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Heritage Strategy

2023 - 2026

**Authorisation Details**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Authorised by:** | Council | **Internal/External:** | External |
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| **Department:** | Environmental and Planning Services | | |
| **Document Owner:** | Director Environmental and Planning Services | | |
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| **Community Strategic Plan Goal** | 4: A culturally rich and diverse Community with strong identities, history and sense of belonging | | |
| **Community Strategic Plan Strategy** | 4.1: Conserve the heritage and history of the Shire | | |
| **Delivery Program activity** | 4.1.1: Support the conservation and restoration of the Shire’s heritage items | | |

### i) Introduction

This document has been prepared to set the future direction for heritage initiatives in Muswellbrook Shire. It is also prepared to meet the requirements of Heritage NSW in association with the funding agreement to support local government heritage management in NSW. As a condition of heritage funding, councils must prepare or update a heritage strategy to guide heritage management in their area.

Muswellbrook Shire comprises the town of Muswellbrook and villages of Denman and Sandy Hollow, as well as other rural areas, including many properties associated with the early European settlement of the Hunter Valley. The Shire is being increasingly developed, particularly with open cut mines and renewable energy projects, and this has exposed the need to protect items of heritage significance and heritage conservation areas.

The purpose of this document is to provide a summary of the activities that Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC) will undertake in relation to heritage management for the financial years 2023-2024, 2024-2025, and 2025-2026.

The implementation of this Strategy will be the responsibility of MSC and Council’s Heritage Advisor.

The Strategy is based on the nine (9) recommendations in the the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage publication titled, ‘*Recommendations for Local Council Heritage Management*.’

### 1.0 Establish a Heritage Committee to deal with heritage matters in your local area

*Aims*

Increased community participation, awareness, and appreciation of heritage in the local area.

*Actions*

* Review and update Muswellbrook LEP 2009 and Muswellbrook DCP 2009.
* Promote good heritage practice among community groups and managers of heritage items.
* Assist community groups to properly manage heritage places under their control by providing timely advice and assistance with management planning.

### 2.0 Identify the Heritage Items in the Muswellbrook Shire and list them in the Muswellbrook Local Environmental Plan 2009.

*Aims:*

Increased knowledge and proactive management of heritage in the Muswellbrook area.

*Actions:*

* Council and/or consultants to begin a period of negotiation with the Aboriginal stakeholders in the LGA with the aim of applying for funding in the future for an LGA wide Aboriginal Study.
* Update the European Heritage Study for use on the internet (currently a hard copy scanned document).
* With guidance from Council’s Heritage Advisor, continue to assess potential items of environmental heritage within the Shire for inclusion in Schedule 5 of the *Muswellbrook Local Environmental Plan 2009* (MLEP 2009) and State Heritage Register.
* With guidance from Council’s Heritage Advisor, review the Shire’s heritage conservation areas to ensure they provide a true reflection of significant areas of environmental heritage.

### 3.0 Manage a heritage advisor service to assist the council, the community and owners of listed heritage items.

*Aims:*

Increased community participation and proactive heritage and urban design management in the Muswellbrook area.

*Actions:*

* Encourage active involvement with community heritage groups and heritage events through the Heritage Committee.
* Encourage and advertise the advantages of seeking advice at the early stages of a design and the opportunity for the Heritage Advisor to visit sites and speak to owners directly.
* The Heritage Adviser to continue to provide advice and support to Council in planning and development issues as necessary through staff referrals. This involves formal advice on development applications or other works likely to impact on heritage items or places of significance.
* Provide assistance with the preparation of related planning and development documents to assist Council staff in the preparation of heritage related documentation.
* Attend a bi-monthly Heritage Committee meeting with Council’s Development Officers to discuss heritage issues and attend site inspections.
* Continue to assist Council in other planning issues as recommended by Heritage NSW such as urban design and streetscape issues.

### 4.0 Manage Local Heritage in a Positive Manner

*Aims:*

Proactive heritage and urban design management in your local area

*Actions:*

* Apply for funding, and assist in a review of the DCP and heritage guidelines that apply to each conservation area and significant heritage precincts.

### 5.0 Manage a local heritage incentives fund to provide small grants to encourage local heritage projects

*Aims:*

Increased community participation and proactive conservation and management of heritage in the Muswellbrook area.

*Actions:*

* Advertise and encourage through the community and the Heritage Committee the opportunity for all owners of all heritage properties to apply for funding.

### 6.0 Manage the heritage main street program

*Aims:*

Council, property owners, and the community actively participate in the attractive and well managed heritage main streets.

*Actions:*

* Review the Denman Main Street Study and revitalise the interest in this street.
* Encourage and support owners of significant buildings within the CBD area by assisting them in making applications under the Local Heritage Fund and State grant applications for positive repair or restoration work.
* Update DCP provisions for heritage main streets and to incorporate masterplans for Denman and Muswellbrook town centres.

