

# Our People, Culture & Place

A new heritage plan  
for Ballarat  
2016 - 2030

**PRELIMINARY  
HERITAGE  
PLAN**

For discussion  
August 2016



**Step 5: Historic Collections  
and Public Assets**



## Step 5: Historic Collections and Public Assets

The City of Ballarat is responsible for an array of historic public assets including objects, historic records, public buildings, gardens, places and spaces. In addition, many other organisations care for historic assets and collections. These historic collections can provide us with the rich resource to know our city and tell Ballarat's stories – we can't do this without them. This section proposes recognising our public assets as important, undertaking a range of steps to unlock Ballarat's stories and taking action to provide appropriate storage and access to Council's historic collections.

The 'real deal' can fascinate us – imagine standing in front of Ned Kelly's original photos and reading his handwritten letters (did you know that Ned's father married Ellen Quinn in 1851 in Ballarat?) or think about what it feels like to look up (and up!) at the Eureka flag.

### What does HUL need us to do?

The HUL approach recognises that 'culturally vibrant cities build stimulating environments, acting as incubators for creativity and appealing to diverse groups of people.'<sup>53</sup> Ballarat's competitive advantage is our outstanding urban environment and a community rich with stories. It's the distinguishing things about our city that inspires and appeals to many people.

Much of what makes up Ballarat's distinctive 'DNA' is captured in our historic collections and public assets. They are the key to unlocking Ballarat's story – we can't do it without them. The collections give the city its characters and stories, and if used well can further showcase the city as a unique location. As such they provide us with a critical piece of the puzzle to enhance and sustain the cultural vibrancy of our city.



Image20 Uncovering the time capsule that was placed in the Burke & Wills fountain in Sturt Street, Ballarat by Governor Henry Barkly in 1863 captured the interest of the nation.

<sup>53</sup> WHITRAP, City of Ballarat, Federation University Australia (2016) *The Historic Urban Landscape Guidebook: Managing heritage in dynamic and constantly changing environments. A practical guide to UNESCO's Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape.*

### What are we doing now?

At present we're not able to make the most of this rich resource. For example, key cultural events like the Ballarat Heritage Weekend rely on our city's stories and collections to create unique experiences. However this isn't easy. While we have a growing number of accessible collections in organisations like the Ballarat Archives Centre (PROV), the Ballarat Gold Museum and the Art Gallery of Ballarat; and online platforms like Trove, Victorian Collections<sup>54</sup> and a few locally run websites; much of our city's collections and stories remain difficult to find and use.

To date, key stakeholders including the State Government and the City of Ballarat have undertaken a number of studies to identify ways forward. In addition, the City of Ballarat has established a research partnership with CeRDI<sup>55</sup> to begin to make our past and present stories, collections and associated research easily accessible and useable online. The early results - [www.hulballarat.org.au](http://www.hulballarat.org.au) and [www.visualisingballarat.org.au](http://www.visualisingballarat.org.au) – continue to evolve in collaboration with a range of stakeholders using 'smart' city principles.<sup>56</sup>

### Next Steps

The solutions are not short-term. What's important is that we make a start, guided by a long-term vision to make the best use of our historic collections and public assets to help enhance and sustain the cultural vibrancy of our city.

We're proposing to:

- Recognise the role that public assets play in addressing our society's changing needs
- Unlock Ballarat's stories
  - Strengthen partnerships that can provide leadership and research
  - Support capacity building initiatives for professional, indigenous and volunteer heritage organisations
  - Explore solutions for a heritage 'one stop shop'

<sup>54</sup> <http://trove.nla.gov.au/> and <https://victoriancollections.net.au/>

<sup>55</sup> Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation (CeRDI), Federation University Australia

<sup>56</sup> 'Smart' cities use multiple innovative digital-based and people-centred methods to become more efficient.

