



Manly, Warringah & Pittwater Historical Society Inc.

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Patron: The Hon. Dr. James Macken, LL.D. (Hon.Syd.)

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Heritage Enquiry
Productivity Commission
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Dear Commissioner,

Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage Places

We make the following submission in response to the draft report of December 2005.

- We recognise that problems exist with the present system but we believe that the draft recommendations would result in the **loss of much of our local heritage**, particularly when developers become involved. Their motive is almost always profit rather than heritage protection.
- **Problem of subsequent listing.** The problem of people buying a property and subsequently having it heritage listed could be partially overcome if Councils would update their heritage inventories more often. One of our local Councils last did an update in 1998 and we are lobbying them commit to another. They are mentioning 2008 as a possibility but without any commitment.
- **Incentives and Penalties.** There should be encouragement and assistance in both cash and kind for owners of heritage properties. There should also be penalties for owners who allow their property to deteriorate to the stage where demolition is the only viable option.
- Councils already complain that they have **insufficient resources** to properly manage their heritage including discussions and negotiating with owners. The lack of resources includes funding and expertise. We have seen cases where contact with owners has had positive results for heritage but we see nothing in the draft report which would make it viable as a wide-scale process.
- Another problem with negotiated agreements is the potential for **uneven application** where owners might get a better outcome than their neighbours because, for example, they have access to a more influential architect.

- **Recommendation 9.6.** There appear to be too many ways in the report whereby listing can be avoided. In this recommendation the owner of a listed property merely needs to lodge the DA and then refuse to come to agreement with the Council.
- We agree that **planning and heritage** are linked considerations. Heritage conservation areas should not impose less stringent restrictions on the ability to demolish and redevelop than do individual heritage controls. (Draft Finding 5.3A) Planning laws should not be allowed to override heritage protection. There should be the same adequate protection for heritage places both individual and in conservation areas. Recommendation 9.7 would seem to be against this.

Similarly we oppose government orders such as those recently imposed by the State in areas of Sydney where heritage protection has been removed in preference to planning considerations.

- In the cases where **agreement cannot be reached with owners** we believe that the proposal and recommendation would not work to the benefit of heritage. Except in the cases of conservation areas we generally don't see the availability of alternative properties with similar heritage characteristics in our area. The identification of alternatives would be a particular problem with places of historic, social or spiritual values as separate from aesthetic or scientific values. We also can't see funds being made available for purchase of properties of local heritage significance.
- We would like to see it made mandatory that a full **archival record** be made, including photographs, plans and drawings of any heritage property where demolition is inevitable. As mentioned in the report (p.23) this should never been seen as an alternative to retention of the heritage item.

Yours faithfully,



Meg Quinlisk (Ms)
President