

Anglican Church of Australia Diocese of Tasmania

Representation to Productivity Commission Hearing
Friday 11 August 2005

1. Quality of our old buildings

- a. Many buildings tend to be original because unaffected by wars and civil strife
- b. Many have not yet been altered

2. Social value

- a. Referred to in both the Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975
- b. Similar intent in Australian Heritage Council Act 2003
- c. Heritage buildings display
 - ... particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group¹
 - ...special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons²
 - Symbols of the past help to build cohesion and continuity in our community

3. Cultural tourism

- a. Tourists frequently visit and stay in Tasmania because our heritage buildings are real and have not been duplicated or seriously altered - as they have in many other places
- b. Heritage buildings must be properly maintained to remain attractive

4. Churches on the register

- a. Churches are 8.4% of places on the historic register. Only government building at 11% exceed it as a percentage of listed buildings³

5. Condition of churches

- a. High integrity but mounting maintenance load⁴
- b. Churches are generally in good (46%) to fair (53%) condition and probably have the highest integrity of any class of heritage place. Signs of developing conservation problems, especially rising damp or failing roofs and roof plumbing⁵.
- c. Growing ongoing and deferred maintenance bill for many churches will pose major problems over the next decade⁶.
- d. Constraints imposed by heritage building planning, decoration and furnishing (such as boxed pews) often make them unsuitable for contemporary styles of worship.

6. Impossibility of churches funding cost of conservation

- a. Not enough income
 - Anglican churches are self supporting - their source of income is weekly collection and investments in property (if they have any)
 - Churches don't generate enough income to fund major conservation and restoration of their buildings
- b. Not core business
 - Churches are involved in mission, reaching out to the community and serving the community's spiritual and physical needs.

¹ Australian Heritage Council Act 2003, p13

² Ibid, p. 13

³ Register of the National Estate 1997, p29

⁴ DEH, State of the Environment Australia 2001, Natural and Cultural Heritage theme report, p6

⁵ Ibid, p6

⁶ Ibid, p6

7. Non-heritage v Heritage properties

- a. When non-heritage properties are unsatisfactory, owners dispose or alter them
- b. Heritage properties, if unsatisfactory, are very difficult to dispose of and alterations to make them work better are made almost illegal by heritage bodies.
 - Tasmanian heritage council requires five reports and processes before unsuitable building can be demolished.

8. Dilemmas faced by Heritage listed Anglican churches

- Many tourists love heritage buildings and communities appreciate their connections with the past
- Many people prefer the look of old buildings to new buildings

BUT

- They are often unsuitable for contemporary worship
- They are not allowed to be altered to make them more appropriate
- Regulations make it extremely difficult to dispose of unsuitable churches
- Many require major conservation, restoration and expensive on-going maintenance
- Churches do not have the means to undertake repairs - especially if the buildings are unsuitable

9. Funding heritage building

It appears that tourists, society and heritage committees are very keen to retain old churches for reasons that do not directly relate to the core business of the Anglican Church.

Therefore, the expense of preservation and maintenance of these buildings should be met from the public purse.

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