- Provide appropriate storage and access to the City of Ballarat's historic collection
  - Improve the condition and accessibility of Council's historic collections
  - Apply the City of Ballarat 'Historic Assets Management – Strategy and Procedures Manual'
  - Work closely with Public Record Office Victoria to identify and transfer historic records and items
  - Progress long-term storage and access solutions

## PRINCIPLE 8 RECOGNISE THE ROLE THAT PUBLIC ASSETS PLAY IN ADDRESSING OUR SOCIETY'S CHANGING NEEDS

There is an increasing awareness of the growing cultural and creative industries and the important role these industries play in the changing economy. These industries often find inspiration in our past – whether that is through stories or in intriguing and different characters, places and spaces.

### PROPOSAL 31: Flag historic public assets in City of Ballarat's asset's systems to recognise their intrinsic and potential value to Ballarat and mitigate risks

In addition to more than 3,000 historic collection items (Figure 11 on page 80), the City of Ballarat is an owner of a wide variety of historic public assets as well as a manager and/or trustee of historic places on behalf of the State Government. These places not only have aesthetic, economic, social and historic value to the local community but they can provide inspiration for and therefore attract creative-based endeavours.

Historic public assets open up potential for low-cost access by arts and community-based organisations as well as business start-ups (such as co-working labs). In fact, many community groups care for our historic assets and use them for a wide variety of local activities today (Image 21).

It is essential that we recognise the potential of these assets as the city grows and new opportunities for these resources present themselves. In addition to the Collingwood Arts Precinct example (Case Study 20), there are other examples of city's leveraging their community groups and cultural activities such as Geelong, Walsh Bay Sydney and London's Southbank.

At this point in time we don't have triggers for historic places in our assets system meaning that their intrinsic and potential value to Ballarat, along with any special requirements due to the age of the assets, is not clearly indicated. This poses a potential risk.

This paper proposes to *flag* public heritage assets in the assets system so that they are *attributed as heritage* with any specific documentation regarding their care attached and notes about:

- emergency management considerations during recovery
- particular statutory planning requirements
- known social values and potential uses



**Image 21** Public assets are very important to local communities. Learmonth & District Historical Society volunteers have fully embraced the refurbished Learmonth Shire Offices and actively play a part in its conservation. This public asset provides a home for the Society, their records and museum and a function hall (with renovated kitchen) for the local community and visitors.

## Case Study 20

### Collingwood Arts Precinct

'The former Collingwood Technical School site in inner north Melbourne has been a place of creativity, collaboration and inspiration for more than 140 years. Now, a visionary project is set to transform the site into a thriving contemporary arts precinct.

The art deco façade of the site is well known to locals, but behind those doors lays a long-neglected treasure. Thousands of students were educated there since the 1870s, but in 2005 the school was closed and the Collingwood site was abandoned. For more than a decade, it has collected dust and fallen into disrepair.

"The vision is to take this amazing site and to create a precinct or a hub of creative activity which brings together all sorts of possibilities," says Marcus Westbury, CEO of the newly established Contemporary Arts Precincts Ltd (CAP).

Westbury is inspired by the faded grandeur of the site, with its abundant natural light, sweeping views across the city and its proximity to the hustle and bustle of Smith Street.

Westbury and the CAP board have modelled a future for the site inspired by international organisations including Artscape (Toronto), Acme Studios (London) and Artspace (US). But in Australia, CAP will be the first of its kind – a charitable social enterprise managing a vibrant, cross-disciplinary cultural precinct that provides secure customised space for the creative industries.'



(Source:

[http://creative.vic.gov.au/News/Showcase/Feature\\_Stories/working\\_And\\_Collaboration/Collingwood\\_Arts\\_Precinct](http://creative.vic.gov.au/News/Showcase/Feature_Stories/working_And_Collaboration/Collingwood_Arts_Precinct))

### QUESTIONS:

- ? At the moment, how do we identify if a public asset is of Local, State or National heritage significance?
- ? What other processes may be needed to preserve the value of these assets?

## PRINCIPLE 9 UNLOCK BALLARAT'S STORIES<sup>57</sup>

### PROPOSAL 32: Strengthen partnerships that can provide leadership and research to achieve a common vision for Ballarat's historic collections

Ballarat has a number of strong cultural heritage organisations both at the professional and volunteer level. At the moment though, many of these organisations work largely independently from each other.

