

## 1 Introduction

This Background Note provides the context for the development of the Australia ICOMOS Practice Note on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Place. It describes:

- the scope of the Practice Note
- how the Practice Note was prepared
- development of a definition of intangible cultural heritage for the Practice Note
- the review of terms used to describe 'intangible' aspects of place in other Australia ICOMOS practice documents, including the Burra Charter (2013) and other adopted Practice Notes.

## Acronyms

AI	Australia ICOMOS
Burra Charter	The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013
ICH	intangible cultural heritage
ICICH	International Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage – ICICH is an International Scientific Committee established by Australia ICOMOS
NSC-ICH	National Scientific Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage (a committee of Australia ICOMOS)
UNESCO Convention	UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003

## 2 Scope of the Practice Note

The Practice Note on ICH and Place was developed based on the 2015 Australia ICOMOS guide – *Developing Practice Notes* – that was established following completion of the AI Practice Notes adopted in 2013. It explains the purpose of Practice Notes and indicates that they should be based on issues and challenges in heritage practice today. Further it indicates that Practice Notes should be kept up-to-date through review and revision as needed.

The guide also outlines a process for the development of Practice Notes and suggests the general structure to be adopted.

The Practice Note on ICH and Place has therefore been structured around key issues on the recognition, protection and management of intangible cultural heritage and place.

This Background Note documents some of the thinking behind specific aspects of the ICH and Place Practice Note and will be of assistance when the Practice Note is reviewed. As well it includes the outcome of a review of terms used to describe 'intangible' aspects of place in other AI Practice Notes and the Burra Charter, and will be of use in the future review and revision of these documents.

## 2 Preparing the Practice Note

The Australia ICOMOS Practice Note on *Intangible Cultural Heritage and Place* was prepared by a Working Group established by the NSC-ICH at its first meeting on 19 October 2014, following the symposium '*Grasping the intangible at heritage places*' and launch of the NSC-Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Meredith Walker convened the Working Group which comprised: Richard Morrison, Marilyn Truscott, Anne Warr, Abigail Belfrage, Miljenka Perovic, Tanya Park and Georgia Melville.

The Working Group, with the support of the NSC-ICH, undertook a range of activities as part of the development of the Practice Note. These included an NSC-ICH workshop – *Developing our Toolkit* – at Port Fairy in June 2015 as part of combined event presented by the NSC Cultural Landscapes and Cultural Routes and NSC-ICH. At the workshop participants explored five topics: 1. Definition: How should we define ICH for Australian practice in relation to place?; 2. Identification and documenting; 3. Assessing significance; 4. Protecting ICH; 5. Managing for and sustaining ICH.

The Working Group also carefully considered UNESCO Convention (and associated guidance documents), analysed references to intangible aspects of place in the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter (2013) and the Australia ICOMOS Practice Notes adopted in 2013, and assembled specific terms used in these documents with the aim of achieving consistency (see Attachment 3).

In October 2016, Meredith Walker, convenor of the Working Group presented a paper on the context for the development of the Practice Note at the Australia ICOMOS *The People's Ground* conference. Her paper, 'UNESCO and Us: Introducing the Burra Charter Practice Note - Intangible Cultural Heritage and Place' outlined the theoretical direction chosen and explained the working definition of intangible cultural heritage.

The Working Group developed the Practice Note through many drafts and meetings. It was advised by a specialist Reference Group of ICH experts formed to test and comment on the Working Group's draft version of the Practice Note. The Reference Group included: Olwen Beazley, Sandy Blair, Anne Warr, Tanya Park, Andrew Sneddon, and Georgia Melville.

A smaller Writing Group – Meredith Walker, Richard Morrison and Chris Johnston – then refined the draft Practice Note, providing it to the Coordinating Group of the NSC-ICH for final comment and approval prior to its submission to the Australia ICOMOS Executive Committee for adoption.

The Practice Note was approved for release by the Australia ICOMOS Executive Committee on 5 August 2017 and was launched by the NSC-ICH on 20 October 2017 at its event *Intangible and Invisible: Recognising intangible cultural heritage in place* held at Old Parliament House/Museum of Democracy (Canberra).

In launching the Practice Note, the NSC-ICH proposed to review the Practice Note in the near future, based on a review of its application in heritage processes and projects.

## 3 Intangible Cultural Heritage at place: a definition

### Exploring possible definitions

The first step in developing the Practice Note was the need to consider the definition of ICH.

