BROKEN HILL, NSW, AUSTRALIA

HERITAGE & CULTURAL TOURISM INITIATIVES, 1986 - 2005

INFORMATION FOR PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION ENQUIRY

JULY 2005

Submitted by the City of Broken Hill
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Broken Hill is a remarkable city with a mining history of world significance – despite minimal rainfall and extreme summer temperatures it has survived as a unique settlement with a strong community spirit and civic pride. From 1886 it burgeoned as a mining centre attracting skilled men and labour from all over the world. By 1907, when it was proclaimed a city, 9,000 men were employed on the mines. With mining as its focus the population of the city peaked at 35,000 in 1915 and again in 1952 at 32,500. However since that time the population has been steadily declining as the mines have closed, and the population was predicted to fall. That has not occurred – there are still 20,500 people in the city with 550 employed on the mines. In nine years the last mine will close and the city will need to turn fully to an industry that has been steadily developing – that of cultural tourism.

2.0 PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Broken Hill Heritage and Cultural Tourism program, developed over the last 19 years has the following objectives:

- To identify, research and protect important heritage assets in the city
- To establish a sustainable heritage protection and cultural tourism framework for the city by providing professional advice to property owners to achieve the responsible management of heritage assets.
- To create unique visitor experiences which tell the story of the development of the mining settlement in an engaging and creative way which can be economically sustainable and are based on authentic history.
- To create partnerships within the community between local residents, business people and the relevant authorities and establish mechanisms which result in long term economic benefits for all involved and the city as a whole.

3.0 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Silver was first discovered in 1883 by Charles Rasp and developed by the Syndicate of Seven (BHP); Broken Hill developed as a commercial, residential and service centre to support the mining activities of the remote arid area. Mining settlements are usually short lived – boom and bust is their fate. However the wealth of mineral resources at Broken Hill has resulted in a centre with a population of 20,500 people, persisting in an area where there is no permanent source of water, where the annual rainfall is less than 250 mm and where summer temperatures of 40 degrees are common. That Broken Hill has existed for over a century is probably its greatest achievement.

The main street of the town of Broken Hill developed parallel to the Broken Hill Line of Lode (or rocky outcrop of ore) and a survey in 1886 fixed a rectangular grid pattern of Broken Hill with streets distinctively named after minerals. Chloride, Argent, Zebina, Iodide, Crystal, Sulphide are among the many and varied street names taken for granted by the locals but often remarked upon by visitors.

A major fire in 1888 marked the physical turning point for the city when most of the “Hollywood Film Set” timber frontages visible in early photographs were destroyed and subsequently replaced with substantial architect designed buildings of the late Victorian boom style. As confidence in the strength of mining grew, the certainty of Broken Hill’s future was expressed in the construction of substantial public and commercial buildings. The majority of residential buildings were constructed away from the town centre – these were houses mostly for miners and were of basic construction in corrugated iron and lined with hessian or canvas. The emphasis was on easily transportable material for housing and indeed many houses had been relocated from nearby Silverton after its decline as a mining settlement in the 1890s.

Broken Hill has always been at the forefront of union activity in Australia, the major issue being wages and conditions for miners. This was to culminate in the Miners’ Strike of 1919 which caused huge community upheaval. Broken Hill has survived the 1930s depression, dust storms, and decline in mining activity, and survives as a unique settlement with a strong community spirit and civic pride. The self reliance and strength of the people of Broken Hill is legendary. But by...
the late 1980s the city was struggling economically and community pride was at an all time low. Commercial buildings were in poor condition, and corrugated iron houses were subjected to recladding in fake weatherboard or brick to overcome the stigma associated with these modest dwellings. Tourism was barely considered as an option when what was on offer was a run down and depressed remote city with little hope of a future.

However, the Broken Hill City Council and the New South Wales Heritage Office recognised the strong and unique historic character of Broken Hill and the urgent need to manage and conserve the rich cultural assets. Community support was galvanised, key stakeholders identified and partnerships established to implement a program unparalleled in Australia to present a mining settlement of international significance to the public. One of the most comprehensive heritage assistance programs in Australia has been developed and this has been very effective in conserving and managing the important heritage and cultural assets in the City of Broken Hill.

