

# Report Guidelines

## for Aboriginal Heritage Investigations

All consultants should refer to the Guidelines to the Burra Charter: Cultural Significance, Conservation Policy, and Procedures for Undertaking Studies and Reports, for guidance relating to the contents and preparation of reports. These guidelines set out the basic information requirements for managing heritage values. All sections of these guidelines directly relate to the expected format and content of cultural heritage reports.

It is accepted that the scope of the contents of a report will vary according to the demands of a particular project.

Consultants are reminded that site location information and content information should be treated as confidential. In many cases it will be appropriate to provide detailed site information as a confidential addendum to a report.

### Cover

Include:

- the title of the report
- author
- name of the department or company producing the report
- year and month.

- account of results
- account of recommendations.

(Depending on the nature and length of the report, the abstract should be able to be extracted as a plain English report if this is required. Consultants are reminded that a plain English style is preferred throughout the report.)

### Title Page

This should have all of the above information, with the addition of author contact details and for whom the report is written.

### Introduction

State the aims of the study with some reference to the project brief. Include:

- the reasons for the study
- where the study was conducted
- who funded the project
- timing of project and its stages
- people involved and consulted
- any constraints on the project
- a location map
- the aims of the project.

The project brief must be included as an appendix.

### Contents

This should list page numbers for:

- text (chapters, sections)
- tables
- figures
- plates
- appendices.

### Background Information

Background information, e.g. environmental, historical and any previous cultural heritage work is important contextual information. It should be presented as an aid to the study for the purposes of designing the survey strategy and interpreting the cultural resource.

Environment

Only include information relevant to past human behaviour, site formation processes and conditions of site visibility.

### Acknowledgements

As required

### Abstract

This should summarise the following:

- who commissioned and funded the work
- account of aims

Identify and describe land systems in terms of geology/geomorphology, climatic condition, habitat, vegetation structure and food resources. The establishment of land systems for an area should be seen as an aide to developing site predictive models for the study area.

#### *Landscape Assessment and Characterisation*

Undertake a landscape assessment and characterisation of the area under consideration. This may form the basis for a future sampling strategy including test-pitting or other excavation. Consider not only the gross landscape forms but also micro-topographical features that may have promoted/constrained Aboriginal site formation

#### *Ethno-history, Historical documents, Oral history*

Only include information relevant to the study, make an assessment of the reliability of ethno-historical and historical sources. Provide both contextual and specific historical information.

#### *Previous Aboriginal heritage work*

This should be fairly brief. Identify previous studies and survey areas. Identify patterns in site type and location. Assess the adequacy of previous work and summarise current models.

## Research Design and Field Methods

#### *State Research Aims*

These should be designed to meet the objectives of the project (outlined in the brief) but can also address specific questions and/or aim to test current models.

#### *Outline Survey Strategy*

The survey strategy should be designed to meet the objectives of the study. For many studies this may be 100% coverage. For very broad-acre (regional) studies some form of sampling will take place. This section should describe:

- the representative sample of all land systems (for site predictive purposes) selected in the study area
  - the sampling method employed.
- and may also respond to:
- areas highlighted in the background ethnographic/historical search
  - areas associated with previous findings.

#### *Describe the Field Methods*

The logistics of the survey should be described. This includes the time taken, people used, sampling strategy employed, and survey methods (e.g. transects, quadrants, targeted areas, etc.) undertaken. Aspects such as conditions encountered, visibility, restrictions, weather and land tenure, etc. should also be mentioned.

Note the practical field recording methods employed,

e.g. definitions of site boundaries, recording site contents, quantifying site contents, assessing condition of site preservation and condition, and the means used to record features and specific elements.

## Results

Clearly present full descriptions of places, features, and cultural landscapes, including their condition. The TASI site recording forms should be used as a basis for the level of recording required. Include the following information:

- survey coverage (% of each land system)
- visibility (% of ground surface exposure)
- processes affecting site formation and condition.

Consultants are expected to estimate the percentage of the total area surveyed. The figure provided must be verifiable. It must include the size of the study area, number of surveyors, length of transects with width of visual coverage, and average visibility (e.g. results represented as a percentage survey of a 1km square block, using two surveyors, 1km parallel transects 20m apart with 6m visual coverage per person, high visibility).

All reports should include a best scale map upon which is delineated a GPS track record of all survey transects taken.

Copies of the fully completed site recording form(s) used should be included as a confidential appendix that is removable.

The results should also include summary information about the number of sites recorded and their general locations. This can be presented according to the land systems.

