



The
COMO
APPROACH

ACTION PLAN



NATIONAL
TRUST

Ensuring that conservation skills are valued and sustained into the future

The **COMO** APPROACH

Our Position

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) strives to be a leader in developing and promoting conservation excellence. As the custodian of over 40 heritage properties the Trust has a key role to play in building the capacity of the heritage conservation industry and ensuring that conservation skills are valued and sustained into the future.

The Challenge

The National Trust recognises there is limited knowledge in the community about conservation processes and their necessity for providing good conservation outcomes. There is also a critical need to address the ongoing issue of a diminishing pool of skilled conservation practitioners, as well as limited avenues and opportunities for practitioners to share their knowledge and develop skills in the traditional trades and conservation practices. If these two issues are not addressed there will not be the conservation skills required to sustain cultural heritage values in Australia into the future.

The Opportunity

With its diverse portfolio of heritage places and collections, the National Trust has the opportunity to provide an active forum where conservation practitioners can collaborate in sharing, strengthening and celebrating heritage conservation skills. As an advocacy organisation, the Trust also has the opportunity to share conservation knowledge and experience gained at its sites and with others, to build a greater understanding of the necessity and value of a conservation approach.



Why Como?

Como House is a flagship property of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and in every sense, it reflects the achievements of the heritage conservation movement in Victoria, as well as the mounting challenges. At the inception of *The Como Approach* a grant was awarded to undertake conservation works at the site, providing the opportunity for it to act as a pilot project for the initiative.