Ballarat has already proven its ability to make a difference to historic collection processes through partnerships, for example:

- the Ballarat Collections Network was established in 2008 to address disaster recovery issues for historic collections with efforts recognised by Blueshield Australia, the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross.
- Federation University Australia's Collaborative Research Centre in Australian History (CRAH) has set up a number of partnerships with local collecting organisation to access and research significant local historic collections.
- Ballarat's professional cultural institutions are partnering to bring large exhibitions to the city linked with their own collections, including M.A.D.E, Sovereign Hill and the Gold Museum's recent '19<sup>th</sup> Century BLING' exhibition. 'BLING' has been supported financially by the State Government in recognition of the role these types of exhibitions play as a key economic driver in the region.<sup>58</sup>

Reports, like *Victorian Goldfields – Australia's Premier Heritage Region*, continue to identify that fragmentation of Ballarat's cultural organisations is limiting our achievements. There is significant opportunity to enhance leadership and partnerships to consolidate strengths and progress both heritage and cultural tourism initiatives.

<sup>57</sup> Concepts for proposals and some text sourced from Forest, J (2013) *Accessing Our Regional Heritage*. Stage One: Needs Analysis. Final Report: City of Ballarat, PROV, RDV

<sup>58</sup> Source: <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/ballarat-to-showcase-gold-diggers-bling-in-new-exhibition/>

It is proposed to work towards strengthening partnerships by bringing together a **working party to map out how we can best achieve a long-term vision for Ballarat's collections as part of an enhanced and sustainable culturally vibrant city.**



#### QUESTIONS:

- ? Who needs to be in a historic/cultural collections working party and what can they bring to the process?

### PROPOSAL 33: Support capacity building initiatives for professional, indigenous and volunteer heritage organisations

Government may never have the capacity to fully respond to community demand for the care of historic collections however we can assist by supporting capacity building initiatives to occur in Ballarat. Such support may also assist community-based historical associations to develop a professional tourism offering and community service.

Some organisations, including Public Record Office Victoria (PROV)<sup>60</sup> and Museums Australia Victoria, offer training to community organisations for collection care, storage and access. A number of local groups are keen to develop their skills base in this area and many have also highlighted a need for training in governance and communications.

Members of the Ballarat Heritage Advisory Committee have highlighted the potential for self-help networks via social media and other mediums. Options will be explored with the Committee and the 'working party' (PROPOSAL 32) as part of this proposal.

<sup>59</sup> Ballarat Gold Museum. Source:

<http://www.sovereignhill.com.au/gold-museum-ballarat/>  
<sup>60</sup> PROV currently runs sessions in Ballarat which have been supported by the City of Ballarat.

### PROPOSAL 34: Explore solutions for a heritage 'one stop shop'

In a number of forums during the development of this paper an idea for a physical 'one-stop-shop' for all things heritage has come up time and time again. This could include planning advice, historic research and collections, heritage tourism, education and other functions. From the perspective of efficiency, a 'one-stop-shop' would consolidate resources and save the City of Ballarat (and many other organisations) a lot of staff time to public and visitor queries. This idea will be explored.

#### QUESTIONS:

- ? Do you think there should be a 'one-stop-shop' for all things heritage? If so, where do you think this 'one-stop-shop' should be? What form should it take?
- ? How would you foster greater collaboration amongst the many heritage people, places and organisations in Ballarat?
- ? How can historic collections be used to connect Ballarat's stories with its residents and tourists?

### PRINCIPLE 10 PROVIDE APPROPRIATE STORAGE AND ACCESS TO THE CITY OF BALLARAT'S HISTORIC COLLECTION

#### PROPOSAL 35: Improving the condition and accessibility of Council's historic collections<sup>61</sup>

The City of Ballarat has responsibility for a range of historic collection material which includes both paper items and object items. Paper items include petty cash books, rates books and a variety of information materials. Object items include furniture, flags, memorabilia and artworks. The City has more than 3000 historic collection items across several sites. (See Figure 11 on page 80).

Storytelling and exhibition of the items is currently limited. This is highlighted by the collection's key needs:

<sup>61</sup> Except where indicated, discussion in this section is mostly sourced from Forest, J (2013) Accessing Our Regional Heritage. Stage One: Needs Analysis. Final Report: City of Ballarat, PROV, RDV

- Suitable long-term collection storage
  - Curatorial assessment and stock take
- While there have been many improvements in the interim storage of the collection over the past few years, there is still work to do.

