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NEPEAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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July 23rd, 2005.

Heritage Enquiry
Productivity Commission
P.O. Box 80
BELCONNEN A.C.T. 2616

Dear Sir,

Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage Places Issues Paper - May 2005.

This Society has been involved in requests for listing historic heritage places at the three levels of government to ensure some protection is given to such places for the cultural well being of our society.

The municipal level has been most successful whilst changes in legislation at both State and Federal level has still to be fully resolved.

We have also been involved with applications for financial assistance for various projects with limited success.

Whilst the listing of historic heritage places (as defined on p.5) appears to be acceptable in our area (Nepean Peninsula, Victoria), the need for more financial support for the maintenance and protection of listed places is urgent for both private and government properties.

For example, the Collins Settlement historic area at Sorrento is the site of the first official British Government settlement in what is now Victoria. It attracts some 30,000 visitors annually, but finance for a suitable new visitors centre for displays and as a venue for talks to visitors groups is outstanding. The former visitors centre, though adequate, was removed for safety reasons as the cliff top site was crumbling.

Again, the conservation of the Quarantine Station, Portsea, is a site of historic importance. Here, there are over 100 buildings of which 65 are on the National Register. It is in a beautiful and isolated location with a number of suggestions for adoptive re-use, but such plans will need major financial commitments for initial capital and subsidized operating costs.

2.

We note that the local municipality gives rate reductions for approved maintenance of private properties listed on its Planning Scheme schedule of heritage places.

We support the concept of `adaptive re-use' (p. 6 & 24), but such re-use must respect the original design concept of a project.

Heritage conservation cannot always be obtained by price mechanisms and in many instances regulatory controls are needed (pp. 10-11) and are supported by the community. Few heritage sites can be conserved without outside financial assistance, usually from a government source that is, in effect, acting on behalf of the community.

Historic heritage places are important for the culture of our society and some are of tourist interest. The Productivity Commission with its general emphasis of economic sustainability must ensure it takes into account our need for social heritage. Externalities cannot always be evaluated in financial terms. Our cultural and historic heritage is important for our social wellbeing.

Yours sincerely

**Hon. Secretary
Nepean Historical Society Inc.**

cc. Cr. Margaret Bell
Peter Brown (Shire) Nepean
Conserv. Group Nepean
Ratepayers Assoc.