

**KEW COTTAGES COALITION:
SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION.**

Feb 2006

An Unhealthy Draft.

The PC Draft Report "*Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage Places*" is a deeply disappointing document, and in its current form appears to do a disservice to all Australians.

It reads like a 'Health Report' that pays scant regard to significant questions about the quality and quantity of doctors available, and says nothing about the need for, and advances in equitable access to accident, emergency, and intensive health care services.

International best practice is not even mentioned !

Worst of all, evidence that State Governments are potentially the worst offenders in terms of exerting pressure on the conservation of historic heritage places appears to have been ignored.

That the latter problem has arisen can, we submit, only be because of failures in the existing policy frameworks. These frameworks appear to allow State Governments to retain the overriding powers necessary to appoint themselves judge, jury, and executioner on projects they deem to be of 'State Significance.' There are no adequate checks and balances.

We have previously provided evidence to your inquiry (Submission 191) on this matter with regard to the Victorian Government's recent actions with respect to State Heritage Listed Kew Cottages and Royal Park in Melbourne.

You should also now be aware that the former Chairman of the Victorian Mental Health Authority, Dr. E. Cunningham Dax A.O has called for a Judicial Inquiry into the Government sale of these State Heritage Sites. (see: <http://www.kew.org.au/change/contents.htm>)

We respectfully request, therefore, that you to properly investigate this matter in order to better inform the Australian Government of some of the deeply rooted problems still faced by iconic State Government owned Heritage Listed sites in Australia despite 30 years of heritage legislation ostensibly designed to provide for their protection.

Conservation Agreements

We note your expressed draft preference for conservation agreements between Government and private owners to improve heritage outcomes.

We see problems with this approach, however, if it is to be adopted, it must we submit be applied equitably not only to privately owned Heritage sites, but also to State Government owned Heritage Listed sites

So, for example, in the case of the Royal Park, and Kew Cottages sites, the Victorian Government would be required to enter into a conservation agreement with the Australian Government (given the very high Heritage significance of these sites). And in the case of Kew Cottages, prior to the proposed sale to a private developer, the State Government as both owner, and responsible planning authority, would also be required to enter into a separate agreement with the Local Government Authority (Boroondara Council) for the proposed management by the Council of the Heritage Listed public open space.

Proposed Draft Amendments.

In our submission the Commission now has before it evidence supporting the following amendments to its draft findings and recommendations.

Finding 4.2

We propose Draft Finding 4.2 be amended as follows:

The commitment to identify, conserve and manage publicly-owned historic heritage places varies considerably between States and Territories.

This is a significant problem that demands urgent attention to identify and protect those iconic Heritage sites currently at risk of demolition, such as Kew Cottages in Victoria.

Recommendation 7.5

We propose Draft recommendation 7.5 be amended as follows:

State, Territory and local governments should:

produce adequate conservation management plans for all government-owned statutory-listed properties; and

implement reporting systems that require government agencies and local governments with responsibility for historic heritage places to document and publicly report on the heritage-related costs

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produce adequate conservation management plans for all government-owned statutory-listed properties; and

implement reporting systems that require government agencies and local

governments with responsibility for historic heritage places to document and

publicly report on the heritage-related costs and contractual relationships associated with their conservation.

Brian Walsh
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