

Heritage Council



of New South Wales

CRITERIA FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF EXCAVATION DIRECTORS

Excavation Directors are people who have professional training and extensive fieldwork experience in the investigation of relics within historical archaeological sites. Excavation Directors have usually completed tertiary training in archaeology, prehistory or a closely related field. Excavation Directors may be consultant historical archaeologists undertaking paid professional work associated with site redevelopment projects; university employed archaeologists and/or others undertaking research investigations of historic sites.

PURPOSE

The purpose of these criteria is to highlight the composition of skills required when selecting an Excavation Director, to be nominated as part of an application under relevant sections of the *NSW Heritage Act, 1977*. Those sections include: section 140 and section 60 applications; section 65A, and section 144 variations to existing approvals and also Integrated Development Applications (IDAs) lodged under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979* (the *EPA Act*).

QUALIFICATIONS

Excavation Directors need to have pertinent qualifications and professional fieldwork experience. They must also provide sound justification for the proposed archaeological work which is likely to impact on 'relics', within the meaning of the *Heritage Act, 1977*. Any qualified historical or maritime archaeologists with demonstrated historic sites experience wishing to act as an Excavation Director must submit a current written statement to the Heritage Council addressing his/her ability to meet the basic criteria set out in the following table. This applies equally to both Primary Excavation Director and Secondary Excavation Directors (see below). Such documents must be lodged to support applications to undertake controlled activities under the *Heritage Act 1977*, as well as for IDAs, where excavation would or is likely to result in a relic being moved, damaged, destroyed, exposed or altered.

EPA ACT APPROVALS

The Criteria for the Assessment of Excavation Directors will also assist in establishing commitments for projects determined under the *EPA Act, 1979*, including Part 3A, Part 4 and Part 5 matters.

MENTORING

The Assessment Criteria can set a standard for archaeological consultancies for the recruitment of staff and for in-house training and mentoring of less experienced personnel. Combined with Mentoring from more experienced practitioners, the Criteria have been designed to provide a pathway for individuals who may wish to become future Excavation Directors for *Heritage Act* permits.

BENEFITS

Selection of a suitably qualified and experienced historical archaeological Excavation Director will usually provide benefits to a project and improvements in cost effectiveness due to early consideration of the opportunities and options to amend development plans, and the capacity to devise other appropriate mitigation strategies if significant features are discovered or expected.

PROCESS

Usually a single individual will be nominated as the Excavation Director for an archaeology permit. In cases where more than one Excavation Director is nominated or required due to project circumstances, then the terms Primary and Secondary Director will be relevant. These are defined in Section C of the Criteria. When only one Director is nominated, that individual is the Primary Director. Additional submission requirements outlined following, will be required of Primary Excavation Directors or Secondary Excavation Directors nominated for the first time and also for Excavation Directors who wish to be nominated for the first time to investigate archaeological sites assessed as having State, heritage significance, when his/her previous experience has only dealt with sites of Local significance.

The staff of the Heritage Council of NSW can also provide advice about the consideration of archaeological projects and approaches before formal permit applications are lodged under the *Heritage Act, 1977*. Contact the Heritage Branch, Office of Environment & Heritage: Street address: 3 Marist Place, Parramatta 2150 Mail: Locked Bag 5020, Parramatta NSW 2124 DX: DX 8225 Parramatta Phone: (+61 2) 9873 8500 Fax: (+61 2) 9873 8599 Website: www.heritage.nsw.gov.au
Hours of business: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday

A. ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS/EXPERIENCE

Excavation Directors must be able to meet **all** the following requirements.

1. A tertiary honours (or Masters/Doctorate) degree or graduate diploma in archaeology or a related discipline and three years professional experience* in historical archaeology or a related archaeological field.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>OR</i>	
A tertiary pass degree with subjects in archaeology or a related discipline and four years professional experience in historical archaeology or a related archaeological field.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>OR</i>	
Professional accreditation through the Australian Association of Consulting Archaeologists (Full membership).	<input type="checkbox"/>
AND	
2. A demonstrated understanding of NSW heritage legislation assessing heritage significance criteria and relevant archaeological guidelines/best practice methods and standards including, but not limited to, relevant archaeology publications issued by the Heritage Council of NSW.	<input type="checkbox"/>
AND	
3. Demonstrated experience in the investigation of comparable or relevant historical archaeological sites (especially Australian Historical Archaeology) project management and preparing written archaeological assessments/site management recommendations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
AND	
4. Ability to demonstrate that work under any approvals previously granted by the Heritage Council has been completed in accordance with the conditions of that approval and the final report has been submitted to the Heritage Council.	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Professional experience may include work as a sub-consultant or consultant, private consultancy, and/or permanent or temporary government employment and/or research based experience.*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

For Primary Excavation Directors or Secondary Excavation Directors nominated for the first time, you will also need to provide:

- (a) a written statement demonstrating how your fieldwork experience meets the stated criteria in the adjoining table;**
- (b) written statements of relevant professional experience prepared by at least two referees (a maximum of one statement may be from a current employer), verifying your professional fieldwork experience in relation to the stated criteria in the adjoining table; AND**
- (c) a copy of your current curriculum vitae (CV).**

The documents listed above, (a) to (c) are also required for Primary or Secondary Excavation Directors nominated for the first time to investigate archaeological sites assessed as having State significance. Each application will then be addressed on a case by case basis according to the following criteria matrix of historical archaeological fieldwork experience.

B. HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE CRITERIA

	LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE	STATE SIGNIFICANCE*
Test Excavation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excavation Director needs to demonstrate his/her understanding of the meaning (date, type, common application in the past) of basic fabric types likely to be encountered; Excavation Director needs to demonstrate his/her ability to recognise and interpret taphonomic processes and his/her meaning; Recognition by the Excavation Director of any limitations re the above; Excavation Director needs to demonstrate his/her ability to complete adequate recording of stratigraphy, soils, features without needing to re-excavate previous trenches; and Excavation Director needs to demonstrate his/her ability to prepare a report that clearly identifies what was done, why, what new information was recovered and what it means. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excavation Director needs to demonstrate his/her ability to manage/work within a multi-faceted team of heritage professionals; and Excavation Director needs to demonstrate his/her commitment to operating within the principles outlined in relevant Heritage Council's guidelines and policies, including but not limited to: <i>Historical Archaeology Code of Practice</i> as well as <i>Managing Change</i>.
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excavation Director needs to meet ALL of the requirements listed for "Test Excavation" above, <p>AND</p> <p>Excavation Director needs to demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previous experience with and demonstrated understanding of how to use a machine excavator effectively and safely; Demonstrated ability to understand when it is necessary to change from machine to manual investigation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the requirements listed for "Test Excavation" above.

NOTE 1:

"State Significance" includes items listed on the State Heritage Register as well as non-listed sites identified as State significant or potentially State significant in relevant studies such as an Archaeological Management Plan, Heritage Study or Archaeological Assessment report.

NOTE 2:

The *Historical Archaeological Fieldwork Experience Criteria* listed for State significant sites are in addition to those listed for the equivalent work on locally significant sites.

	Local Significance	State Significance*
Open Area Excavation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation showing the nominee has been approved as Excavation Director on five (5) or more prior permits for excavation of lesser scope such as archaeological testing or monitoring permits (and/or section 63 approvals) • Excavation Director needs to demonstrate that ALL the above-mentioned projects have been completed in accordance with the permit consent conditions; • Excavation Director needs to demonstrate his/her excavation experience as a Site Director or Trench/Area supervisor on at least three (3) sites subject to open area excavation; • Excavation Director needs to demonstrate his/her experience and/or clear evidence of a capacity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) manage project timeframes, budgets, client's requirements; as well as (b) manage community interest/Public Relations issues; <p>AND</p> • Excavation Director needs to demonstrate his/her ability to synthesise excavation and post excavation analysis/historical research into a report that responds to identified research questions and makes a positive contribution to community understanding of the history and significance of the place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excavation Director needs to demonstrate his/her ability to manage/work within a multi-faceted team of heritage professionals; • Excavation Director needs to demonstrate his/her commitment to operating within the principles outlined in relevant Heritage Council's guidelines and policies, including, but not limited to: <i>Historical Archaeology Code of Practice</i> as well as <i>Managing Change</i>; • Excavation Director needs to clearly demonstrate his/her understanding of the significance and archaeological research potential of sites of State significance and of the loss of information that can be incurred by application of less than best practice and/or rigorous methods both on-site and during preparation off site (including reviews of the site assessment). and • Excavation Director needs to clearly demonstrate his/her experience in project management of on-site interpretation.

NOTE 1:

“State Significance” includes items listed on the State Heritage Register as well as non-listed sites identified as State significant or potentially State significant in relevant studies such as an Archaeological Management Plan, Heritage Study or Archaeological Assessment report.

NOTE 2:

The *Historical Archaeological Fieldwork Experience Criteria* listed for State significant sites are in addition to those listed for the equivalent work on locally significant sites.

C. DEFINITIONS

Primary Excavation Director – usually has prepared the archaeological assessment and is the best person to actively supervise the standards in the archaeological proposal and the approved research design. This person has primary responsibility for all aspects of the archaeological project including fieldwork and post-excavation research. Fieldwork includes selection of the methods and strategies appropriate for a particular site, and aspects such as facilitating public access if required by the Conditions of the approved permit. The Primary Excavation Director always retains full and ultimate responsibility for the final excavation report unless otherwise varied through Section 144 of the *Heritage Act 1977*.

Secondary Excavation Director – may be nominated for large-scale archaeological projects to share certain aspects of supervision of the excavation with the Primary Excavation Director.

Secondary Excavation Directors may also be nominated on an application under the Heritage Act 1977 when a prospective Excavation Director nominee cannot meet all the required criteria but still wishes to undertake the proposed archaeological work. In these circumstances, and with the agreement of the Applicant, a Primary Director who meets the required criteria can be nominated. It is essential that the nominated Secondary Excavation Director has worked on archaeological excavation sites, to at least at the level of an Area Supervisor or Site Director.

This option is also viewed as a mentoring system for junior personnel and it may also be useful when experienced practitioners in other areas of archaeology (e.g. Indigenous archaeology) wish to undertake work on contact or historic sites.

In cases where a Secondary Director is nominated and approved, the Primary Excavation Director will still hold key responsibilities such as completing the final excavation report.

Joint Permits – may be an option when a proposed development requires round-the-clock fieldwork due to limited operational timeframes, such as rail track possession or closures of major roads/thoroughfares. Joint permits may enable the nominated Excavation Directors to be directing excavation/monitoring at a site for extended hours. Previously also referred to as a Co-Director arrangement, it is essential to identify a Primary Excavation Director where a joint permit arrangement is requested. The Primary Excavation Director fulfils a quality assurance role as they must take ultimate responsibility for the standard of fieldwork, for explicit statutory conditions of consent in the excavation permit related to nominated Excavation Directors and for the preparation of the final excavation report. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, no more than two Excavation Directors should be nominated on joint permit applications. Exceptional cases should be discussed with the staff of the Heritage Council before the permit application is lodged.

NOTES:

The Heritage Council of NSW or its delegate may contact referees to substantiate information about the nominated Excavation Director(s).

The Heritage Council of NSW or its delegate also has the discretion to consider special cases that may not meet the stated *Criteria for the Assessment of Excavation Directors*.