

**8.4 LIVING HERITAGE GRANT - WHITBURGH COTTAGE**

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**Attachments:** Nil

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**SUMMARY**

Council has applied for the Heritage Victoria, Living Heritage Grant Round 5, for the Whitburgh Cottage Conservation and Preservation Project for the maximum amount of \$200,000. Applications closed 12 June 2020. Originally, Council was not eligible to apply for these grants as these were eligible only for "at risk" heritage in bushfire effected areas, eligibility guidelines were then extended to sites outside of these specific areas.

As Whitburgh Cottage was discussed extensively during the budgetary process, there is money in the draft operating budget for 2020/2021 financial year to commence the planning permit and heritage permit process and some consultation. The 2021/2022 budget includes a Council cash contribution to proceed if a Living Heritage Grant is obtained during 2020/2021.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** Council:

1. Note that the Whitburgh Cottage Conservation and Preservation Project funding application was submitted to the Living Heritage Grant Round 5, as applications closed on 12 June 2020.
2. Supports the Whitburgh Cottage Conservation and Preservation Project application submitted for funding under the Living Heritage Grant Round 5 scheme.

**BACKGROUND**

Whitburgh Cottage is Kilmore's oldest surviving bluestone house built between 1853-1857. Currently, the building is in poor condition and at risk according to the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) completed by Michael Taylor Architecture and Heritage in 2020. It has been identified that if works do not occur on Whitburgh Cottage, is at risk of deteriorating further.

The Living Heritage Program was launched in 2016 to provide funding to safeguard and reactivate Victoria's key heritage resources. The Program aims to enable owners and managers to undertake necessary conservation works to address the needs of their heritage place or object, and in doing so, support the ongoing and sustainable use of the State's most significant heritage assets. In May 2020, it was announced that the current round of Grants was being extended to 12 June 2020 to allow applications

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from other Councils to apply for these grants for "at risk" heritage in all areas, not just bushfire effected areas. Accordingly, Council have applied for the Heritage Victoria, Living Heritage Grant Round 5, for the Whitburgh Cottage Conservation and Preservation Project for the maximum amount of \$200,000.

**ISSUES AND DISCUSSION**

Funding has been provided to support projects that address the risk to the place or object and that deliver and demonstrate benefits for the community. A budget boost of \$20.5 million in the 2019-20 State Budget brings the total Living Heritage Program fund to \$60 million. The boost adds close to \$9 million for a competitive community heritage grants program targeting "at risk" State-listed heritage places, adding to the \$9.25 million already provided. The program is running to 2022-23.

The following criteria applies to the Living Heritage Program. Whilst Whitburgh Cottage is currently not open to the public, officers have been advised by Heritage Victoria that the Whitburgh Cottage Conservation and Preservation Project is still eligible as following this project, it could be available to the community:

- Projects will include conservation works to the exterior and/or interiors of Victorian Heritage Register listed places and objects to improve their overall condition and mitigate the risk to the place.
- The place or object subject to works:
  - Must be included in the Victorian Heritage Register.
  - Must be publicly accessible and provide a significant community benefit.
- The proposed project:
  - Must mitigate the identified risk(s) to the place or object.
  - Must be guided by advice sought from a heritage professional, such as a heritage architect or advisor.
  - Must not have started.
  - It is generally expected that projects will replace materials in a like-for-like manner, rather than introduce modern materials, as is considered best practice.

## LIVING HERITAGE GRANT - WHITBURGH COTTAGE (CONT.)

Timelines for the Project

- July 2020 begin planning and heritage applications
- September 2020 Announcement of Grant

If successful:

- Construction begins April 2021
- Construction finishes April 2022
- December 2021 Business case study for community art gallery and further planning and heritage applications following completion of this project.

**CONSULTATION**

Kilmore Historical Society have met with Council and officers on a number of occasions to discuss their concern regarding the state of Whitburgh Cottage and plans for the site. Before any of these plans can progress, Heritage Victoria has advised the building needs to be restored. During the restoration, a business plan will be developed in consultation with the Kilmore Historic Society for Council's consideration on the best way forward for the site once it is fully restored. The restoration does not impact on Council's decisions for the future of the site in any way.

**FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Whitburgh Cottage is in the Capital Budget for 2021-2022 at \$600K with a Council cash component of \$400K, with unconfirmed grant income of \$200K. As Council's contribution is not until the 21/22 financial year, we have outlined this in the Grant application. Following discussion at Council, Council can endorse the Grant application, Grant application can be withdrawn and applied for again in January next year. By this time, it is anticipated that the planning permit and heritage permit would be more advanced. If this is too advanced, the project would no-longer be eligible for the grant. There has been a generous budget allowance given the high-risk nature of heritage buildings:

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|---|------------------------------|
| • Building - highest of two quotes<br>(noting tender will be required, detailed concepts included in the CMP) | \$345,000                    |
| • Consulting fees – Heritage architect  | \$ 60,000                    |
| • Project management fees   | \$ 50,000                    |
| • Fees and Permits  | \$ 8,500 <b>(20/21 opex)</b> |
| • Other fees  | \$ 8,500                     |
| • Contingency   | \$135,000                    |
| • Total   | <b>\$607,000</b>             |

The cost of the project is estimated at \$607,000 including approx 30% contingency.

LIVING HERITAGE GRANT - WHITBURGH COTTAGE (CONT.)

**POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

The planned and future conservation works at Whitburgh Cottage that affect fabric and elements of significance will be carried out with regards to the principles of the *Australian ICOMOS Burra Charter, 2013* and the *Heritage Act 2017*. The current *Conservation Management Plan (CMP)* will be the guide to all planned and future works. The Burra Charter provides guidance on the conservation of places of heritage significance. The principles of the charter will be applied when considering future works to fabric previously identified in this document of primary and secondary significance to Whitburgh Cottage.

**RISK IMPLICATIONS**

Risk Ranking is determined using [ROHS201-G1- Corporate Risk Matrix](#). Risk is identified as Low, Medium, High or Very High.

Risk	Risk Ranking	Proposed Treatments	Within Existing Resources?
Whitburgh Cottage is at structural risk due to deflection of the west wall. Refer attached structural advice by Michael Taylor. This progressive deflection has potential to cause the wall's collapse.	High	Significant works outlined in the CMP	Yes
Services Safety and Fire Risk	High	The proposed electrical upgrade of supply, distribution board and wiring shall improve electrical safety for occupants, and be a less like potential cause of fire than the existing infrastructure	Yes
Currently, the external envelope of the western wall is peeling away from the internal envelope. The internal walls have cracked, and much of the original plaster is on the floor. While the later addition of internal rods has helped stabilise the building, they have not succeeded in ceasing the continued degradation of the building. There is also a risk of vandalism due to the dilapidated and abandoned appearance of the	High	Significant works outlined in the CMP	Yes

## LIVING HERITAGE GRANT - WHITBURGH COTTAGE (CONT.)

Risk	Risk Ranking	Proposed Treatments	Within Existing Resources?
building, further degrading the heritage building.			
Roof is in danger of collapsing, due to the western wall	High	Significant works outlined in the CMP	Yes
Pricing is difficult to ensure on a Heritage Building	Medium	A component of 30% contingency has been built into this project.	Yes

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL)**

This project provides good opportunities for collaboration and partnership between Council and the community in the future when the building is restored. It also recognises the important cultural heritage of the local area. It will provide a positive improvement to the visual environment.

The cottage is an important element of the local streetscape and will be retained and enhanced through this project. The restoration of Whitburgh Cottage provides Council and the community with future opportunities including tourism. The works will be carried out by local trades under a Heritage Advisor.

The Kilmore Historical Society and others will have opportunities to be consulted on the conservation works. The works will consolidate Whitburgh Cottage's condition and safety. The works will also promote increased community use of the site.

**CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

The rights protected in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* were considered in preparing this report and it's determined that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS**

It is important for children and young people to have a connection with history and the heritage of the local area.

**OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in this matter.

**CONCLUSION**

Whitburgh Cottage is Kilmore's oldest surviving bluestone house built between 1853-1857. Currently, the building is in poor condition and at risk of deteriorating further. Council have applied for the Heritage Victoria, Living Heritage Grant Round 5, for the Whitburgh Cottage Conservation and Preservation Project for the maximum amount of \$200,000, which closed 12 June 2020. It is recommended that Council note the application, and support the application.