation advice to individual property owners of buildings in Hyde Street as part of the Heritage Advisory Service until such time as a new Main Street Study is prepared and adopted by Council.
- c) In the 2018-2019 financial year, Council will focus the marketing of the Local Heritage Assistance Fund to property owners of buildings within the CBD

area of the Bellingen Conservation Area in order to encourage owners to conserve and restore their buildings. Projects that are considered worthy of support in this area include:

- Restoration of awning structures, fascias, parapets and verandahs,
- Reinstatement or restoration of original awning fascia, wall face applied panel and parapet panel signage,
- External repainting in cases where the existing colour scheme and paintwork is inappropriate for the building or in poor condition,
- Restoration or reinstatement of original shopfronts,
- Urgent conservation work, and
- Removal of air conditioning units and mechanical exhaust fans from front facades of shopfronts and relocation to a more suitable and less intrusive location.

### ***2.7 Increased awareness and appreciation of heritage by the council, owners and the community in our local area***

- a) Support local heritage and National Trust Festival events by including event information on Council's website.
- b) Inform, engage and involve key stakeholders and groups including the Chambers of Commerce, Local Historical Societies, property owners of heritage items and Family History Groups in the review of the Bellingen Shire Heritage Study and the preparation of the Main Street Study.
- c) Increase community access to available cultural heritage information by scanning and creating electronic copies of documents held by Council and uploading these to Council's website. These documents include:
  - The current Main Street Study prepared by Tim Shellshear,
  - The current Bellingen Shire Heritage Study (1992) prepared by Perumal Murphy Wu, and
  - The Bellingen Conservation Area Heritage Report (2002) prepared by Gary Stanley.
- d) Continually update the Heritage Assistance page on Council's website to provide more helpful information and external links as they become available, such as:
  - OEH Heritage publications including the "Maintenance Series",
  - Information on other heritage grants available through OEH or other organisations,
  - Information about when consent is required for works involving heritage listed items or within the Bellingen Conservation Area,
  - A standard template form for people seeking an exemption from the need for development consent for minor works to heritage items,
  - Local Heritage Trail brochures for Urunga and Bellingen,
  - Fact sheets produced by Council staff in conjunction with Council's Heritage Advisor that outline best practice approaches and techniques for the most common works involving heritage items.
- e) Continue to support Council's Heritage Advisors initiative to run annual workshops on heritage topics for relevant Council staff and councillors.

### **2.8 Council proactively conserves and manages its heritage assets.**

- a) Prepare an inventory and map of Council owned or managed heritage listed structures and items. This map will be converted to a GIS layer that can be viewed using Council's Arc Reader system.
- b) Once all Council owned or managed heritage assets are identified and mapped, heritage asset maintenance plans for these will be developed and implemented with indicative timeframes and costings.
- c) Prepare and implement an unexpected finds procedure, similar to the Roads and Maritime Authority's *Standard Management Procedure: Unexpected Finds (2012)* that will be applicable to any excavation work carried out by Council.
- d) Seek funding for the preparation of Conservation Management Plans for high priority heritage listed assets.
- e) Council staff in conjunction with Council's Heritage Advisor will identify Council owned sites or places of heritage significance that are worthy of an interpretation project in the future.
- f) Investigate funding opportunities for interpretation projects for Council owned places or sites.

### **2.9 Proactive heritage and sustainable development in our local area**

- a) Council will continue to encourage and support compatible adaptive reuse of both heritage listed buildings and contributory buildings (as identified by Chapter 15 of the Bellingen Shire DCP 2017) located within the Bellingen Conservation Area,
- b) Council will continue to support the incorporation of energy efficient design solutions into heritage buildings provided this is undertaken in a sensitive manner that minimises the impact of such works on the heritage significance of the building.
- c) Council will continue to encourage sensitive application of BASIX requirements for new buildings within the Bellingen Conservation Area and on buildings located within the curtilage of heritage listed items.