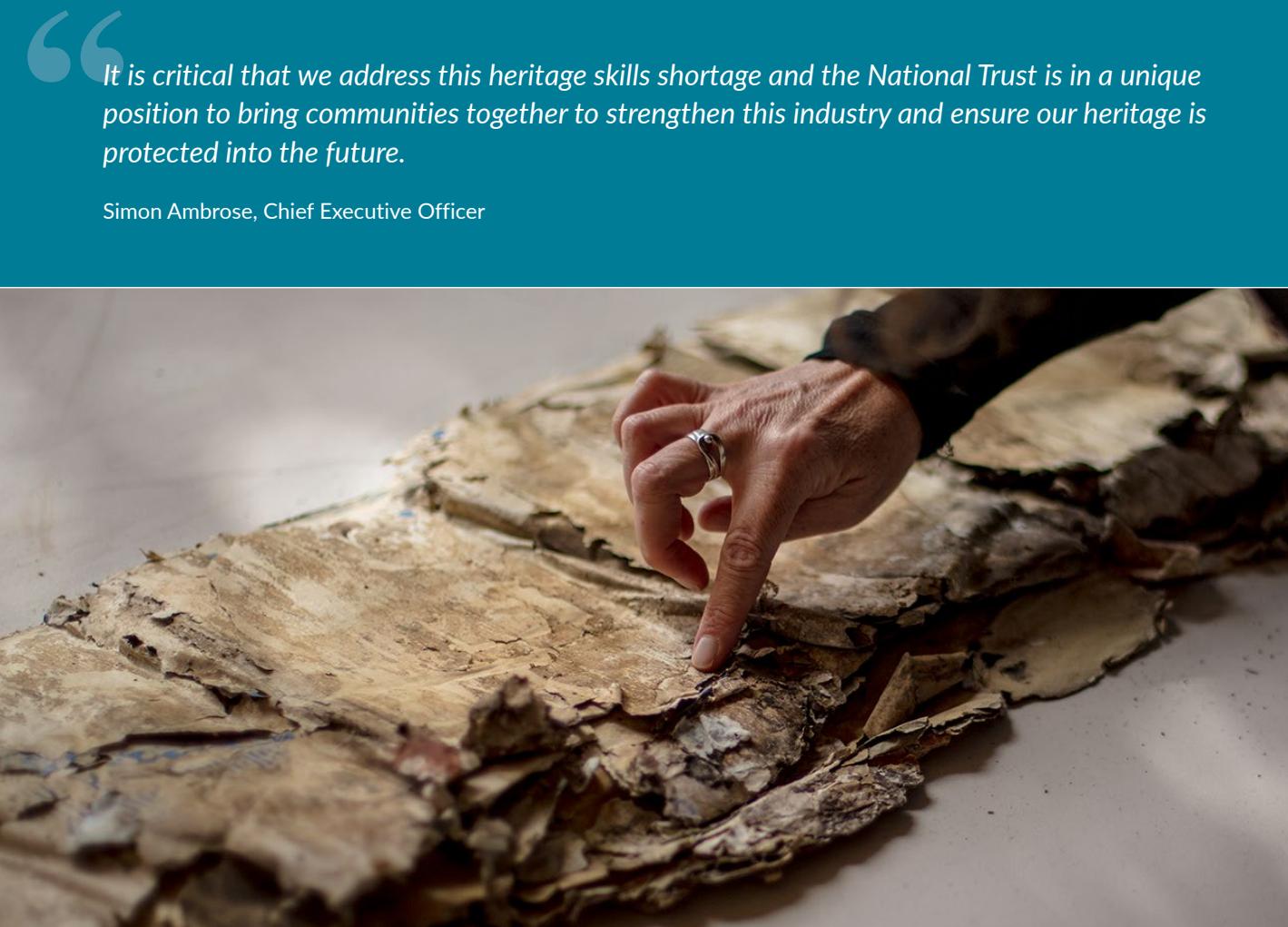
Action 1

Demonstrate Best Practice Conservation

We understand that as a peak heritage body managing heritage places and undertaking conservation projects, we should lead by example and demonstrate best conservation practice in all that we do.

“It is critical that we address this heritage skills shortage and the National Trust is in a unique position to bring communities together to strengthen this industry and ensure our heritage is protected into the future.

Simon Ambrose, Chief Executive Officer



Deliverables

- Deliver high quality conservation works and projects at our properties demonstrating best conservation practice.
- Embed conservation skill share activities and promotion of best practice conservation into projects at our properties.
- Ensure that wherever possible conservation projects provide active forums for promotion, sharing and collaborating in improving heritage conservation skills.
- Integrate conservation approach awareness into employee and volunteer inductions and provide opportunities for staff and volunteers to develop skills in conservation practice.
- Establish volunteer teams for built heritage and collections, where volunteers can participate in conservation projects and develop knowledge and skills.
- Ensure that we document the conservation projects we undertake – keeping records of change and methodologies and preparing project evaluations and summary reports.





Action 2

Strengthen the Conservation Industry

The aim is to strengthen and build the capacity of the heritage industry by increasing the number of practitioners with a conservation approach, while supporting and promoting those already operating in the industry.

Deliverables

- Proactively seek industry partners to work and collaborate with in delivering *The Como Approach*.
- Establish a network of existing and emerging conservation practitioners and consultants, relevant government and non-government institutions and owners and managers of heritage places.
- Establish an annual knowledge sharing forum that brings practitioners together to share experiences, successes and failures to open up discussion about conservation philosophy and processes.
- Deliver an events calendar of talks, forums and workshops that reach a wide audience including government and non-government institutions, consultants, practitioners, students, owners and managers.
- Provide opportunities for teaching institutions to utilise/incorporate National Trust sites, collections and conservation projects into their conservation practice curriculum.
- Provide case study examples of conservation practice/projects that can be shared with the conservation industry and at public forums.

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Knowing that our properties, collections and projects will provide hands-on opportunities for a diverse range of people to learn more about conservation processes is very exciting!

Annette Shiell, Executive Manager -
Cultural Programs and Collections



Action 3

Promote the Value of Conservation

As a community-based, heritage and advocacy organisation we are well placed to raise public awareness, and promote best conservation practice for heritage places.

Deliverables

- Promote the value of best conservation practice and its benefits in improving outcomes for heritage sites and combatting climate change.
- Share best conservation methods and materials that can both preserve our heritage assets and collections and increase carbon and resource efficiency.
- Tell our conservation stories. Bring the general public and our National Trust community along on the journey and provide conservation experiences and interpretation at our sites.
- Support teaching institutions to develop curriculum in conservation principles and techniques that are more accessible to a wider audience.
- Apply Como Approach principles and promote best conservation practice through External Appeals and the Victorian Heritage Restoration Fund.
- Actively provide and promote resources for conservation activities through National Trust channels including the website and the consultants and contractors directory.



“By sharing our own conservation stories and journey, we can generate awareness and make meaningful connections between industry and the public that will have benefits for the entire heritage sector.

Samantha Westbrooke - Conservation Architect



For more information please contact:

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The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.

Cover image: Heritage Trades Forum at Labassa. Page 1: Como House & Garden by Christopher Groenhout. Page 2: Wallpaper at Mills Cottage (courtesy of Digital Heritage Australia), re-pointing workshop at Como House. Page 3: CostumeLAB at Labassa (courtesy of University of Melbourne), Heritage Forum 2020. Page 4: Students visiting Labassa, Samantha Westbrook at Como restoration workshop, restoration at Mills Cottage (courtesy of Digital Heritage Australia).

