

REVIEW OF THE HERITAGE ACT 1977

Hearing – 17 August 2021

Question on notice to Ms Penny Barletta, Anglican Church Growth Corp / Anglican Church Property Trust Sydney Diocese

In your submission 64 you point out:

... from a Christian perspective, we value people and actions significantly above our church buildings. We feel that we are being constrained in the redevelopment of our sites for church, education and social infrastructure uses by heritage rules that more serve the secular community, who do not use our assets, at the expense of more high quality ministry and charitable works.

You outlined the St Jude's Anglican Church example. How did the process of the Victorian heritage assessment differ from the Heritage NSW assessment? How was it an improvement?

Conversations with the architectural firm that designed and project managed the St Jude's development indicate that the assessment processes do not differ significantly between Victoria and New South Wales. According to the architectural firm, the key difference was the leadership coming from the Heritage Council of Victoria. Appropriately, it seems that the stance taken by the Council towards preservation, restoration and adaptation impacted the decision making by the regulator and the response to this particular application.

As the position of the Council towards the way in which heritage should be handled is so influential, understanding the personal preferences and positions of potential Council members towards the adaptation and development of heritage properties would be a critical element of the appointment process. Diversity of opinion on the Council in this area would allow for a robust and critical approach to creative applications that in a more conservative environment may be rejected out of hand.