A meeting in Canberra on 2 November 2013 proposed the idea of establishing a NSC and recognised the importance of an agreed definition of ICH.

Following a second meeting, Paul Rappaport and Sue Rosen prepared a discussion paper – 'Defining Intangible Cultural Heritage' (26 May 2014) – which considered the scope of intangible cultural heritage in Australia, referencing the definition in the UNESCO convention, and using examples. Their paper is included as Attachment 1.

This was followed by 'Defining intangible cultural heritage' by Meredith Walker, based on the Burra Charter (2 September 2014). This is included as Attachment 2.

In 2015, the Port Fairy workshop proposed the following definition:

ICH relates to people and place in terms of:

- aspects of use including activities, traditional and customary practices, knowledge and skills;
- connections between people and places including social or spiritual aspects and cultural obligations/responsibilities, shared understandings and memory; and
- what a place signifies, indicates, symbolises, evokes or expresses.

In developing the definition of ICH finally adopted in the Practice Note, the Working Group explored four options, each reflecting a different scope:

Option 1: simply adopting the UNESCO definition

Option 2: adapting the UNESCO definition to focus solely on ICH in relation to *place*

Option 3: including other intangible aspects of place in the definition, reflecting on the five values in the Burra Charter (aesthetic, historic, scientific, social, spiritual), and including associations and meanings, both of which are defined in the Burra Charter.

Option 4: adopting the definition developed at the Port Fairy workshop (above).

The key issue in defining ICH was whether the definition should focus on cultural practices, traditions and knowledge that is transmitted between generations – that is follow the UNESCO model – or should it seek to address other intangible aspects of place such as sensory attributes of and response to place, associations and meanings.

The sensory attributes of and human responses to a place are recognised in the AI Practice Note on *Understanding and assessing cultural significance* (2013: 3) in relation to aesthetic values:

*Aesthetic value refers to the sensory and perceptual experience of a place—that is, how we respond to visual and non-visual aspects such as sounds, smells and other factors having a strong impact on human thoughts, feelings and attitudes. Aesthetic qualities may include the concept of beauty and formal aesthetic ideals.*

It was decided not to include *sensory and perceptual experience of a place* in the definition of ICH. Rather it was recognised that a place may have tangible and intangible attributes, and that this different use of 'intangible' should not be confused with the UNESCO-defined ICH which refers to cultural practices, traditions and knowledge.

The Burra Charter recognises and defines associations and meanings as follows:

- Article 1.15: *Associations mean the connections that exist between people and a place, with the explanatory note adding 'Associations may include social or spiritual values and cultural responsibilities for a place', and*
- Article 1.16: *Meanings denote what a place signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses to people with the explanatory note adding 'Meanings generally relate to intangible dimensions such as symbolic qualities and memories'.*

Through discussion, it was recognised that associations and meanings are likely to be encompassed in any potential definition of ICH, and that the definitions in the Burra Charter already provided for these two concepts.

## Refining the definition

The UNESCO Convention defines ICH as:

“the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.”

The Convention further defines ICH as being manifested in five domains<sup>1</sup>:

- (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
- (b) performing arts;
- (c) social practices, rituals and festive events;
- (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- (e) traditional craftsmanship.

The Working Group felt that the definition used in an AI Practice Note needed to be clearly connected to place, and not address ICH where place was not a consideration. For example, many forms of ICH may not have a strong relationship with the place in which they occur – they may be able to be performed or enacted anywhere. Second, the conservation of specific places might be incidental to, or not needed, for the activity or knowledge to continue. Third, sustaining ICH may involve the use of methods, tools and techniques that are well outside the realm of place-based heritage practice.

On the other hand, the Working Group recognised that practitioners working on heritage places might, from time to time, need to appreciate the full scope of intangible cultural heritage, as defined in the UNESCO Convention and the guidance UNESCO provides about approaches to the safeguarding of ICH.

The Working Group concluded that the definition of ICH should be consistent with the UNESCO definition. Several versions were considered before decided on a final definition.

***Intangible cultural heritage** means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills related to the place that communities and groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage.*

This definition included all of the elements needed but was seen as cumbersome and perhaps unclear. The listing of ‘practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills’ from the UNESCO definition did not provide a simple and encompassing term: a decision was made to use *cultural practices* as shorthand for all of the UNESCO elements.