4.0 COMPONENTS OF THE HERITAGE & CULTURAL TOURISM PROGRAM

In order for the community to benefit from its recognised character as a remote outback city with remarkable heritage assets of national significance, the Broken Hill Heritage and Cultural Tourism Program was initiated in 1986. The program includes many significant components which are detailed below.

4.1 Overall Approach - Living Museum Heritage Management

The City of Broken Hill positions itself as a “Living Museum” within the “Accessible Outback” which is a unique approach in Australia. This concept was introduced in 1989 and allows visitors to experience the whole city of Broken Hill, both the past and present, as a living museum. Originally a stand alone museum building was proposed in 1988 as part of the Bicentenary of Australia celebrations, but this did not prove financially viable. The approach was therefore changed to the interpretation of the city, the development of booklets and guides and the establishment of over 300 kilometres of trails and walks with lookouts and signage which tell the story of the place in an engaging and imaginative way. This has been accompanied by the development of associated programs to conserve and manage the city's built heritage assets.

4.2 Management of Heritage Assets

4.2.1 Free Heritage Advisory Service

A Heritage Adviser was appointed in 1987, (a position jointly funded by the NSW Heritage Office and the Broken Hill City Council). This is a key service that provides free conservation assistance and expertise for the community on all areas of heritage conservation including:

- practical conservation advice for heritage places (commercial, residential and public)
- upgrades of building facades and verandas
- external paint schemes for all properties
- preparation of heritage strategies and reports where required
- advocacy for heritage issues within the city in a wider arena.

4.2.2 Heritage Assistance Funding - Broken Hill Heritage Restoration Fund

As an adjunct to the Heritage Advisory Service, a comprehensive Heritage Restoration Fund has been established. Broken Hill has received the most generous level of start up heritage funding given to any local government authority by the New South Wales Government and this has been matched on a dollar for dollar basis, by Council with additional private sector contributions. While funding has been allocated on a grant or loan basis the focus has been on the establishment of a revolving low interest loan fund which becomes self sustaining after the initial injection of capital. The Heritage Restoration Fund is administered by the City of Broken Hill and has supported the conservation of many key buildings in the city.
4.2.3 Residential Paint Assistance Schemes (1992 – ongoing)

Increasing awareness of the significance of modest iron miners cottages has resulted in the development of a scheme to encourage the conservation and maintenance of these important but previously overlooked properties. Paint sponsorship was obtained and incentive funds offered which provide a maximum $300 grant (increased to $500 in 2005) and $1,000 low interest loan to householders for the repainting of their houses. There has been a marked improvement in the care and preservation of modest but significant housing in Broken Hill. Data from this scheme has resulted in a comprehensive photographic record of residences with “before and after” photographs taken.

The multiplier effect of the benefits of the paint scheme program has been measured since its inception in 1992. Analysis of figures indicate that for every dollar given by the State Government to financially support this scheme, this has been multiplied at the local level by 17 times with significant economic benefits for the city. Since the commencement of the program, 730 grants totalling $180,865 have resulted in $1,537,061 worth of work being carried out, ie 8.49 times the total grant received by applicants, which has multiplied the NSW Government contribution by 17 times. These loans are revolving, as loan moneys are repaid back into the loan bank.

4.2.4 Verandah Restoration Program (1999 - ongoing)

Initially, a four year program to reinstate and or restore original and compatible verandahs was instigated in 2000. Established as a revolving loan program, this is the most ambitious of its kind in Australia seeded with Centenary of Federation Funding via the New South Wales Heritage Office. In response to constant requests for information about this program from other communities, a video was prepared in 2001 “The Broken Hill Verandah Revival Program” to explain the benefits of this initiative. $416,933 has been allocated to date to this initiative with the project target expenditure of $800,000.

