

Submission to the Commonwealth Productivity Commission – Draft Report on the Conservation of Australia’s Built Heritage.

The Forum does not support a voluntary approach to local heritage listing. Members feel that built heritage needs the current three levels of protection - Local, State and National – voluntary listing will enable many privately owned built heritage items to be demolished.

Compulsory acquisition by Local Government could place financial burdens on small Councils and communities.

Commonwealth and State funding is desirable to retain Australia’s past for heritage tourism, communities and future generations.

Tax based (both State and Federal) incentives for private investment in heritage conservation is essential to enable Australia’s past to be retained for the future.

All levels of government need to have a more coordinated approach to the more efficient use of available funding and the development of better incentives for conservation of built heritage.

State and Federal training programs need to be funded to train people in the skills of the ‘old’ trades – stonemason, carpenter etc to enable built heritage to be retained and maintained.

Local Governments currently prepare management plans and publicly report on related costs. The Forum feels it would not be onerous for Local Government to produce conservation management plans, document and publicly report on heritage related costs for local government owned buildings.

Our Local Government area – the City of Onkaparinga has only recently undertaken a Plan Amendment Report for its Local Heritage List. To recommend that the hundreds of properties on the list be reviewed and potentially de-listed at the request of landholders would be an unnecessary expense to the ratepayers of this City. It also has the potential for this Community to lose much of its sparse built heritage.

Negotiating conservation agreements would put built heritage at risk. In the situation where a Conservation Agreement cannot be reached it will be the case of he who has the most money and the most money to buy a skilful negotiator wins. Local Government and the local community often lose against big developers.