

MRRA

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Productivity Commission,
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24 February, 2006

Re: Submission: PC Draft Findings and Recommendations, 2006

Macedon Ranges Residents' Association wishes to place on record its opposition and objection to the proposals in the Commission's draft report.

As an Association which has as part of its purposes the objective of:

To ensure that the high quality of the [Macedon Ranges] Shire's environment is preserved and enhanced through the (i) protection of environmental features and significance, and protection of natural, historic and scientific resources ,

we are appalled not only at the Commission's findings and recommendations, but at what appears to be an inaccurate and narrowly-focussed basis for reaching those conclusions.

The Commission admits there are major differences between approaches taken across States and Territories (which point to a variety of circumstances to be considered), yet makes 'broad brush' recommendations to apply nationally.

The Commission seems to not be in possession of all the facts when it states there are no mandatory tests to be met for heritage places to obtain protection. In Victoria, heritage places cannot be placed under heritage protection controls, **at either 'local' planning scheme or higher levels**, without just such a statement of significance.

The intent of recommending removal of almost all protection for heritage places across Australia seems to be to advantage individuals in development projects. The assessment of potential benefits appears to revolve around providing an easier path for a such individuals to demolish heritage places in pursuit of their own profit. This is absurd_ There is more to life than costs and money, and the reality is that development proposals can't always start with the clean piece of paper some may want. No-one in their right mind would condone one group of people being given free rein to run others over simply because that group is in a hurry! Why should any person be given free rein to destroy this nation's heritage, culture and identity because it suits their personal agenda?

The Association's view is that the Commission's findings and recommendations are irresponsible, environmentally and socially unsustainable, and ignore the short and longer-term losses (i.e. costs) to this nation, and future generations, if its findings and recommendations - to dismantle a system which protects and preserves things that people value, that cannot be replaced - are implemented. MRRA would say that the Commission knows the cost of everything and the value of nothing, except the Commission itself admits to uncertainty about costs in this matter.

The Association believes that the most productive - and sustainable - outcome for this nation would be the immediate abolition of the Productivity Commission.

Christine Pruneau,
Secretary.