

**Submission  
No 199**

## **INQUIRY INTO REVIEW OF THE HERITAGE ACT 1977**

**Name:** Dr Alister Sharp

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Overall, the existing Heritage Act is substantially adequate, but requires the addition of mechanisms to ensure it is observed.

The Objects of the Act seem still to be appropriate.

The proposal of the Discussion Paper to split the State heritage category into three seems to lack justification, with no clear distinction between Categories 1 and 2.

The directions for selecting members of the Heritage Council need to be amended to ensure that development and political interests are not over-represented.

Heritage needs to be well funded, by government, to ensure decisions are based on merit, rather than on what is desired by development interests. Given that conservation of heritage is an investment for future generations, and that heritage can be conserved, but never created, Governments must provide funding for their continued protection of heritage items. This can be done in a variety of ways, including direct grants or loans, and by tax incentives.

The Act should give greater weight to the protection of local heritage which often is threatened by development and lack of funding for protection. Part of such action can be done by nurturing local heritage and history organisations.

State Significant development must not be excluded from the level of scrutiny of other development proposals afforded under the Act.

The Minister should publish his/her reasons for not accepting any recommendation made by the Heritage Council.

Local Councils need each to have an independent advisory committee (such as Hunters Hill's Conservation Advisory Panel) to advise and to critique proposed development of or near local- or state-listed heritage items.

Local councils should always set the example of being good custodians of heritage by adopting heritage properties, and, where appropriate, adapting them for public purposes.

The Review needs to identify measures to ensure that property owners (especially of residential property) are not deterred from seeking or assisting heritage listing on the grounds that it might lower the value of their property.