

**Submission
No 269**

INQUIRY INTO REVIEW OF THE HERITAGE ACT 1977

Name: Ms Bev Atkinson

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To the NSW State Government,

Review of the Heritage Act 1977.

From Bev Atkinson B.Arch UNSW

5.7.21

Thank you for opportunity to comment, and *apology for being some hours late*, I had no idea that so little time could be allowed for such an important field. Human heritage has accrued over eons!

* The Heritage Council; keep continuity and records; retain the expertise and history belonging to *founding members of staff*. Consult previous staff members with background; and academics.

* Aboriginal Heritage.. Regard their heritage through their own eyes. Learn, and respect more fully.

* Yes, the objects of the 1977 Act are still relevant. It is only ignorance and undereducation that can diminish its relevance. It is those which should be changed, not the Act's objectives.

* The expectations of the contemporary community? See the above reply. The shrinking of education in history and culture is being caused by narrow and self-centred obsession with money at the expense of history, values, ethics and understanding. STEMs need leaves and flowers.

That is why there is no practical proposal from Government to address its own plaintive cry at the end of the document: *"We are also still learning about the contribution that heritage makes to our daily lives"*. It is the confession of a bankrupt collective imagination, bereft of the knowledge which used to arrive, in my living memory, in our education, our libraries, our parental family stories and experiences, until the advent of busy, computer-digested "contemporary community".

Governments too are starving public education, libraries, and arts, even the ABC. Reverse this.

In NSW, Heritage (which is the sum of our knowledge and inheritance, natural, built and created) has been silently tacked on the end of 'arts' and divorced from Planning. It is seen only as an obstacle, a waste of government revenues. If our children know less, they will be satisfied with less. So our 'contemporary community' has an ever shallower 'expectation'. And Government follows that? NO.

* Adaptive reuse did OK under 1977, and I don't know that direction-changes are needed to enable commonsense value decisions. It's the political will which is the main obstacle, ending up in such shocks as turning the magnificent public Sandstones into private palaces of commerce.

If you want to improve it, regulate to prevent destruction of our heritage by private interests. Fund artisan training, rebuild the TAFE to take in the kids now being sucked into mining from classrooms. Provide them with healthy creative and interesting work which will build, not destroy, their lives.

* Sure, the Councils don't manage to get the funding opportunities across; but what real engagement do they experience from the State level? What language? What encouragement? Funding is needed, and priority, for State representatives who care, who have imagination to share, and who speak straight, not in governmentese jargon. They can try to make up for the pervasive plunging level of education in history. It is these people who could pick up on local enthusiasm, connect with local Libraries and schools (especially Public), and convey Heritage possibilities.

* Possibilities for Tourism yes, but for our own enjoyment and stimulation first. Experienced Overseas travellers are numerous in this country; surely the successful tourism examples seen in older European countries can be more of an example than they are generally allowed to become. Here, it's almost as if the less we know, the less we care about knowing. Landscape is lost, and the cost of a colorbond fence round a badly designed, damagingly sited bungalow takes full stage.

If you gut the Heritage Act 1977, for revenues, be careful what you are wishing for. Thanks, BA.