

**Submission
No 197**

INQUIRY INTO REVIEW OF THE HERITAGE ACT 1977

Name: Ms Hayley Edmonds

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Standing Committee on Social Issues
Legislative Council
New South Wales Parliament

4 July 2021

Submission to the Review of the Heritage Act 1977

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing in response to the Heritage Act Review Discussion Paper published in April 2021.

I am a heritage professional with 3 years experience, and regularly work with the Heritage Act and relevant local government legislation.

Consideration of the role that heritage plays in our State is always welcome. Heritage is an extremely significant aspect of our State's identity and economy, and it is important that its role continues to be recognised and evaluated.

It is my opinion however that a Review of the Act itself is not necessary. The Discussion Paper portrays the legislation of the Act as largely prohibitive and 'onerous.' I have not found that to be the case. Anything that is appropriate for a specific property or site is achievable within the legislation. The excessive time frames for approvals referenced in the Discussion Paper are, I would suggest, more closely related to the resources available to Heritage NSW.

Rather than a Review of the Act, which could result in the weakening of protections for heritage assets, and as consequence a potential diminishing of the role that they play in our State's identity and economy, it is my opinion that the resources available to government bodies responsible for the assessment and management of heritage assets should be investigated, and increased where appropriate. The provision of additional resources would have the same stated intent as a Review, without the potential to undermine the protections that were won only half a century ago.

In place of an unnecessary Review of the Heritage Act, I believe that the creation of stand-alone Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation should be a top priority, as NSW Aboriginal Affairs Minister Don Harwin stated it to be in March 2020.

I appreciate you taking the time to consider my submission.

Yours sincerely,

Hayley Edmonds