**As a starting point it is proposed that we undertake a more intensive project to physically improve the interim storage, documentation and preservation of the Town Hall based collection,** particularly the material currently in storage in the building.

In response to an assessment by professional museums consultants the following actions will be delivered during this first stage:

- Confirmation of policy and strategic direction for the Historical Collections.
- Physical improvement to the interim storage of the collections at the Town Hall.
- Improved knowledge of the significance of the collections in the context of the city's heritage planning.
- Development of an up-to-date inventory of the collections at the Town Hall (including digital images of items in a format that can be added to a future online catalogue).
- Recommendations for future projects and funding opportunities for the medium to long term utilisation, documentation and storage of the City of Ballarat's collections.

The project will help us to:

- Increase stakeholder and broader community awareness of the Town Hall historical collections.
- Improve accessibility of the Town Hall collections.<sup>62</sup>

#### PROPOSAL 36: Apply the City of Ballarat 'Historic Assets Management – Strategy and Procedures Manual'

Under the umbrella of the City of Ballarat, there are organisations that have their own collecting policies and processes including the Art Gallery of Ballarat and the Ballarat Library's Australiana Collection<sup>63</sup> however the

<sup>62</sup> Trudgeon, R (2016) City of Ballarat Historical Collection Project Plan Proposal: City of Ballarat

<sup>63</sup> Forest, J (2013) Accessing Our Regional Heritage. Stage One: Needs Analysis. Final Report: City of Ballarat, PROV, RDV

City of Ballarat itself doesn't have integrated process for managing its historic collection. This is because legacy decisions to keep the range of items we have has presented us with the role of being curator and museum, even though this is not the City core function. As such, the City of Ballarat isn't staffed to provide appropriate and ongoing storage or care for the collection.<sup>64</sup>

In response we have developed a 'Historic Assets Management – Strategy and Procedures Manual' which contains the following guidance within the City of Ballarat's existing staffing arrangements:

1. Background
2. The City of Ballarat's Collection Parameters
3. Managing the Collection
  - a. Guidelines for Accepting and Rejecting Donations
  - b. Significance Assessment
  - c. Transfer of Title for Donations
  - d. Cataloguing Process
  - e. Storage and Conservation Guidelines
  - f. Loan Procedures
  - g. Disposal Process
  - h. Disaster Preparation and Management
  - i. Interpretation and Use of the Historic Assets
4. Resources

It is proposed to integrate this manual into our assets and other systems/processes in order to deliver it as part of our ongoing core business.

**PROPOSAL 37: Work closely with Public Record Office Victoria to identify and transfer historic records and items**

'City of Ballarat has legislative responsibility under the Public Records Act 1973 to care for paper items, across all its sites, in line with this act. This includes transfer of appropriate items to the Public Record Office Victoria.'<sup>65</sup>

The City of Ballarat currently transfers permanent historic records to PROV on an irregular basis.

<sup>64</sup> Forest, J (2012) Historic Assets Management – Strategy and Procedures Manual (proposed): City of Ballarat

<sup>65</sup> Forest, J (2013) Accessing Our Regional Heritage. Stage One: Needs Analysis. Final Report: City of Ballarat, PROV, RDV

Additionally, because of the significance and age of our collection some items that would not normally be considered are also able to be transferred under this arrangement. This preliminary paper proposes to work closely with PROV to identify and transfer historic records and relevant items in a more structured way. Part of this can occur during the proposed project to physically improve the interim storage, documentation and preservation of the Town Hall (PROPOSAL 35).

Transferring records to PROV has the following advantages:

- Historic collection items become the responsibility of the State authority who have experts to provide the highest level of care and access to the collection (Image22).
- Helps to free up and make safer City of Ballarat buildings.
- Better meet our legislated responsibilities.