As in the UNESCO Convention, the Working Group wanted to ensure the definition reflects the

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<sup>1</sup> Language is not, in itself a domain within the definitions used in the UNESCO Convention.

fundamental role of communities and cultural groups.

The final definition adopted is as follows:

**Intangible cultural heritage** means the diversity of **cultural practices** created by communities and groups of people over time and recognised by them as part of their heritage.

**Cultural practices** encompass traditional and customary practices, cultural responsibilities, rituals and ceremonies, oral traditions and expressions, performances, and the associated language, knowledge and skills, including traditional craft skills, but is not limited to these. It includes all of the aspects of intangible cultural heritage covered in the UNESCO Convention.

**Communities and groups** means those who engage in a cultural practice that, in their view, forms part of their intangible cultural heritage. Individuals within communities and groups may be the guardians of aspects of a cultural practice, or hold specific knowledge or skills. Communities and groups *are* self-defined by their shared involvement in the cultural practice; they may also share a locality, ethnicity, or cultural background and be local to the place, or from a wider area.

## 4 Consistency with the Burra Charter & Practice Notes

In order to avoid or minimise inconsistencies with adopted Australia ICOMOS practice documents, the Working Group also considered the consistency with the terms used in the Burra Charter and adopted Australia ICOMOS Practice Notes. Attachment 3 provides a summary of terminology.

The Working Group noted some inconsistencies between these documents, and suggested that any future reviews of the Burra Charter and/or Practice Notes should address any differences in terminology that exist between these key documents so as to achieve greater consistency in future.

## 5 Conclusions

The ICH Practice Note, is (like other Practice Notes) subject to review, in order to reflect experience and developments in practice. Given the relatively recent emergence of ICH as a factor in heritage practice, the NSC-ICH recognises that further guidance may need to be provided in relation to Burra Charter practice. This is a key role for the NSC-ICH.

## Attachments

### Attachment 1: Defining Intangible Cultural Heritage Working Paper, Sue Rosen & Paul Rappoport 26 May 2014

Under the UNESCO Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted on 17 October 2003. Intangible cultural heritage was defined in the following terms:

The “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.

Article 2.2 of the Convention referred to the following forms that intangible cultural heritage might be found. It states:

The “intangible cultural heritage”, as defined in paragraph 1 above, is manifested inter alia in the following domains:

- (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
- (b) performing arts;
- (c) social practices, rituals and festive events;
- (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- (e) traditional craftsmanship.

The following is an elaboration of these concise and elegant definitions. It is provided to evoke discussion regarding the application of the convention in Australia.

Under the definitions intangible cultural heritage encompasses how communities relate to both the natural and cultural world around them. Intangible cultural heritage is therefore both physical and associational. It comprises actual places, objects and practices as well as memories of places, objects and practices that no longer exist or have been displaced. Intangible cultural heritage is inter-generationally variable – shaped and pressed by many hands, heads and histories.

In the Australian context, intangible cultural heritage may be expressed through numerous and varied secular and religious practices such as the celebratory breakfasts in the church hall for the First Communicants post the First Holy Communion Mass in the Catholic Community; bar and batmitvahs for 12 and 13 year old Jewish children, the festival of Eid al-Fitr – the Feast of



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Breaking the Fast at Ramadan, Baptisms, Christenings, Naming Day ceremonies, wedding ceremonies, 21st birthday parties, school dances, family summer holidays, school sports, rugby matches, cricket matches, swimming carnivals, racecourse events, gambling, betting or camps on the river at Christmas for the Wiradjuri people of the Murrumbidgee.

Intangible cultural heritage also encompasses other ephemeral cultural practices such as body art, dance, music and traditional corroborees. It is encompassed in media such as film, radio especially talk---back---radio, popular, traditional, classical and jazz music, poetry, fine art, journalism and television; new media such as the Internet, blogging, epistemic communities (shared causal or normative beliefs), knowledge networks and twitter. Intangible cultural heritage may be expressed in the form of artwork, exhibitions, physical artefacts and other aspects of embodied cultural, symbolic and manufactured material. The stories we tell, pastimes, pleasures and tolerance of pain – all make up who and what we are as an Australian people. Each component constitutes an aspect of intangible cultural heritage. It includes the living expression of tradition including for example traditional Aboriginal knowledge; or Australia's unique surf lifesaving volunteerism; the immigrant experience; our suburban and urban ways of life; and ways of living associated with the experience of the interior and natural environment, including bushcraft.

