

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS – RESPONSES

1. Ms Alexandria Barnier your submission indicates that the current system of grants facilitated by Heritage NSW are not used by most owners because they are not easily accessible or considered to be awarded equitably between private owners and community groups. Could you outline the specific requirements of the grant systems that make them difficult to access?

Response:

Urbis' assertions regarding issues with accessibility of the current heritage grants facilitated by Heritage NSW are based on the execution of the selection process by HNSW. I acknowledge that most, if not all owners of heritage listed properties are eligible for one or more heritage grants. Further, that the requirements to apply for the grants are not strictly prohibitive. Urbis' submission was intended to identify the limited access that HNSW allow to the schemes based on the nature of the applicant/s despite their eligibility.

I will not reproduce names or project details in the following reference to a previous conversation directly between an Urbis team member and HNSW representative. However, the conversation is valuable to reference broadly as it indicates the attitude of HNSW to the award of heritage grants to private companies, despite the apparent accessibility of the application process and the eligibility of the applicant.

The conversation which occurred in 2021 resulted in advice to an Urbis representative that while the applicant (a private company) was eligible and it could not be explicitly stated that the company would not receive a grant, that Urbis needed only to refer to previous grant award list to establish the likelihood that they would be chosen based on the nature of the successful applicants in the past. This strongly implies that HNSW acknowledge the exclusive precedent but do not intend to address or subvert it.

The heritage grant application processes in which Urbis has previously participated have required preparation and collation of a high volume of corporate information and heritage documentation. While these requirements are not prohibitive to an application, they are overly onerous when considered on balance with the likelihood that a private company will receive a heritage grant. It must be appreciated that not only are many applicants being discounted for heritage grants that they are technically eligible for, but these applicants are spending considerable time and money preparing the applications.

Explicit provision for award of heritage grants to all types of owners would assist in addressing the propensity of HNSW to award heritage grants to an exclusive type of owner.

2. Ms Alexandria Barnier you mentioned a revolving funds scheme as explored by Mary Knaggs in the ICOMOS paper (2015) and as practiced by Working Heritage Victoria. Are you able to list an example of where this scheme was implemented?

Response:

The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council prepared a report on the Historic Places Investigation in 2016). This report refers to the management of Farm Vigano Working Heritage in relation to revolving funds and states the following.

Working Heritage (formerly Mint Inc) has been operating in Victoria for 18 years and over this time has developed its operating model such that now it is akin to a revolving fund. The proceeds of leasing heritage assets together with other revenue are invested into restoration and adaptation projects for sites which in turn provide revenue when leased.