4.3 Heritage Surveys - the Basis for Policy Decision Making

Comprehensive heritage studies for individual buildings, mining relics, Aboriginal heritage and the city as a whole have been undertaken. These serve as the basis for decision making for the heritage assets in the city. In 1987 a detailed Heritage Study was undertaken1 and in 1988 a Heritage Assessment of Argent Street Precinct was undertaken2 paralleled with an Urban Design Study3. Volumes of early photographs of individual places have been compiled which have been used to guide the upgrading of properties when these are proposed, ensuring authenticity and accuracy.

4.4 Planning Scheme Provisions – Protection Status

The recommendations of the various heritage studies have provided the basis for a rigorous conservation planning framework. Heritage planning provisions within the Broken Hill Local Environment Plan provide a framework for more detailed Development Control Plans and an attached Heritage Schedule. This provides statutory protection for residential, commercial and public sites, as well as conservation precincts. Protection against demolition is a critical component of this planning framework.

Broken Hill was the first Council in New South Wales to be delegated decision making powers from the Heritage Council, a response to the City’s responsible track record over the past decade. Council has also initiated a heritage information database for all properties listed on the Heritage Schedule.

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1 Latona Masterman & Associates, A Tale of Tin and Silver – Broken Hill’s Heritage Study, 1987
2 McDougall & Vines, Argent Street Urban Design Study – Heritage Analysis and Recommendations, April 1988
3 Connybeare, Morrison & Partners, Argent Street Urban Design Study - 1989
4.5 Conservation Standards and Building Techniques

Building restoration and conservation proposals are prepared for property owners by the Council’s Heritage Adviser, a skilled conservation architect. Reference is made to the significance of the site and to early photographs which serve as a basis for the formulation of recommendations. Simple drawings are prepared and standard details are available for use where appropriate, such as new verandahs on contemporary buildings designed to fit into the existing streetscape context. A list of approved contractors experienced in heritage work is available from the Broken Hill Council and local contractors have now developed expertise in undertaking work, with initial instruction from the heritage adviser. The overall approach to conservation works is within the framework of the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, the charter which guides conservation projects in Australia. Traditional building techniques are utilised and heritage training workshops have been held to ensure that contractors in the city use appropriate materials and approach to construction.

4.6 Interpretation and Promotion

Heritage walks and drives have been developed with illustrated booklets, maps and interpretive signs. These establish the City itself as a Living Museum. Various look-outs within the town have been created and these landmarks are interpreted in a variety of innovative ways. The design of consistent graphics, illustrations and logos has been developed as part of this approach. Promotional videos have been prepared, in particular a video completed in 2001 focussing on the verandah restoration program. Broken Hill now features regularly in television programs dedicated to cultural tourism.

4.7 Outback Regional Art Gallery - Sully’s Building Conservation Program (1999 – ongoing)

Council has purchased Sully’s Building in the centre of the city, a substantial heritage building which was at risk from fire and suffering vandalism and neglect. Council facilitated the conservation and adaptive reuse of the building for use as an art gallery. This is a major tourism initiative as it houses Council’s significant art collection, one of the finest regional collections in Australia. The project was completed in October 2004, coinciding with the centenary of the original Broken Hill Art Gallery.

4.8 Broken Hill Line of Lode Project - A Key Tourism Initiative

Cultural tourism is the city and region’s major growth industry. The Council has adopted a proactive role in the pursuit of visitors. The Line of Lode (one of the world’s largest silver, lead and zinc ore bodies, which bisects Broken Hill) is presented as a heritage precinct and museum to commemorate the daily lives of miners and their families who have worked on the Line of Lode. This is a collaborative initiative of Normandy Mining Limited (the world’s fourth largest gold miner), Pasminco Limited (the world’s largest Zinc producer), and the people of Broken Hill. These mining companies have given a substantial amount of their infrastructure to the project. The site provides information on continuing minerals exploration and mining, heritage conservation, curatorship and innovation. It presents to visitors Australia’s pre-eminent collection of mining heritage assets. The Line of Lode provides research institutions, universities and industry access to a world renowned industrial research and development site and laboratory.

