

Cultural Heritage Assessment Guidelines – Tasmania

Introduction 🏞️

Cultural heritage in Tasmania—encompassing both Aboriginal and historic values—is vital to the state’s identity. A Cultural Heritage Assessment (CHA) systematically identifies, evaluates, and manages heritage values in the context of proposed development. These guidelines offer a clear, legislation-backed framework suitable for digital integration.

1. Legislative & Policy Framework 📋

- **Aboriginal Heritage Act 1975 (Tas)** – primary legislation protecting Aboriginal relics, sites, and objects, administered by Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania [Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania Cultural Heritage](#).
 - **Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995 (Tas)** – establishes the Tasmanian Heritage Council and protects places of historic cultural heritage significance [Tasmanian Legislation Online+1](#).
 - **Amendments (2024)** – enhancements effective from 1 January 2025 strengthen protection of historic built heritage and ease regulatory engagement [Heritage Tasmania+1](#).
 - **Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS)** – provides best-practice conservation principles and procedures [Wikipedia](#).
 - **Integration with planning legislation** – the Historic Cultural Heritage Act is embedded within the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993 framework [Heritage Tasmania](#).
 - **Ongoing reform** – A new Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Protection Act is anticipated, following consultation and legislative review (review report released July 2021; exposure draft expected) [Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania+1](#).
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2. Key Principles 🌞

- **Early Assessment** – heritage considerations must be integrated at project inception.
- **Respect & Recognition** – uphold Aboriginal and historic cultural values.

- **Authentic Engagement** – consult Aboriginal groups, heritage councils, local authorities, and communities.
 - **Transparency** – document methodologies, decisions, and heritage value assessments clearly.
 - **Avoid, Minimise, Mitigate** – aim to avoid heritage impacts; if not feasible, minimise and propose mitigation.
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3. Assessment Process

Step 1: Background Research & Desktop Review

- Obtain a **Search Record** by submitting a Desktop Review to Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania—this is not a permit [Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania](#).
- Review registers: Aboriginal Heritage Register, Tasmanian Heritage Register, and national listings.

Step 2: Consultation

- Engage with **Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania**, Tasmanian Heritage Council, local councils, and affected communities in good faith.

Step 3: Field Survey

- Conduct on-ground survey for Aboriginal sites (e.g. artefact scatters, shell middens) and historic elements (e.g. buildings, ruins, landscapes).
- Document all findings precisely (GPS data, photos, sketches, notes).

Step 4: Significance Assessment

- Evaluate values (cultural, historic, scientific, social) using legislation and the Burra Charter criteria [Tasmanian Legislation OnlineWikipedia](#).
- Assign significance level: local, state, national.

Step 5: Impact Assessment

- Analyse direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of proposed works on identified heritage values.

Step 6: Management Recommendations

- Propose avoidance strategies (redesigns, buffer zones), mitigation (recording heritage, salvage, interpretation), and monitoring during works.

Step 7: Reporting & Compliance

- Compile a comprehensive CHA Report detailing context, methodology, results, impacts, and recommendations.
 - Submit to relevant authorities (e.g. Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania for Aboriginal sites, Heritage Council for historic sites).
 - If heritage cannot be avoided, apply for a **Permit** under the appropriate Act [Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania](#).
 - If consented, proceed under permit conditions; if refused, re-assess possible options [Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania](#).
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4. Ethical Engagement & Good Practice 🧠

- Collaborate respectfully with Aboriginal representatives, adhering to cultural protocols and safeguarding sensitive information.
 - Historic heritage engagement should involve local history groups and relevant community stakeholders.
 - Maintain confidentiality where required, especially in handling Aboriginal site information.
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5. Additional Tools & Resources 📖

- **Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania** – legislation, processes, forms, guidance [Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania](#).
- **Standards & Procedures** – detailed process guidance, including technical considerations and flowcharts [Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania+1](#).
- **Works Guidelines** – for permitted interventions on registered heritage places under the Historic Cultural Heritage Act [Heritage Tasmania](#).
- **Assessing Historic Significance** – guidance document to support significance evaluations [Heritage Tasmania](#).