

What is a heritage advisory service?

A heritage advisory service assists local government, property owners, tenants or any other agency to make informed decisions about a heritage issue. The goal is to help local communities to recognise, celebrate and promote the conservation and sensitive development of their heritage places.

Who provides a heritage advisory service?

Local governments operate a heritage advisory service by engaging a heritage advisor, working with them to build a heritage strategy and implementing the resulting actions. A heritage advisor can be a local government officer but it is often a heritage consultant contracted for the role.

What does the heritage advisor do?

The advisor shares their expertise with the local government, property owners and others using the service. This is generally providing advice on conservation issues but can also be through development of policy, mediation on development issues, advising a heritage committee and similar activities.

The advisor will also work with the local government to produce a progress report that summarises the year's activity and helps to plan future priorities.

Are there any activities that heritage advisors can't do?

The role of a heritage advisor is fairly flexible and can be tailored to fit the needs of the local government. Consultants will have a range of backgrounds and some will have experience and/or professional qualifications in a related field, such as archaeology or architecture. Advisors can be asked to undertake work for which they are qualified and that is consistent with the aims of the heritage advisory service.

What's in it for the local government?

Local governments need to make informed decisions for their communities. Heritage is integral to the vibrant life and prosperity of local communities, with many Community Strategic Plans identifying that residents value their local heritage and want local governments to help conserve it. At the same time, local governments have to review and decide on development issues, some of which will affect heritage places if approved. Operating a heritage advisory service ensures that local governments, owners and the general community have access to the right information to make informed decisions and can help achieve the goals set out in the community plan.

How does it work?

Heritage advisors can be contracted to spend a set amount of time at local government offices, where they work with local government officers and can be made available to the community. Appointments will usually be made through the local government's heritage contact.

Advisors can also respond to queries and continue research and development projects from their own offices. Each local government will agree how many hours each month can be made available to the advisor.

Consultants are available through a Heritage Advisory Services panel operated by the WA Local Government Association (WALGA). Local governments can ask one or more of the panel members to quote through the WALGA 'eQuotes' system. This will identify the cost of consultancy and any travel that may be required.

Projects that require multiple consultants or are significant activities in their own right will need to be contracted outside of the panel agreement, as consultant fees have not been set for this purpose.

How much does it cost?

There are several factors that will affect this including the choice of consultant and the amount of travel required. As consultants are paid by the hour, the number of hours requested each month will also have a significant impact on cost.

For example, a local government around two hours from their advisor's base might allow a half-day visit each month, plus another 2 hours for offsite support. With travel time, expenses and consultancy fees, the total cost could be around \$750 to \$1500 per month.

Costs can be reduced by working with neighbouring local governments to arrange a coordinated heritage advisory service. With shared travel costs and other overheads, there is potential to make efficient use of advisor time for joint projects.

Is funding available?

The Heritage Council offers a subsidy of up to 75% of funding the costs of establishing and running a new heritage advisory service, subject to some conditions and availability. Local governments who already have a heritage service or have previously received a subsidy through the Regional Heritage Advisory Service may apply for a 50% subsidy.

Which local governments are eligible for funding?

The Heritage Council subsidy is intended to support local governments who could not reasonably afford the costs of operating a heritage advisory service without external funding. In general, most Perth metropolitan local governments and those that are assessed as being able to meet their general expenses through operating income will not be eligible for the subsidy. Full details are available from stateheritage.wa.gov.au.

Where can I get more information?

For general advice and assistance on heritage advisory services please contact the Local Government Services branch at the State Heritage Office (*see below*).

For information on the WALGA heritage advisory services panel please contact Andrew Casella:

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