The management of the project is entrusted to the Line of Lode Association Incorporated, a not-for-profit heritage institution.

The Line of Lode Miners Memorial and Visitors Centre were completed in 2000 and awarded the Walter Burley Griffin Award for Urban Design by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects in 2001, the highest award in Australia for an Urban Design project. This major project is at the core of the City’s future, embracing cultural tourism, education, training and employment for retrenched mineworkers and industrial research and development infrastructure for research institutions, universities and industry partners. It is a major component in the Heritage and Cultural Tourism Program.
4.9 Annual Heritage Awards
This is an important component of the Broken Hill National Trust Heritage Week and following a tour of the city by the judging panel, simple certificates are presented annually to property owners in recognition of individual heritage conservation initiative and effort.

4.10 Voluntary Conservation Initiatives
Council and a group of dedicated volunteers have established the West Darling Machinery Conservation Centre. An able and enthusiastic volunteer group is sponsored by Broken Hill Council to undertake conservation work on machinery. Other Broken Hill Council initiatives include the Council Photographic Service at the Charles Rasp Library, a building materials collection and active engagement in the conservation of museum objects by dedicated volunteers managed by Council officers.

4.11 Outback Art and Film Projects
The development of a unique outback art style and strong identification of the community with the Broken Hill landscape is an important part of the artistic endeavours of the city. The famous "Brushmen of the Bush" are known internationally for the distinctive art works produces in the area. A Sculpture Symposium, staged in 1992, brought 15 of the worlds key sculptors to the outback and has created a lasting "Stonehenge" on a dramatic outcrop overlooking the desert.

The historic setting of Broken Hill and its vast, dramatic landscape has resulted in the area becoming known as "Australia's Outback of Hollywood".

Many film companies use the area for a variety of films including major features, commercials and wildlife documentaries. A comprehensive film manual produced by the Broken Hill Regional Tourist Association is used to attract the film industry to this location.

5.0 FUNDING FOR PROJECT

5.1 Funding to Date (1986 – 2002)
- **Heritage Advisory Position** (1987 – current)
  Consultant conservation architect funded by NSW Heritage Incentives Program and matched by Broken Hill City Council. Currently $ 20,000 annually. Total 1987 – 2005 : $281,653

- **Living Museum Project** (initiated in 1999 and ongoing)
  $400,000 Bicentenary funding with associated donations from the corporate sector (banks and mining companies) and private donations. Allocated to interpretation, tourist drives, booklet compilation and publication etc

- **Verandah Restoration Program** (1998 – current)
  Total proposed $800,000 over 4 year period
  Funded by 25% NSW Heritage Incentives Program, matched by Broken Hill City Council and 50% owner contribution. $320,000 of this fund revolves and is fed back into a sustainable loan fund.
  Expended to date - $416,933 in loans (revolves back to general fund)

  Loans and grants have been allocated to 34 Individual building projects from 1986-2002 totalling approx $900,000
- **Heritage Restoration Fund 1986-2005 including Paint Scheme Project**
  - Total project $469,258 – ongoing
  - Paint Scheme Component
    - 730 grants, totalling $180,865
    - The scheme has generated a total injection of $1,537,061 into previously depressed residential housing stock, multiplying original seed funding from government by approx 17 times
    - 41 loan funds allocated ($49,600) revolve back to the general fund

- **Federal and State Government and Community Cultural Tourism Initiative – Line of Lode Project**
  - Total cost of project $4.6 million
  - provided for the opening of the mining complex to visitors and construction of the Museum & Visitor Centre
  - Funding from Centenary of Federation, Mining Companies and private companies

- **Council allocation for Management of Heritage Program**
  - Council funds a part time heritage officer position, and provides maintenance of the heritage trails and other initiatives for the running of the heritage program - average expenditure $130,000 p.a.

