

**Submission  
No 206**

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

**Name:** Mrs Evelyn O'Donoghue

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## Review of Heritage Act 1977

I am a member of a community group, North Parramatta Residents Action Group (NPRAG) and I do not endorse the the proposed changes to the Act. I am actively involved in the campaign to preserve Willow Grove in Parramatta which is viewed by our Minister Don Harwin, as a disposable building, against the advice of recognised heritage experts.

There is general agreement on the importance of cultural places to the identity of people and places, for future generations, for tourism and for the economy as a whole. Any changes to the Act should make it more transparent and robust and produce excellent results, not weaken protection measures.

At the present time, heritage throughout Sydney is at great risk because the numerous State Significant Developments which seem to override any sense of history or the desires of local populations. Since Sydney, and Parramatta in particular, resembles a huge construction zone, actions concerning heritage items are dealt with in a cavalier way regardless of the views of local councils or citizens. If the Government deems a development is state significant, that is the end of the story.

For heritage to be managed effectively in NSW, recognised heritage experts should be properly funded to oversee and monitor decisions. People, organisations or groups who have heritage items to look after should be assisted to manage their properties effectively to enable adequate maintenance or to allow appropriate commercial use of the buildings. It is not surprise to anyone to know that one of the key reasons people travel overseas, apart from to see family and relatives, is to see and experience history. This does not seem to be important here to many of our government officials.

As a resident of Parramatta, I do not feel it has ever really been marketed as an important historical destination in Greater Sydney, now conveniently linked by ferry and rail, and at the rate we are going, there will be little heritage left that is not overshadowed by high- rise buildings, football stadiums. We need a strong Heritage Act to enable us to retain the heritage in NSW and to be able to display it to its best advantage.