Agency VA 706  
Ballarat East (Municipal District 1857-1863; Borough 1863-1870; T 1872-1921)

Date Range	Series Title	Series Number	Series Location	Public Access
? 1857 - ? 1921	Committee Minutes	VPRS 12764	Ballarat	Open
? 1857 - ? 1921	Notice Papers	VPRS 13006	Ballarat	Open
? 1859 - ? 1872	Rate Payment Ledgers	VPRS 7266	Ballarat	Open
? 1863 - ? 1870	Special Rate Payment Ledgers	VPRS 7296	Ballarat	Open
? 1864 - ? 1872	Rate Payment Ledgers [SERIES REPROCESSED AS VPRS 7266/P3 AND VPRS 7299/P2]	VPRS 7297	Ballarat	Not Applicable
? 1865 - ? 1906	Rate Valuation Books	VPRS 7299	Ballarat	Part Open
? 1872 - ? 1921	General Rate Books	VPRS 7258	Ballarat	Open
1857 - 1921	Council Minutes	VPRS 13005	Ballarat	Open
1858 - cont	Specifications, Contracts and Tenders	VPRS 2503	Ballarat	Open
By 1860 - 1921	Outward Letter Books	VPRS 8117	Ballarat	Open

Image22 PROV's online catalogue highlights best practice access standards for Council's records.  
Source: <http://access.prov.vic.gov.au/>

**PROPOSAL 38: Progress long-term storage and access solutions**

Like many organisations, the City of Ballarat requires appropriate long-term storage solutions for our significant historic collections (Refer Table 3 and Figure 11). In response to findings from a comprehensive Needs Analysis, a feasibility study was completed in 2014 to identify a solution to key collection storage issues for the City of Ballarat and Public Record Office Victoria (PROV).

Jointly funded by Regional Development Victoria, City of Ballarat and PROV, the study explored potential solutions that could meet the following objectives:

- Address the City of Ballarat and PROV's collection storage issues.
- Deliver efficiency and revenue generating initiatives to become self-sustaining.<sup>66</sup>

Innovative long-term storage solutions that could meet these objectives have been identified as sufficiently feasible to move forward to Phase 2 - a full feasibility assessment.

To continue to meet the objectives set out in the Needs Analysis, at a minimum the assessment would need to assess a solution to achieve:

- Storage and ancillary areas required to access, store and research the collections, as these provide the central starting point for the project and will provide the long term source of intellectual property to enrich related activities.
- A storage space that accounts for collection growth into the next 20 years.
- Spaces that encourage and attract other activities such as touring exhibitions, interpretation, public gatherings and training as this is what will encourage a self-sustaining facility.

- Leverage off existing collecting organisations and tourism sites.
- Provide best practice storage and access of the collections.
- Support associated research, learning and skill development.
- Innovative 'museum' style experience, as this is critical to sharing the significant stories of the collection and attracting visitors from outside the region.
- Exhibition area/centre, as this is central to the display of the collections and the continuous refreshment of the brand and attraction of new visitors through new exhibitions.

Following the initial Feasibility Study, the City of Ballarat has implemented recommendations from the report to undertake further assessment and identify a process to prepare our collection for any future relocation. This process enables detailed specifications to be identified regarding our collection storage requirements. The process will begin with the Town Hall collection. (PROPOSAL 35).

It is proposed to continue to work towards a long-term solution for storage and access of the City of Ballarat's collection by bringing together key stakeholders to further discussions.

Table 3 Estimated quantity of the City of Ballarat's collections and conversion to floor space required for the next 20 years<sup>67</sup>

Collections	Current space m2 (2014)	Annual growth rate	Total storage space required in 2040								
			Collection	Processing	Loading	Packing / crating	Workshop	Photography	Quarantine	Equipment /materials	
CoB archives	200	0%	200								
CoB historic collection	300	1%	400								
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,230</b>		<b>1,750</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>75</b>	

<sup>66</sup> McArthur, S & Associates (2014) Feasibility Study for Ballarat Museum, Exhibition and Heritage Centre: Final 21<sup>st</sup> May 2014: City of Ballarat, Public Record Office Victoria, Regional Development Victoria

<sup>67</sup> McArthur, S & Associates (2014) Feasibility Study for Ballarat Museum, Exhibition and Heritage Centre: Final 21<sup>st</sup> May 2014: City of Ballarat, Public Record Office Victoria, Regional Development Victoria

**Figure 11**

**Understanding the scope of the City of Ballarat's historic collections**

*Art Gallery of Ballarat*

It is well-recognized, regional art collection, built up over the last 120 years. The total numbers of items are estimated at 9000, with 4000 of those works on paper. The remaining 5000 items are furniture, textiles, sculpture, decorative art and other art.

