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Heritage Inquiry  
Productivity Commission  
PO Box 80  
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Local Government and Heritage Conservation**

Banyule City Council wishes to comment on heritage conservation with regard to the Productivity Commission's *Conservation of Australia's Heritage Places Issues Paper*, and the issues faced by local government in Victoria.

Whilst it is acknowledged that State and Federal Governments are increasingly supportive of local government's role in heritage conservation, Council still identifies some problems with the current heritage processes and funds available.

In particular, as time progresses, more heritage places and objects are identified and listed on local, State and National registers. Unfortunately, the funding available to local governments to assist the identification, assessment and protection of these items, is limited and has to stretch further to cover these new listings.

In addition, the average landowner who has purchased a heritage property, has a disposable income that can only stretch to minor alterations of their dwelling. In many cases, the detailed assessment, planning and reconstruction that is required for heritage properties to retain their historical integrity, is beyond the normal property holder's budget. Without assistance from various levels of government, the preservation and conservation of heritage places is often impossible.

Given that heritage and historic items can stimulate tourism and employment, add to cultural identity and provide sources of information and education, Council feels that a more significant financial commitment is required from the State and Federal Governments.

It is also felt that heritage conservation in Australia is too regulation-driven. Council believes that a focus on positive reinforcement would further enable heritage conservation. If incentive programs were available through State and/or Federal Government, this would enable local government to further negotiate with developers to re-use and rehabilitate heritage buildings.

It is clear that local government can play a significant role in heritage conservation. Local Government already provides the public with information and education about natural and built heritage. Council can also lobby on the public's behalf for heritage listings and provide funding for smaller heritage projects. If the levels of government combined, larger heritage conservation, education and tourism projects could be supported with much success. If Heritage Victoria entered into more partnerships with local government, heritage conservation could be much stronger.

Should you have any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me on 9457 9815.

Yours sincerely,

JULIA NIEMANN  
Urban Planner