Expressions of intangible cultural material are inherent in idiom and design – in every aspect of the way we live, such as the way we make and decorate our homes and create our gardens. Aspects of our working lives reflected in the culture and organization of workplaces. Our loves, desires, distastes, our prejudices and fears as reflected in cultural practices, the arts, and vernacular language. Intangible cultural heritage can also encompass aspects of the way we govern including our Federal structure, elections and compulsory voting system and; our concerns about the world in which we live.

Intangible cultural heritage is rich, varied and replete with myriad representations in multiple forms. It is in a constant state of flux and is complex, multi-faceted; rarely singular. Intangible cultural heritage is created and transmitted by communities thus defining who we are as a people. It is subject to technological, spatial, linguistic, existential and natural influence and change and its survival depends on its recognition by and relevance to a community.

Intangible Cultural Heritage ICOMOS is dedicated to the recognition, identification and the maintenance of intangible cultural heritage. As an organisation, it seeks to celebrate and protect its myriad expressions, representations and practices.

The kit on Intangible cultural heritage available at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00451#1>

Is a valuable source for those wishing to read further.

### Attachment 2: 'Defining intangible cultural heritage', Meredith Walker, based on the Burra Charter (2 September 2014)

Sue Rosen and Paul Rappoport have started a discussion about the application of Intangible Cultural Heritage convention in Australia, providing examples of the wide range of intangible heritage in Australia.

Within this wide range, Australia ICOMOS is most interested in the intangible cultural heritage related to place. The Australia ICOMOS *Burra Charter* does not define 'intangible cultural heritage', but its scope is encompassed by other terms, some of which are defined.

This table includes the obvious mentions of aspects of intangible heritage and a rough summary.

A tightly worded definition - like those in Article 1, is probably not warranted. If a definition was needed, the Burra Charter working group might have produced one. However, just for fun (and to see if the Charter is adequate, I have attempted a summary. If anyone was tempted, I am sure it can be improved and at least made more succinct.

#	ARTICLE	INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE terms
1.2	<p><b>Cultural significance</b> means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.</p> <p><i>Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.</i></p> <p><i>Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.</i></p>	<p>intangible heritage is encompassed by the terms:</p> <p>USE, ASSOCIATIONS and MEANINGS</p> <p>[Use, associations and meanings may relate to material – the place itself, fabric, setting, records, related places and related objects.</p> <p>NB the place includes objects]</p>
1.10	<p><b>Use</b> means the functions of a place, including the activities and traditional and customary practices that may occur at the place or are dependent on the place.</p> <p><b>EXPLANATORY NOTE:</b></p> <p>Use includes for example cultural practices commonly associated with Indigenous peoples such as ceremonies, hunting and fishing, and fulfillment of traditional obligations. Exercising a right of access may be a use.</p>	<p>ACTIVITIES, TRADITIONAL AND CUSTOMARY PRACTICES</p> <p>CULTURAL PRACTICES – CEREMONIES, HUNTING AND FISHING, AND TRADITIONAL OBLIGATIONS</p> <p>RIGHT OF ACCESS</p>
1.15	<p><b>1.15 Associations</b> mean the connections that exist between people and a place.</p> <p><b>EXPLANATORY NOTE:</b> Associations may include social or spiritual values and cultural responsibilities for a place.</p>	<p>SOCIAL OR SPIRITUAL ASPECTS AND CULTURAL RESPONSIBILITIES</p>
1.16	<p><b>Meanings</b> denote what a place signifies, indicates, evokes or</p>	<p>SYMBOLIC QUALITIES AND MEMORIES</p>



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#	ARTICLE	INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE terms
	<p><i>expresses to people.</i></p> <p><i>EXPLANATORY NOTE: Meanings generally relate to intangible dimensions such as symbolic qualities and memories.</i></p>	
SUMMARY	<p>Intangible cultural heritage relates people to place; it encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aspects of use, including activities, traditional and customary practices- such as ceremonies, fishing, hunting;</li> <li>• connections between people and place, including social or spiritual aspects and cultural obligations/responsibilities and right of access [custodianship?]</li> <li>• what the place signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses to people, such as symbolic qualities, stories and memories.</li> </ul>	
Summary 2	<p>ICH at a place may be expressed, embodied or found in the use of the place and the cultural practices associated with it, and its associations and meanings to people (derived from advice from Chris Johnston)</p>	

## Attachment 3: Consistency with the Burra Charter & Practice Notes

### *Aim of the review*

The aim of the review undertaken by the Working Group was to identify the ways in which intangible cultural heritage is referenced in Australia ICOMOS practice guidance – the Burra Charter (2013) and the seven Practice Notes adopted in 2013.

