

Dr Christopher D Starrs

BA (Hons), DipEd, MA, PhD Justice of the Peace

The Productivity Commission Heritage Inquiry
PO Box 80
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

Re: Heritage

My experience in Europe has made me very aware of the fact that Heritage protection is primarily an economic good. Tourists visit historic areas; and tourism is a major industry.

I am also aware that heritage is a community good, valued by many people.

In Europe and the Americas, vast sums are spent on Heritage presentation and restoration with outstanding results for tourism and local sentiment.

In Australia the significant failure of Heritage protection occurs, I believe, from the attempt to impose the costs of Heritage protection upon the owners of buildings, as if Heritage protection was a private good and therefore a private responsibility.

At present, to own a property which becomes heritage listed is an owners worst nightmare. Heritage listing causes a dramatic decline in the value of a property.

This situation needs to be reversed. Owners of buildings should be keenly seeking Heritage listing in order to qualify for restoration and preservation funds provided from the public purse.

When this happens, we will see Australia's heritage preserved for the benefit of Australians as well as visitors to Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Starrs
23/2/06