- **Sully's Project – Regional Art Gallery**
  - Cost of project $1.4 million - ongoing
  - Total State and Federal funding for Heritage Program; excluding Line of Lode - approx $2.4 million
  - Total Heritage and Cultural Tourism Programs; excluding Line of Lode - approx $4.2 million - including Line of Lode – approx $8.8 million

These funding initiatives developed for the conservation of Broken Hill’s heritage assets have been designed to become self sustaining. Revolving funds administered by the Broken Hill Council will allow for ongoing projects to continue on heritage places. The partnerships with private property owners match these loan funds. Given the success of the program to date the NSW State Government has committed to continue support for funding for the Heritage Adviser's position and the injection of regular funds into the Broken Hill Restoration fund. Visitor numbers to Broken Hill are increasing annually, providing additional economic input into the local economy, which provides the framework for private property owners to invest in their properties.

### 6.0 KEY FINDINGS FOR THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION ENQUIRY

Heritage and cultural tourism have become an integral part of Broken Hill’s future. The fixed life of the mining industry has led the city to focus on sustainable cultural tourism as an important area of growth with heritage as its major selling point. Most importantly there is now a new attitude and pride within the population of Broken Hill and as the city embarks upon the new millennium this sense of confidence is critical for its community spirit. Strong leadership is a key factor and Broken Hill’s strong community spirit and civic pride is a critical component of its future.

Broken Hill provides a unique model for managing heritage at the local level and has established an integrated approach to conserving heritage buildings and revitalising public streetscapes. Innovative plans have been implemented by the City with cooperative efforts between local government and the community, resulting in a renewed sense of pride in the community.

Heritage and the heritage programs have played a significant role in the economy of Broken Hill. The tourism experience and the sense of place have been enhanced. Tourism numbers have increased over recent years. The last census showed that more people are employed in commercial sector than in mining, indicating that the economy is robust in itself not just relying on...
tourism. There has been a trend for retirees to move to Broken Hill given its affordability, and there is considerable anecdotal evidence that the appearance of the city has been a determining factor in the choice of location of the retirees in question.

7.0 AWARDS & TESTIMONIALS FOR THE PROJECT

Overall program benefits have also been recognised with Broken Hill being the recipient of many awards over the last few years which include the following heritage awards:

- 2005 NSW National Trust Award for the Sullys Regional Art Gallery development;
- 2004 YBE Award for Building Regional Communities;
- 2004 NSW National Trust award for Conservation of Heritage Areas;
- 2003 NSW Tidy Town Award - overall winner;
- Honourable mention in the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards in 2002;
- 2000 Tidy Towns Award Main Street Verandah Program

“The integrated approach of conserving significant heritage buildings and revitalizing the public streetscapes of a historic mining town establishes an exemplary conceptual framework that can be adapted by other communities in Australia and throughout the Asia-Pacific region. The initiative of the local government in setting up associated programmes to conserve and manage the city’s built heritage is not only noteworthy, but also demonstrates how municipalities can play an effective role in stimulating the conservation process. Innovative plans that were implemented by the municipality included a free heritage advisory service, heritage assistance funding, residential paint assistance schemes, and the veranda restoration programme. The cooperative efforts between local government and the community have led to shared knowledge between the stakeholders, and a renewed sense of pride in the community, reviving the local economy based on sustainable cultural heritage tourism.”

- 2002 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation – Honourable Mention

“Broken Hill City Council provides an exemplar for local government heritage management in Australia. It has surveyed its heritage assets, recording these in detailed conservation reports, protecting them in law and carefully managing their conservation and positive promotion. Broken Hill City Council has achieved this over many years and through ongoing commitment of funds and resources to ensure that best conservation practice is followed. Against the odds, in one of Australia’s harshest physical and economic localities, Broken Hill has established itself as a sustainable heritage tourist destination of national significance, now and into the future.”

- Mr Reece McDougall, Director, New South Wales Heritage Office

“The Broken Hill Verandah Program has been hugely successful. It combines State and Local Government, and the owner in a partnership to build upon the heritage assets within the community. The owner gets many benefits in that it enhances his business, the community has their heritage assets retained and enhanced. It is also great for local government in that it builds up a productive partnership with the community.”