While aiming to understand current terminology and practice and thereby minimise inconsistencies, the Working Group also recognised that this review would be useful for future revisions of Australia ICOMOS practice guidance.

The Working Group noted that the Burra Charter and Practice Notes use a variety of terms to describe or explain intangible aspects of place; some terms are used in one document, but not in another without an apparent rationale for the different terms.

### *Intangible cultural heritage in the Burra Charter*

The term ‘intangible cultural heritage’ is not specifically mentioned in the Burra Charter but the Charter provides examples of cultural practices and includes articles on community engagement. In amendments to the Burra Charter adopted in 2013, the term **intangible** is included in the revised definition of place, and in the explanatory notes.

The Working Group concluded that work undertaken within the terms of the Burra Charter should include consideration of intangible cultural heritage of that place.

The following table highlights where the word **intangible** occurs within the Burra Charter, referring to intangible dimensions of place: dimensions in the Charter means attributes or element or aspects of place.

Definitions	Article/Explanatory Note
Place	1.1 Place means a geographically defined area. It may include elements, objects, spaces and views. Place may have tangible and <b>intangible</b> dimensions.
Associations	Article 1.15: Associations mean the connections that exist between people and a place.  Explanatory note: Associations may include social or spiritual values and cultural responsibilities for a place.
Meanings	Article 1.16: Meanings denote what a place signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses to people.  1.16 Explanatory note – Meanings generally relate to <b>intangible</b> dimensions such as the symbolic qualities and memories.
Setting	1.12 Setting means the immediate and extended environment of a place that is part of or contributes to its cultural significance and distinctive character.  1.12 Explanatory note - Setting may include: structures, spaces, land, water and sky; the visual setting including views to and from the place, and along a cultural route; and other sensory aspects of the setting such as smells and sounds. Setting may also include historical and contemporary relationships, such as use and activities, social and spiritual <b>practices</b> , and relationships with other places, both tangible and <b>intangible</b> .

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**Cultural practices** are specifically referred to in several articles (see table below); **associations** are widely referenced and offer an important connection to ICH related to a place as does the definition of **use**. In some articles ‘activities’ is used in combination with ‘practices’, and in other articles there is reference to ‘cultural relationships’ or simply ‘relationships’, and ‘cultural responsibilities’, each of which is understood to comprises a part of ICH.

Cultural practices	Article/Explanatory Note
Use	1.10 Use means the functions of a place, including the <b>activities and traditional and customary practices</b> that may occur at the place or are dependent on the place  Explanatory note – Use includes for example <b>cultural practices</b> commonly associated with Indigenous peoples such as ceremonies, hunting and fishing, and fulfillment of traditional obligations. Exercising a right of access may be a use.
Setting	Article 1.12 - see table above
Compatible use	7.2 A place should have a compatible use.  Explanatory note – The policy should identify a use or combination of uses or constraints on uses that retain the cultural significance of the place. New use of a place should involve minimal change to significant fabric and use; should respect associations and meanings; and where appropriate should provide for continuation of <b>activities and practices</b> which contribute to the cultural significance of the place.
(Conservation of) Setting	Article 8. Conservation requires the retention of an appropriate setting. This includes retention of the visual and sensory setting, as well as the retention of spiritual and other <b>cultural relationships</b> that contribute to the cultural significance of the place.
Reconstruction	20.1 Reconstruction is appropriate only where a place is incomplete through damage or alteration, and only where there is sufficient evidence to reproduce an earlier state of the fabric. In some cases, reconstruction may also be appropriate as part of a use or <b>practice</b> that retains the cultural significance of the place
Retaining or reintroducing use	Article 23. Retaining or reintroducing use: Retaining, modifying or reintroducing a significant use may be appropriate and preferred forms of conservation.  Explanatory note – These may require changes to significant fabric but they should be minimised. In some cases, continuing a significant use, <b>activity</b> or <b>practice</b> may involve substantial new work.
Retaining associations and meanings	24.1 Significant associations between people and a place should be respected, retained and not obscured. Opportunities for the interpretation, commemoration and celebration of these associations should be investigated and implemented.  Explanatory note – For many places, associations will be linked to aspects of use, including <b>activities and practices</b> .

