

Submission
No 265

INQUIRY INTO REVIEW OF THE HERITAGE ACT 1977

Name: Name suppressed

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Committee for the Heritage Act Review
Parliament of New South Wales

Dear Committee,

I am writing to contribute to the discussion on the NSW Heritage Act Review. I am a heritage consultant with a focus on historical archaeology in NSW, but I also work with Aboriginal heritage and the built environment. I have 21 years of experience in NSW, but I have also worked in Queensland, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Scotland and Cyprus. I have also travelled extensively and made my home in Scotland and Greece for a time. I tell you this because I would like to point out how effective good design around heritage is when planning cities and new suburbs - many of these places acknowledge that their cultural identity is embodied in the fabric of their cities. The cultural and visual richness that is promoted when a historical place is well cared for, is obvious to the onlooker. Consider the popularity of The Rocks, Port Arthur as well as historic homes and landscapes. The amount of public interest shown on archaeological sites is high, and people want to know how their region contributed to the growth of the country. They also want to know the smaller, personal stories embedded in the historic environment. Visible heritage provides identity and cohesion to a place and demonstrates that the community, and the people who have been elected to lead them, care about where they live. It also provides opportunities for excellent design.

That said, the changes that I believe are important in managing heritage in this state are not predominantly to be found in the *Heritage Act 1977* (Heritage Act) but in the way it is administered. This is what I see as vital in achieving the goals identified in the three guiding themes:

1. *Making heritage easy.*
 2. *Putting heritage to work.*
 3. *Making heritage relevant.*
- Greater funding for Heritage NSW
The team at Heritage NSW are understaffed and cannot deal with the volume of approvals that are submitted daily. The NSW Government must provide funding to increase the team size, and importantly, its expertise.
Train the staff at Heritage NSW to work with consultants, developers and the public to reach excellent outcomes (they are reachable).
Include a greater focus on heritage interpretation in permit approvals.
 - Increase the number of members of the Heritage Council and decrease professional diversity.
There is enough pressure from developers outside the Heritage Council to include them within.

- Remove clauses from the Heritage Act that are unused.
- Ensure that Division 5 Maintenance and Repair is strengthened and policed.
- Ensure that protection of historical archaeological sites maintained.

New South Wales is the earliest home of the British Colony on this soil. It contains evidence of hard work, of forgotten people, of conflict with First Nations people and of their survival. It tells the story of how we got here. Heritage represents lost building techniques and design, consideration of the surrounding landscape and our commitment to our environment that is quickly being destroyed by the desire to make fast money.

Heritage will only be relevant if we put strong protection around it but figure out how to make its application easy. Weakening the laws that protect heritage in NSW will only result in poorly planned, and built cities, and suburbs. Ugliness as far as the eye can see.

We forget that the economy is here to serve us, the people, rather than us being its slave, so that the State's numbers can look good on paper. Your, and our jobs, are not about big numbers, but about making New South Wales a place where we can live and be proud of.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,