



Your Reference:
Our Reference:
Contact: Paul Kennedy
Telephone: 9806 5093
Fax: 9806 5913

1 March 2006

Heritage Inquiry
Productivity Commission
PO Box 80
Belconnen ACT 2616

Dear Sir/Madam

Draft Report by the Productivity Commission: Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage Places

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft report '*Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage Places*' and also to provide information on heritage listing in Parramatta, in response to a request from one of your staff.

We are pleased that the Commission appreciates the benefits of Australia's historic heritage to the broader community. We also recognise the efforts in this comprehensive and well argued report to explore a different perspective to conserving heritage, which attempts to balance public good with individual rights.

The conservation of heritage listed properties in the Parramatta Local Government Area is especially important given its historic status as the second oldest European settlement in Australia. Subsequent periods of history with the emergence of Parramatta as a service centre and the development of industry and housing have also been important.

Reflecting and recognising these periods of history, Parramatta has one of the largest lists of heritage buildings in New South Wales. Heritage lists in the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 1996 (Heritage and Conservation) and Sydney Regional Environmental Plan Number 28 -- Parramatta includes 65 State heritage items and 1298 local heritage items (including 391 archaeological management units). In addition, 10 conservation areas are situated in the LGA.

Parramatta Council undertakes the following to help maintain and administer its heritage items:

- Employs a heritage consultant one to two days a week to assess development applications and provide a free advisory service for people undertaking work to heritage properties
- Provides a Local Heritage Fund of \$25,000 annually for people undertaking work to heritage listed properties

Provides community grants of approximately \$25,000 annually for heritage related projects

- Holds Heritage Awards biennially to recognise and reward work undertaken to heritage properties
- Owns and maintains a number of important heritage listed items including the Parramatta and Granville Town Halls.

The problems (particularly those relating to cost and practicality of listing and affect on property rights) highlighted in the draft report on the listing and maintenance of heritage properties are acknowledged. However, having regard to Parramatta's historic function and the extensive list of heritage items there is concern at the principal recommendation of the draft report that privately owned properties should be statutorily listed only after a conservation agreement has been negotiated with the owner. In particular:

- the effectiveness of the proposal is far from clear and protection may be lost or greatly reduced for many of the approximately 1350 heritage listed properties in Parramatta
- the proposal will likely have major resource implications, and particularly in negotiating a large number of conservation agreements for Parramatta. It is also likely to be difficult to devise and maintain a two tier system (conservation agreements and listings)
- the proposal could also divert sparse resources from community education, incentive schemes and preparation of statements of significance on the items.

We believe that through an improvement in the administration of heritage properties; with greater publicity and availability of grants and services, careful and balanced assessment of developments applications, updating of heritage lists and the provision of full information on heritage items that the conservation of significant heritage properties can be achieved in a manner acceptable to the community.

I trust the submission will be of benefit in finalising your report. The submission has been prepared by Council staff and should not be regarded as a formal submission from Council. If you would like further information or clarification of the points raised please contact Paul Kennedy on 9806 5093.