

Submission
No 284

INQUIRY INTO REVIEW OF THE HERITAGE ACT 1977

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 4 July 2021

Partially
Confidential

I have been passionate about architecture and the landscape for more than fifty years and am a long-term member of the National Trust, Sydney Living Museums (formerly the Historic Houses Trust) and the Walter Burley Griffin Society.

I am very concerned that the review of the current heritage act will weaken heritage protection in our state. I would support a strengthening rather than a weakening of the Heritage Act, 1977, which was legislated to identify, protect, promote and conserve cultural heritage places in the state.

Our heritage is under increasing threat and pressure, so I would like to see greater resources allocated to heritage matters, including increased grants and subsidies that would assist owners to restore and maintain their listed property. In addition, our state government agencies should adequately resource and responsibly maintain the items they own and manage.

The current disparity between the listing of additional places on the State Register, an average increase of only 22 items per year between 2001 and 2019, in stark contrast to the vast numbers of additional listings on the State Heritage Inventory (local), also indicates a worrying trend to undervalue our heritage by limiting the elevation of many worthy items to the state significant classification.

The Heritage Council should be comprised of recognised heritage experts and representatives of heritage organisations and their advice and recommendations should not be over-ridden or ignored by government, as has occurred too often in recent times: eg Sirius Building and Willow Grove.

It is also so vital that there should be continuing opportunities for public comment during all stages of this review and the subsequent White Paper and the drawing up of any new legislation.