*Ballarat Botanical Gardens & Other Parks and Gardens*

A range of monuments and statues of various materials are located at these main locations: Ballarat Botanic Gardens, Eureka Stockade Reserve, Lake Wendouree foreshore (70 items in total) and Sturt Street (21 items). There are a number of other smaller rural and urban sites with outdoor cultural and historic assets, for example the RSL Buninyong Park that has 6 items. There are also an unidentified number of other items, like park seats, which have a plaque attached for memorial purposes.

*Ballarat Town Hall*

The Town Hall contains at least 300+ items of furniture, paintings and monuments with some dating back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and beyond. The last valuation lists one piece as dating to 1715 and several other pieces as the 1830s. Further items also include paper records, books, prints, approximately 1600 maps and plans dating back to 1856 and working documents relating to a range of events like Council's organization of royal visits, sporting events and housing troops in wartime. Items housed here also contain a large range of cultural items gifted from the City of Inagawa, Japan.

*Ballarat Library (Australiana Collection)*

This collection contains a large local history collection of books, maps, photographs, newspapers and street directories, with special collections on Art History, Military and photographs relevant to Ballarat.

*Former Shire Halls*

The former Shire Halls at Buninyong and Learmonth contain a range of furniture, paper, memorabilia and photographic items. These items date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (proclamation dates for each vary) to amalgamation in 1994.

*Her Majesty's Theatre*

Her Majesty's Theatre contains a small collection of historic items, less than approximately 250 items, such as panels from the old chairs, a painted piece of the dome, stage backdrop, a small selection of historic music pieces, photos and books relating to Arabella Goddard, a range of prints and posters....and a dead cat!

*Girrabanya Childcare Centre*

The centre has two historic objects – a 50cm tall child's doll possibly dating to the 1950-60s and a framed print of a brassiere, with a picture of a 1950s style woman wearing it and a paragraph of information.

*Kohinoor Community Centre*

One map, framed within the last 20 years, of the mines and their shafts underneath the streets of Errard, Sebastopol and Skipton street districts.

*Operations Depot*

World War I guns (German Howitzers), 15 metal seats from Lake Wendouree, approximately 500 tiles (which are reused), 1 unidentified object (possibly a chimney piece) and 200 pieces of decorative cast iron corners and railings from verandahs from Council buildings and notable buildings in Ballarat.

*Phoenix Building*

There are approximately 30 framed paintings, prints and maps.

*Property Division Storage Facilities*

A number of historic items such as an organ, chairs and other furniture.

*Records*

Paper based items, being temporary and permanent Council records are held off-site. Permanent Council records under the Public Records Act (1973) are held at the Public Records Office Victoria (PROV), e.g.: rates books from 1871-1952, land sales to 1943, land surveys from 1858-1938, tenders and contracts from 1858 – 1979.

*Other areas*

Other sites around Ballarat also house City of Ballarat historic items including the Gold Museum and the Mechanics institute. For example, the Gold Museum contains over 2500 items that belong to the City of Ballarat. These include the 1000 items known as the Ballarat War Museum Collection, which were souvenir material returned to Ballarat by returned soldiers after World War One. These include a large number of weaponry as well as ancillary items like gas masks, letters and cards. The Sydney Pern collection contains Aboriginal and South Pacific Islander anthropological items, collected by a local doctor. These are mainly indigenous weapons, many from unknown locations. The mayoral chains of all councils now amalgamated into the City of Ballarat are also held at the Gold Museum, along with the rough minutes of Ballarat Council meetings from 1870-1970 under the PROV place of deposit arrangements. The paper records of Ballarat's first female mayor Jessie Scott are also held by the museum for Council.



Source: Excerpt adapted from Forest, J (2012) *Historic Assets Management – Strategy and Procedures Manual (proposed): City of Ballarat*