Two articles on participation also make reference to **associations** and **cultural responsibilities**.

Engagement	Article/Explanatory Note
Participation	Article 12. Participation: Conservation, interpretation and management of a place should provide for the participation of people for whom the place has significant associations and meanings, or who have social, spiritual or other <b>cultural responsibilities</b> for the place.

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Engagement	Article/Explanatory Note
Applying the Burra Charter Process	Article 26.3 Groups and individuals with <b>associations</b> with the place as well as those involved in its management should be provided with opportunities to contribute to and participate in identifying and understanding the cultural significance of the place. Where appropriate they should also have opportunities to participate in its conservation and management.

### Australia ICOMOS Practice Notes: Definitions

The adopted Practice Notes (2013) include a number of references to **intangible cultural heritage**.

The Practice Note on 'Understanding and assessing cultural significance' uses 'intangible' to refer to aspects, attributes and elements interchangeably.

On page 9, this Practice Note provides some guidance on recognising intangible heritage, offering a definition that embraces both the material and non-material aspects of intangible cultural heritage (see below).

In the Practice Note on cultural significance the phrase 'intangible values and meanings' is used in relation to spiritual values, and it is also used in the Practice Note on policy: this usage was not supported by the Working group and is not used in the Practice Note on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Place.

Practice Note: Understanding and assessing cultural significance	
What are aesthetic, historic, scientific, social and spiritual values?	Each of these criteria may have tangible and <b>intangible aspects</b> and it is essential that both are acknowledged. (p. 2)
3 Assessing cultural significance Locating cultural significance	The <i>Burra Charter</i> says that cultural significance is embodied in the place—in its fabric, setting, use, associations and meanings. It may exist in: objects at the place or associated with it; in other places that have some relationship to the place; and in the <b>activities</b> and <b>traditional and customary practices</b> that may occur at the place or that are dependent on the place. (p. 4)  A place may have multiple aspects of significance and these may or may not be interdependent. The process of assessing cultural significance should include defining the tangible and <b>intangible attributes</b> that embody each aspect of cultural significance. (p. 5)
Issue: Place is too narrowly defined	'Place' in the Burra Charter has a broad meaning, and includes its elements, objects, spaces and views. Place may have tangible and <b>intangible</b> aspects. (p. 8)  Care is needed in defining the extent of the place and the tangible and <b>intangible elements</b> of the place. Its setting may include views to and from the place, its cultural context and relationships, and links between this place and other places: refer to Articles 1.12 and 8 in the <i>Burra Charter</i> . (p. 8)

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Practice Note: Understanding and assessing cultural significance	
<b>Issue: Recognising intangible heritage</b>	<p><b>Intangible heritage</b> means the non-material aspects of culture that are valued. <b>Expressions</b> of intangible heritage include traditions, practices, performance, use, knowledge and language. Place and objects are tangible <b>expressions</b>.</p> <p><i>Guidance:</i> A place may be the locus for the expression of <b>aspects of intangible heritage</b> that are important to a community or cultural group. Assessing the cultural significance of the place involves understanding its <b>intangible heritage</b>, and this means consulting with those for whom it has this value. The <b>intangible heritage</b> may be dependent upon the existence and form of the place.</p>
Practice Note: Developing Policy	
<b>Identify the obligations arising from significance</b>	Some aspects of significance may be <b>intangible</b> , such as meanings, memories or rituals, and may or may not depend on the fabric of the place for their retention, while other aspects will be clearly dependent on the fabric, form, function, location, setting, use and the spatial qualities of the place. (p. 3)
<b>Issue: How should policy address the cultural significance of a place?</b>	A number of specific policy statements may be required to cover all aspects of significance and how they relate to the physical elements of a place (its fabric, form, location, contents and setting) and to its uses, associations, <b>intangible values</b> and meanings. (p. 6)

### Summary of terms used to describe intangible aspects of place

The table below lists the terms used to describe *intangible aspects of place* in the Burra Charter and Practice Notes. The left-hand column is the term, the centre column is the reference in the Burra Charter and/ or Practice Notes.

