

**Submission
No 218**

INQUIRY INTO REVIEW OF THE HERITAGE ACT 1977

Name: Mrs Rosemary Hadaway

Date Received: 4 July 2021

3rd July 2021

To the Standing Committee on Social Issues,

Submission:

Review of the Heritage Act 1977

There is nothing wrong with the Heritage Act 1977 as it stands. It remains relevant, and the objectives are still appropriate.

However, there are a number of associated issues that do need addressing. I will list these and elaborate briefly:

Heritage NSW: This office has been moved between various government departments and renamed numerous times. The staff has been reduced in number with a resulting decrease in expertise and influence. This has resulted in a decrease in capacity to respond with authority and vigour. Thus there is a regrettable and marked reduction in the profile of Heritage in NSW.

The diminishing of the Heritage Office (by internal government shuffling) goes hand-in-hand with the lessening of the value placed on Heritage within other government operations – particularly in the Planning Department. I suggest that the reducing of influence of Heritage NSW has been deliberately actioned to further the interests of developers, and fast-track developments which in fact require greater investigation and community consultation.

State Significant Developments (and State Significant Infrastructure): It is inappropriate that this process calls for ‘comments’ only from Heritage NSW. This is an instrument that allows the law and the intent of the law to be ignored. Heritage NSW should have significant input, even to the point of veto, within this process.

Planning is very much a ‘tick-the-box’ process in regard to the various reports that SSDs are required to procure at the various stages. This lack of examination, recognition, acceptance and incorporation of reports, including Heritage, is a gross betrayal of the community and its values.

Resourcing: Much Heritage in NSW is owned/managed/listed by Local Government. There must be greatly increased resourcing and support to Councils to facilitate identification, protection and conservation of Heritage – whether built, landscape or moveable.

Heritage NSW must have increased and sufficient funding to allow it to return to its premier position of leadership.

Funding and appropriate advice must be available to Heritage owners to facilitate adequate conservation and appropriate positive outcomes.

Aboriginal Heritage: A comprehensive, appropriate, and collaboratively-written Aboriginal Heritage Act is long overdue. This blight on our Heritage management must be addressed as a matter of urgency. With the reduction in the Heritage NSW voice in the planning process, the Aboriginal Heritage voice has diminished even further. We are diminished as a society with this failing.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Hadaway