

Recording Aboriginal Places – Extent Prediction

Standards for Recording Victorian Aboriginal Places and Objects

July 2026

Determining the extent of an Aboriginal place integrates different methods - including prediction.

In accordance with the [Cultural Heritage Management Plan Guidelines](#), predictions for Aboriginal place extents can be submitted to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR) where the nature and significance of the place are well understood, and where the extent can be predicted with a high degree of probability (i.e. very likely, probability greater than 0.7, greater than 70% probable).

The logic and reasoning that justify the prediction must be documented within the Aboriginal place record for the purposes of registration.

Aboriginal Place Extents: Observation, Prediction and Aboriginal intangible values relating to a place

Creating an extent for an Aboriginal place registration inherently involves consideration of observation, prediction, and, where known, Aboriginal intangible values relating to a place.

In the context of registering a place, these can be described as the following:

Observation includes the recorded locations of Aboriginal cultural heritage (e.g. excavated areas with cultural material present, surface artefacts, culturally scarred trees, etc.).

Prediction includes those areas beyond the observed locations of Aboriginal cultural heritage of a place that have a high degree of probability of presence of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Aboriginal intangible values relating to a place includes details of Aboriginal intangible values relating to an Aboriginal place, that are relevant to defining its extent.

A record for an Aboriginal place should clearly distinguish where the place extent has been determined by direct observation, where it has been determined by prediction, and where it has been determined by Aboriginal intangible values relating to the place.

Principles for Predicting Aboriginal Place Extents

Predictions for Aboriginal place extents must ensure the predicted extent is an Aboriginal place consistent with the definition in section 5 of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

The following principles should be considered when incorporating prediction into an Aboriginal place extent determination:

Evidence based – supported by evidence identified at all stages of the assessment and other relevant lines of evidence. Evidence and data should be of high quality and of appropriate resolution.

Reasonable – justification for the prediction is logical, the prediction is proportional to evidence and is consistently applied to the record.

Transparent – methodology and approach to prediction are clear, limitations and assumptions are described.

Predictive Modelling and Place Extents

The CHMP Guidelines note that although predictive modelling and predicting place extents may use similar logic and methods, predictive modelling is not a suitable approach for predicting extents in all cases (pg. 75).

Where there is an intention to use more advanced methods of predictive modelling to inform place extent determination, you may contact the VAHR for further information on the detail to be provided as part of any application to register or edit an Aboriginal place.

Aboriginal Place Extent Prediction and Activity Area Boundaries

Where an Aboriginal place extent is predicted to continue beyond the boundary of a project or activity area boundary, the CHMP Guidelines state that the predicted extent beyond that boundary can be submitted to the VAHR for registration as the extent of the Aboriginal place (pg. 27).

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 do not prevent registering the full extent of Aboriginal places that cross project or activity areas boundaries, or other administrative and cadastral boundaries not relevant to the nature, extent and significance of an Aboriginal place.

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* protects all Aboriginal cultural heritage regardless of registration. Accordingly, DPC considers that for a place's practical protection, and to provide timely and appropriate notice to landowners, an Aboriginal place's nature and extent should be recorded regardless of administrative and cadastral boundaries.

Further, the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 require Heritage Advisors when conducting cultural heritage management plans to record the nature, extent and significance of Aboriginal places, without limiting that recording.

Contact

CHMP Guidelines: aboriginal.heritage@dpc.vic.gov.au

Aboriginal place registrations: VAHR@dpc.vic.gov.au

References

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 - <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/aboriginal-heritage-act-2006/030>

Aboriginal Heritage Act Regulations 2018 - <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/statutory-rules/aboriginal-heritage-regulations-2018/001>

Cultural Heritage Management Plan Guidelines 2026 - <https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/enhancing-aboriginal-cultural-heritage-management-system#monitoring-and-evaluation-framework-for-cultural-heritage-management-plan-guidelines>

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay our respect to them, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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