

**Submission  
No 288**

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

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The key areas that we focussed on were as follows:

**Focus Question 9: How should heritage items that are residential properties be accommodated under a proposed category scheme?**

Our Point of View: The current categories work very well and are easily understood.

- There is a need for greater recognition of **local** heritage items – not less (currently the value of Local Heritage significance poorly recognised).
- The proposed new category system would further undermine the ability to retain and afford significance to local heritage items.

**Focus Question 10: Would greater community engagement deliver a more robust State Heritage Register?**

Our Point of View: Community engagement is important, however getting proper assessments according to the principles of the Burra Charter (attached) is the key to both local and state listings.

- Most heritage items are at the *local level* and are nominated because they are important to the community(s) that they are associated with (also heritage items are of importance to NSW and beyond as a whole in documenting significance e.g. Pyrmont Cottages)

**Focus Question 11: Would streamlining enhance the listing process?**

Our Point of View: NO. Not if streamlining means taking short cuts, saving money and assisting developers to get their DA's approved at the expense of what the community wants

**Focus Question 14: How could we improve heritage consideration within land use planning systems?**

Our Point of View: Start certification system for heritage consultants so that we don't keep seeing the 'rubbish' heritage reports put together by 'independent' reviewers who are paid by developers.

- Provide more resources to Local Councils for resourcing and ability to provide their own internal independent assessments. Current over reliance on "expert" reports submitted by developers. Provide a more robust scrutiny of processes and an independent certification system for "experts" (similar to proposed reforms in Private Certifiers)

**Focus Question 15: Are there opportunities to enhance consideration of heritage at the strategic level?**

Our Point of View: Lots more education is needed. Especially about the benefits of heritage listings (cheaper rates, grants, etc) because too many people see a listing as a barrier, not as an opportunity. Developers of course see it as a huge barrier (and so do many architects) so they promote all the disadvantages. Some examples of education opportunities which were included in the North Sydney Council Heritage Report, dated 1993 are:

4<sup>th</sup> July 2021

In my opinion there can be no forward progress in heritage policy and therefore the preservation of historic, iconic and domestic heritage properties without State Government (NSW) sincerity and an honest pursuit in subsequent policy direction.

This will require a high degree of independence in any in-depth consideration and review of heritage issues in order to produce policy outcomes which can be interpreted equally by stake-holders and owners alike which in turn can provide solid direction to State and Local Government in order to:

- Avoid any possibility of a denudation in policy direction and implementation at Local Government level;
- Deny property developers and Council staff, free or underhand access to properties on heritage listings to stake-holders' and the community's detriment;
- Provide a complete definition and categorisation of heritage listings freely accessible to the public;
- Establish the mechanism by which owners and other stake-holders may apply for a heritage listing;
- Ensure the public at large are included in the decision making process via verbal, written or electronic means, of particular importance in dealing with critical or contentious development issues

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