Term	Burra Charter/Practice Note references
Aspects	PN Significance (p.2) PN Significance (pp. 8, 9)
Elements	PN Significance (p.8)
Attributes	PN Significance (p.5)
Dimensions	Burra Charter Article 1.1 Definition of place 1.16 Explanatory Note
Expressions	PN Significance (p.5) PN Significance (p.9)
Relationships	BC 1.12 Explanatory Note
Values	PN Significance (p.4) PN Policy (p. 6)
Significance	PN Policy (p.3)

Notes:

PN Significance refers to the Practice Note *Understanding and assessing cultural significance*

PN Policy refers to the Practice Note *Developing policy*

PN Indigenous refers to the Practice Note *The Burra Charter and Indigenous Cultural Heritage Management*

PN ICH refers to the Practice Note *Intangible cultural heritage and place*

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## *Defining cultural practice: Comparing UNESCO and Australia ICOMOS*

The following table compares the terms used in the UNESCO definition of ICH in relation to those used in the Burra Charter and 2013 Practice Notes:

UNESCO terms	AI Terms	Burra Charter & 2013 Practice Notes
	Activities, Human activities	BC Article 1.10; BC Article 7.2 Explanatory Note; BC 23 Explanatory Note PN Significance (p.5) ICH PN (p.4, 5, 9)
	Art, Traditional art	PN Significance (p.4)
	Ceremonies	PN Significance (p.5) PN Indigenous (p.4)
	Cuisine	PN Indigenous (p. 4)
	Cultural responsibilities, Cultural obligations	BC Article 12 PN Significance (p.5) ICH PN (p.2)
Expressions		PN Significance (pp.5, 9) ICH PN (p.2,4)
Knowledge	Traditional knowledge	PN Significance (pp.4, 7, 8, 9) ICH PN (p.2,3,4,5,6,9,10)
Knowledge & practices concerning nature and the universe		ICH PN (p.5)
	Lore	PN Significance (p.4)
Oral traditions & expressions	Language Traditional stories	PN Significance (p.9) PN Indigenous (p.4)
Performing arts	Dances, Songs Performance(s)	PN Indigenous (p.4) PN Significance (p.9) ICH PN (p.2,4,5)
Practices	Practice(s), Customary practices, Traditional and customary practices, Social and spiritual practices	BC 1.10, 20.1 BC Explanatory Notes 1.12, 7.2, 23, 24.1 Explanatory Notes PN Significance (p.4,5,9)
Representations		
Rituals and festive events	Rituals	PN Significance (p.5) PN Developing Policy (p.3)
Skills		
Social practices	Medicine	PN Indigenous (p.4)
	Symbolic qualities	BC 1.16 Explanatory Note
Traditional craftsmanship		
	Traditions, Traditions, Inherited traditions	ICH PN (p.4) PN Significance (pp.8, 9)
	Uses	PN Significance (p.9)



# Background Note: Intangible Cultural Heritage and Place

June 2019



## Discussion

The use of a variety of different terms in the Burra Charter and the AI Practice Notes adopted in 2013 appears to reflect an uncertainty as to the most appropriate terms to use, and in turn reflects the limited engagement of place-based heritage practice with intangible cultural heritage.

As is evident from the above analysis, the Explanatory Notes to the Burra Charter and the Practice Notes include the term **intangible** as an adjective – as in intangible aspects, intangible attributes, intangible dimensions and intangible expressions.

In considering these different usages, the Working Group asked: Are intangible *dimensions*, *aspects*, *attributes*, and *expressions* different from one-another? Could they substitute for one-another? Are there other terms that may be clearer – e.g. *qualities*, *characteristics*?

The Working Group also noted that in earlier versions of the Burra Charter and in the associated Guidelines, the approach adopted was to use words in their most common meaning, unless specifically defined. Following this approach, *dimensions* most common meaning relates to measurement. Perhaps another term might substitute for dimensions? e.g. *attributes*? or *aspects*?

Both the UNESCO Convention and the AI documents include a wide range of expressions of cultural practices; it is also likely that there are some not mentioned, and therefore readers might assume that those human activities were excluded.

Therefore, the Practice Note states that the list of cultural practices is not exhaustive and should not be limiting its scope. Instead a broad and an inclusive approach to the recognition of cultural practices/intangible cultural heritage is recommended.