



GET THE FACTS - HERITAGE INFORMATION SERIES

01. WHAT IS CONSERVATION?

Conservation means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance. It includes maintenance and may, according to circumstances, include preservation, restoration, reconstruction, adaptation and interpretation and will commonly be a combination of more than one of these. Place means site, area, building or other work, group of buildings or other works together with pertinent contents and surroundings. Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value

for past, present or future generations. In Australia, we have drawn extensively on the Burra Charter in developing our own conservation principles. The basic principle is that conservation seeks to secure the transfer of maximum significance from past to the future for the benefit of all people everywhere. Conservation involves managing change in the natural, built and cultural environment through negotiation with authorities, the community and landowners. Conservators need to have a very clear idea of the significance of an

object, building or place before planning its conservation. We must accept that the significance of an item may change with time, depending on historical events and cultural attitudes. The 'precautionary principle' requires that we exercise minimum intervention (do as little as possible but as much as necessary), make treatments reversible and try to preserve everything that might in the future be regarded as significant.