### 7.0 Present Educational and Promotional Programs

*Aims:*

Increased awareness and appreciation of heritage by the council, property owners, and the community in the Muswellbrook area.

*Actions:*

* Undertake workshops in council and the local area to explain the heritage clauses of the Muswellbrook Local Environmental Plan and the listing and the constraints and opportunities of heritage listing.
* Continue to promote the heritage attractions in the Muswellbrook area to residents and visitors to the region. Work with the Muswellbrook Visitor Information Centre to make the most of opportunities to link these and other heritage sites. Confer with Council’s Economic Development team to assist in developing a cultural heritage tourism industry.
* Develop Council’s existing internet web pages to include relevant heritage information and material to assist in a greater appreciation of local history.

### 8.0 Set a good example to the community by properly managing places owned or operated by the Council

*Aims:*

Council proactively conserves and manages its heritage assets.

*Actions:*

* Prepare Conservation Management Plans for significant Council owned or managed heritage buildings. This could include working with and encouraging other State Government agencies also directly involved, such as the State Rail Authority or Department of Lands etc.
* Prepare a simple plan of management for the historic cemeteries, covering broad aspects of care and conservation.

### 9.0 Promote sustainable development as a tool for heritage conservation

*Aims:*

Proactive heritage and sustainable development in your local area.

*Actions:*

* Promote heritage and sustainable development in the Shire by providing heritage advice service to members of the public and to council staff.
* Council to promote and encourage the adaptive re-use, or infill, or sympathetic additions to historic buildings. Consider extending the waiving or reduction in DA charges and fees for positive projects that support those principles in the Muswellbrook area.
* Encourage sustainable heritage tourism commercial ventures or state projects associated with the adjacent National Parks.

### Actions Table

| **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Completion Date** | **Commenced** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Identify heritage items for addition to or removal of items from the State Heritage Inventory Database and Local Environmental Plan. | Planner  Heritage Advisor  Heritage Committee | Ongoing | Yes |
| Review the Shire’s heritage conservation areas to ensure they provide a true reflection of significant areas of environmental heritage | Heritage Advisor  Heritage Committee | 2028 | No |
| Appoint a Heritage Advisor to assist Council, the community, and owners of listed heritage items. | Planner  Heritage Committee | Ongoing | Yes |
| Provide owners of heritage listed properties with appropriate heritage conservation advice. | Heritage Advisor | Ongoing | Yes |
| Maintain a local heritage assistance fund, based on Council’s budget, to provide small grants to encourage local heritage projects.  Setup policy/ procedure for the fund. | Heritage Advisor  Heritage Committee | Ongoing – with budget limitations | Yes |
| Broaden the criteria for local fund projects, in accordance with the Eligibility for Funding, as defined in the Heritage Office publication ‘How to Establish a Local Heritage Fund’, to meet the needs of the types of restoration projects within the community. | Heritage Advisor | As above | No |
| Update DCP provisions for heritage main streets and to incorporate masterplans for Denman and Muswellbrook town centres. | Heritage Advisor | TBA | No |
| Develop a range of educational brochures for the area in respect to heritage tourism, trails, and events.  Extend the range of brochures for legislative issues: heritage conservation and management. Provide information on the most commonly asked heritage questions and matters.  Provide these brochures to the Tourist Information Centres, Heritage Groups, and on Council’s website and display areas. | Tourism/ Heritage Committee/ Heritage Advisor | TBA | No |
| Provide support to community and tourism groups in the development of cultural heritage tourism projects and programs. | Heritage Committee/ Heritage Advisor | TBA | No |
| Ensure that asset management plans and maintenance budgets are in place for all Council owned heritage listed properties and that consultation with Council’s Heritage Advisor occurs. | Asset Engineer/ Technician, Parks & Facilities | Commenced | Yes |
| Encourage appropriate change of use for heritage buildings to ensure the ongoing use and maintenance of those buildings by providing available Council resources and identifying and incorporating opportunities. | Planner  Heritage Advisor | TBA | TBA |
| Prepare a simple plan of management for the historic cemeteries covering broad aspects of care and conservation. | Heritage Advisor | TBA | TBA |
| Update DCP provisions for alterations and additions to buildings within heritage conservation areas or heritage items, and for new buildings near heritage items. | Heritage Advisor | Underway & ongoing | Yes |

### Version History

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Version No.** | **Date changed** | **Modified by** | **Amendments/Previous adoption details** |
| 1 |  |  | Heritage Strategy 2014-2017 |
| 2 | 11.07.2016 | Director - Planning, Community and Corporate Services | Adopted by Council 11 July 2016, Minute No. 8 |
| 3 | 08.08.2023 | Director Environmental and Planning Services | Revised draft version.  Public exhibition of draft strategy 24/08/23-21/09/23.  Adopted by Council 24 October 2023, Minute No.145 |
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