NB: Individual site descriptions including TASI numbers and site locations with grid references should be presented in a gazetteer as a confidential appendix that is removable. Eastings and northings should be recorded as six and seven figure numbers respectively, and should be determined using a GPS. Where surveys are carried out in areas which have recently been mapped using the GDA coordinate system then grid references should be based on the GDA 94 datum only. Currently, in most cases, 1:25,000 maps are still published based on the older AGD 66 system. In this case grid references should be given using both GDA 94 and AGD 66 datums. Ensure that the datum system used is indicated.

Maps should be provided showing areas surveyed and site locations. Landscape assessments should show boundaries of landscape types. Maps preferably should also be provided as digital layers in GIS format.

Photographs (plates) included should be annotated as to TASI number and photographer. Published

photographs of sites should include a scale and a board with field number, north point, date and photographer.

Clearly present a full description of any community consultation undertaken, including the names of groups consulted, the attitudes of those consulted and a full list of questions and topics covered. Provide an account of the discussions entered into and any recommendations flowing from those discussions. (Clearly mark any issues that may need to remain confidential, and whether some people consulted wished to remain anonymous.)

## Analysis

The level of analysis depends on the brief and research design and type of data recorded in the field. All of this will vary from study to study.

For purposes of analysing site distribution consider:

- survey coverage
- visibility
- site formation processes
- erosion
- landscape issues.

For purposes of interpreting site type and function consider:

- features
- contents (e.g. artefact analyses)
- structure
- aspect
- location.

Ensure that the level of analysis and approach used meet the stated aims of the study.

## Interpretation and Discussion

Interpret the results and discuss the nature and distribution of the cultural resource. Present/test models of past subsistence/settlement patterns for the study area. From the results identify areas of known heritage sensitivity. Make predictive statements about the location of particular site types. It is important to provide a detailed account of the likelihood of subsurface material potentially present.

## Assessment of Cultural Resource

Assessments of the cultural resource should be made to determine the scientific significance of sites. This should be done from a scientific perspective by the Archaeologist. The definition of significance set out in The Burra Charter provides a standard for this assessment.

The cultural significance of the site should incorporate the opinion of the Aboriginal community representative and the results of any Aboriginal community consultation.

Significance assessments are essential for subsequent:

- management recommendations
- identifying sites which require further assessment and research
- identifying sites with educational value.

The following should be established when assessing values:

- state of preservation
- site content
- site structure
- representativeness within the study area and within a broader context.

It is also important to address the question of the significance of sites to particular Aboriginal community groups who have close affinity with the sites or study area. Close consideration of consultation with particular groups is required.

Any threats to the sites should be assessed.

## Recommendations

Define policies and strategies for protection, conservation, presentation and management of values. Identify who should implement management strategies and how. Identify areas of heritage sensitivity, make recommendations for current and/or future land use in the areas, and respond to particular issues that may have prompted the study.

It is important to specify the legislative requirements for developers and the procedures to be followed if permits must be obtained to destroy, disturb, or otherwise deal with sites. This requirement applies to the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*. Recommendations for permits must be accompanied by:

- an account of the proposed work which will impact on a site
- a specific site plan showing the extent of the site and area of potential impact,
- a description of the site,
- a comparative assessment of the site,
- an account of the scientific significance of the site
- an account of the cultural/social significance of the site, supported by Aboriginal community consultation
- an account of any alternative options to interference that have been canvassed.

Recommendations can also include:

- identifying sites for educational purposes
- identifying future work and research requirements.

If sites will survive in whole or part within the confines of the development area, then recommendations for their long-term survival must be made.

## Bibliography

A full bibliography must be presented using the Harvard System (note that precise punctuation, capitalisation, layout, etc. must be used).

## Appendices

Appendices must include a copy of the brief, a gazetteer of sites discovered and copies of site recording forms, as well as other pertinent information that is not appropriate for inclusion in the main body of the report.

## Glossary of Terms

A glossary of terms should include definitions of technical terms used in the text.

## Plates

All photos must be of a high quality and suitable for reproduction. All photos should be referred to in the text to make their relevance clear.

Photographs (plates) included should be annotated as to TASI number and photographer. Published photographs of sites should include a scale and a board with field number, North point, date and photographer.

## Figures

All maps including site plans must have a scale and grid or magnetic north arrow. All maps as well as other figures and tables must be referred to in the text.

NB. All references to sites recorded during the survey and previously recorded sites must include TASI site numbers. Site numbers will be issued by AHT on receipt of completed site recording forms.

## Style

Consultants are advised to edit their reports according to the latest edition of the Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printers, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

## Plain Language Report

Where consultants are requested to provide Plain Language Reports for issue to media and special interest groups, such reports should be less than 1000 words long. They should not use sentences over fifteen words in length. They should refrain from using adjectives and adverbs. Each sentence should contain only one idea.