

New Heritage Advisory Service for the VCC

The Victorian Council of Churches has engaged Ivar Nelsen to provide member churches with a heritage advisory service. The engagement has been facilitated by a grant from Heritage Victoria and will run for a six month pilot program.

Church buildings are an integral part of Victoria's cultural heritage. Churches illustrate the importance of religion in the establishment and growth of Victorian communities as well as usually being visual icons in the townships and suburbs.

The legacy of church heritage frequently results in the 'listing' or statutory protection of church buildings. This does not imply that change is prohibited – it implies change should be sensitive. Our advisor, Ivar Nelsen, feels strongly that we should we should 'live with the past' and not 'live in the past'.

Ivar trained as an architect and has been involved in heritage conservation for 36 years in NSW, SA, Vic, Tas, Qld and the ACT. Over the years Ivar has worked on such diverse sites as the Swan Island Lightstation on the NE coast of Tasmania to Old Parliament House in Canberra. On a more modest scale Ivar has also been involved in the creation of a chapel at Victoria Barracks in Melbourne and the conversion of the Court House in Bright to a community theatre. Ivar recently completed a conservation management plan for St George's Presbyterian Church property in Geelong.

Ivar has been engaged to provide strategic advice on the implications of heritage listings, guidance on alterations and direction for maintenance issues. Ivar can advise not just on restrictions, but on identifying opportunities too for change and improvement of a building's ability to service its congregation.

Should you require heritage advice, please contact Theo Mackaay at the VCC (03 9650 4511 or tmackaay@vcc.org.au).