

## Managing Indigenous heritage information at Aboriginal Affairs Victoria



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The Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (the Act) requires Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) to establish and maintain the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register, consisting of more than 32,000 Aboriginal places, associated maps, photographs and other information as well as more than 5,000 archaeological reports, while new records and reports are added daily.



**On-demand, integrated information in the field**



**Weave** is a business integration framework for rapidly combining disparate information systems in an easy to use environment. It is based on open systems technology and it is independent from vendor specific technologies and proprietary application programming interfaces.

The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRIS) was implemented to administer the requirements of the Act.

ACHRIS integrates textual information with mapping capability and uses the latest technology to allow authorised stakeholders to spatially search and query the register, providing online registration of Aboriginal places and objects, online applications to access the register, and applications for advice about register records.

Based on the Weave business integration framework, ACHRIS transformed the AAV service provision, enabling easy access to the register by organisations and individuals involved in the management and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

*“ACHRIS is a vital asset that enables AAV to meet its legal obligations under the Act. It has been widely accepted across multiple organisations with a realisation from users that business efficiencies have been achieved. It is now attracting interest throughout Australia from those involved in the protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage.”* said

Heather Bannerman, ACHRIS Project Manager.

With ACHRIS, cultural heritage advisors are more involved in the Aboriginal place registration processes. They are now required to verify the accuracy of geographic locations and validate site information prior to registering a place. This enables the storage of accurate information and engenders a sense of personal ownership of the register. Users of the system can view the workflow process and save their work in progress in draft form for an extended period.

Vanessa Edmonds, cultural heritage assessment practice leader at a consulting business, commented: *“We have a team of 111 archaeologists at our firm and ACHRIS has proved an invaluable time and money saver for the team. It enables us to more accurately service clients at the proposal stage by examining the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register to ensure we encompass any archaeological sensitivities at an early stage, helping us in estimating the costs for a proposal. It also saves the client time and money by enabling the team to*

### About Cohga

Cohga is a company with a focus on the development of systems integration products and the provision of associated professional services. Our philosophy is to use Open, State of the Art, and vendor independent technology to create products and solutions that meet and exceed client expectations.

*undertake register searches from the office rather than adding extra time and cost by examining the register at AAV."*

Adoption of spatial technology is instrumental in presenting the register through a user-friendly interface. Online access to the register has significantly reduced time and effort for registered Aboriginal parties and cultural heritage advisors to register Aboriginal places and to assess heritage impacts in preparing cultural heritage management plans. ACHRIS benefits are clearly evident with a 98% take-up of the new online business processes.

At the heart of the system, Weave combines disparate data sources into a single web portal, including a mapping engine and the whole-of-government shared services for identity management to provide secure, role-based access to the system. Auditing capabilities have been built into ACHRIS to record who accesses the register and why, ensuring compliance with legislation.

Rather than pre-processing or duplicating data for each specific registered user, true spatial operations are used within Weave to limit access to the information within various spatial layers and related tables. For example, if a

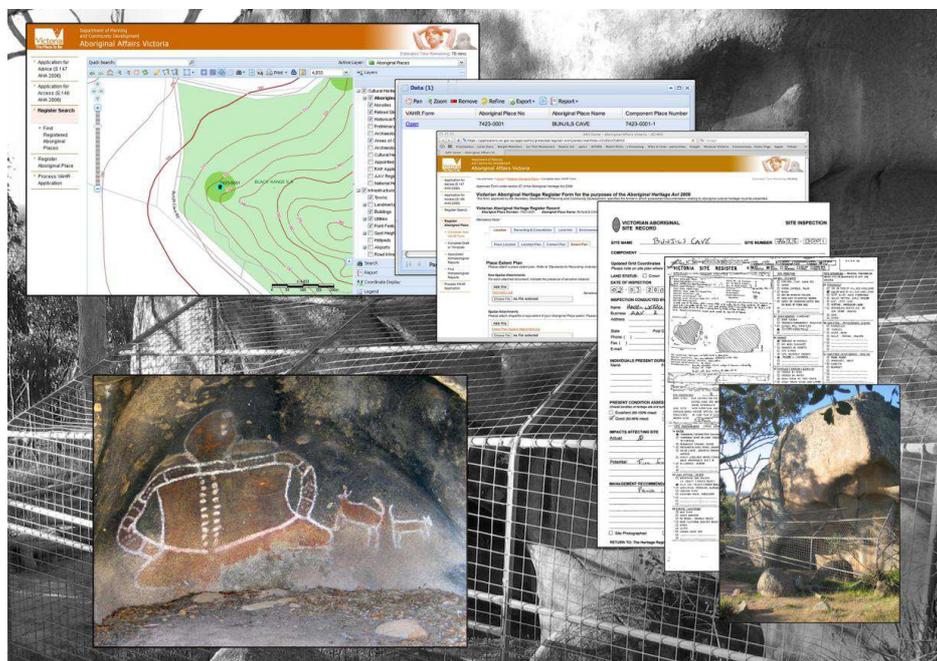
user logged in with a role that tied them to a given Aboriginal Corporation registered boundary, users will only be able to view, search and report sensitive information in that area. Sensitive information in any other parts of the state is not searchable or visible to this user.

Providing a solution that uses spatial operations to determine the level of access to data allows the ACHRIS system to continue working without any modification to the application as the data changes (i.e. when a boundary is updated, added or removed). Applying spatial filters in Weave in this way greatly reduces the maintenance of ACHRIS and the underlying data as the intelligence is in how the filters are applied on the fly.

The project has delivered a spatially enabled application on enterprise infrastructure that can be scaled for performance and future growth and has applied corporate identity and access management infrastructure. The design readily integrates with the Department's document management system and a robust secure transactional IT application that provides the business with high performance and scalability coupled with rich presentation and processing.

ACHRIS is updated in real time, providing more accurate heritage information at all stages of a project. The decision making processes have been vastly improved as Aboriginal places are displayed within minutes of registration. This significantly reduces compliance costs for project proponents.

*"Staff and key stakeholders such as Aboriginal representatives and Heritage consultants now have the potential to work in a mobile office environment, i.e. online and interactive in the field. Aboriginal place registration forms and supporting documentation, photographs and spatial data can be completed and submitted online, reducing by 70% the actual processing time from 10 to 3 days."*, said Ms Bannerman.



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