- Peter Oldsen, Director Environmental Services, Broken Hill City Council

“I personally think it is a great idea - the program allows small businesses like ourselves to improve the external image of our building. Tourists do not come out to look at broken down buildings, or buildings that are in bad repair. This program allows us to improve the exterior of our buildings without tying up cash flows. This in turn increases tourist numbers in the town, which means more money is filtered back into the small business”

- Robert Opie, business operator and loan recipient, 80 Oxide Street

“I have found the Broken Hill City Council very positive and helpful in assisting me with the saving of a near ruinous building purchased by me in the main street (Argent Street). The Heritage Adviser, Council Staff and the consultant engineer (made available through the Council)
made a near impossible project achievable. I have undertaken many other projects through the program which have provided me with a steady flow of work and allowed me to build up expertise in heritage work. Probably half or more of these projects would never have eventuated without the heritage program."

– **Dean James, building contractor and owner 195 Argent Street**

"I have restored a number of verandahs in town and put back original iron verandahs. It is very important to keep my building work in context with the old photographs to keep it as original as possible."

- **Colin Carthew, building contractor**

### 8.0 EXAMPLES OF ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PROGRAM

#### SULLYS REGIONAL ART GALLERY

Project undertaken by the Broken hill City Council 2000 – 2005
SULLYS REGIONAL ART GALLERY (CONT) INTERNAL VIEWS

Views of this area in before adaptation to an art gallery

Completed first floor Gallery Space
ASTRA HOTEL, 393 ARGENT STREET

Photo of frontage prior to verandah reconstruction work

View after completion of verandah restoration works

DETAILS OF PROJECT:

Contractor: DeFranceschi & Sons
Date: 2003/2004
Works Undertaken: Painting and verandah repairs (part of larger upgrade project for hotel)
Documentation: Broken Hill Heritage Adviser, E Vines
Cost of Works: $50,000 Verandah Revival Program
STURT CLUB, 321 BLENDE STREET

Photo of frontage prior to verandah reconstruction work

View after completion of verandah restoration works

DETAILS OF PROJECT:

Contractor: Gerald Spain Builders
Date: 2004/2005
Works Undertaken: New verandah and façade upgrade
Documentation: KenX Design & Associates
Cost of Works: $71,066.60 Verandah Revival Program
SOUTH STATE INDUSTRIAL SUPPLIES, 335 BLENDE STREET

Photo of frontage prior to verandah reconstruction work

View after completion of verandah restoration works

DETAILS OF PROJECT:

Contractor: DeFranceschi & Sons
Date: 2002/2003
Works Undertaken: New verandah and façade upgrade
Documentation: Broken Hill Heritage Adviser, E Vines
Cost of Works: $21,543 Verandah Revival Program
MAC'S OVEN FOODS, 503 CHAPPLE STREET

Photo of frontage prior to verandah reconstruction work

View after completion of verandah restoration works

DETAILS OF PROJECT:

Contractor: Colin Carthew Builders
Date: 1998/1999
Works Undertaken: New verandah
Documentation: Broken Hill Heritage Adviser, E Vines
Cost of Works: $9,852  Verandah Revival Program
OFFSYS TELEFIX, 80 OXIDE STREET

Photo of frontage prior to verandah reconstruction work

View after completion of verandah restoration works

DETAILS OF PROJECT:

Contractor: Colin Carthew Builders
Date: 2000/2001
Works Undertaken: Verandah repairs and façade upgrade
Documentation: Broken Hill Heritage Adviser, E Vines
Cost of Works: $12,831 Verandah Revival Program
SILVER CITY NEWSWORLD, 207 OXIDE STREET

Photo of frontage prior to verandah reconstruction work

View after completion of verandah restoration works

DETAILS OF PROJECT:

Contractor: Dennis Separovich
Date: 1999/2000
Works Undertaken: New Verandah
Documentation: Broken Hill Heritage Adviser, E Vines
Cost of Works: $10,595  Verandah Revival Program