

Scanned copy of original submission

Maggy Ragless

- Historian, researcher, author and advisor to local government and communities on matters of historical importance.
- Career in heritage matters has extended over 35 years.
- Volunteer for heritage and historic organizations for 30 years, serving on a variety of committees including the National Trust of SA.
- Community Historian to regional local government for 0 years, establishing local history collections for Millicent, Penola and Mitcham Councils.
- Holder of several National and State awards recognizing contributions to heritage.
- Supervisor of heritage volunteers for over 15 years. Including the national Landcare Environmental Action Projects (LEAP)/

Supervisor of heritage volunteers for over 15 years. Including the national Landcare Environment Action Projects (LEAP).

Comments on the Commission's scope and recommendations. The

Commission is to examine:

1. The main pressures on the conservation of historic heritage places.

From my observations and experience inappropriate development, minimal financial support both founded on lack of relevant education are the main pressures.

2. The economic, social and environmental benefits and costs of the conservation of historic heritage places in Australia.

Sympathetic adaptability would minimize the cost of the conservation of~ heritage places and safeguard Australia's social history. Creative building' reuse, is an example of sustainability. Ailing local economies benefit from such foresight. South Australia contains many examples of sympathetic development eg Penola, Burra, and Colonel Light Gardens. The latter demonstrates in a sound manner the capacity of a suburb from a past era to be sympathetic adapted to support a modern lifestyle.

The cost is offset by money coming into the area in response to the use of the heritage place. The maintenance cost may be large initially but more economic long term.

3. The current relative roles and contributions to the conservation of historic heritage places of the Commonwealth and the state and

territory governments, heritage owners (private, corporate and government), community groups and any other relevant stakeholders. Given the intrinsic value of heritage, it follows that public monies should be spent equally throughout the community regardless of the ownership in the public or private sector.

4. the positive and or negative impacts of regulatory, taxation and institutional arrangements on the conservation of historic heritage places, and other impediments and incentives that affect outcomes. The attitude and a less officious manner of the individuals applying the regulations impacts on of the owner/occupier or collective community concerns about the long term conservation of historic and heritage places. Taxation reform is imperative in order to conserve heritage long term.

The grant system is an important positive to uphold and bureaucratic processes often deter efforts in conservation.

5. emerging technological, economic, demographic, environmental and social trends that offer potential new approaches to the conservation of historic heritage places.

These trends need to be taken into consideration by owners and regulatory bodies to reinforce basic environmental features often already existing in historic heritage places.

This will encourage the use of emerging alternative technologies which combined with the existing features will contribute greatly to the long-term protection of resources and sustained wellbeing. Confidence through this stability will strengthen the community in a variety of ways.

Sound education of the people including use of use of new technology will dissipate fear in a community that due to changing demographics has little or no knowledge of local, state or national heritage.

6. possible policy and programme approaches for managing the conservation of Australia's historic heritage places and competing objectives and interests.

Policies and regulations are open to extremes by a range of administrators and programmes are limited to experienced staff to present, encourage and guide understanding and informed choices of appropriate actions by the owners/occupiers.

If heritage is going to be protected, and an economic benefit recognized the following needs to occur.

- Reform of the taxation system
- Increased funding
- Informed practitioners
- Training support at the grass roots level
- Genuine recognition of the place of history at all educational levels.

7-4

The Australian Government should implement reporting systems that require government agencies with responsibility for historic heritage places to document and publicly report on the heritage related costs associated with their conservation.

Not only should the Australian Government implement transparent reporting systems through its agencies and departments, but also show-case their results, positive or negative so all can discuss and learn from the experiences and expenditures. This must be accompanied by financial support

- Reform of the taxation system
- Increased funding
- Informed practitioners
- Training support at the grass roots level
- Genuine recognition of the place of history at all educational levels.

7-5

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 associated with their conservation.***

The Australian Government should practise the same recommendations that it imposes on other levels of government to set an example and to achieve a greater understanding of the heritage experience.

8.1

Privately-owned properties should be included on a national, State, Territory or local government statutory heritage list only after a negotiated conservation agreement has been entered into and should remain listed only while an agreement is in force.

9.1

The Australian Government should implement processes whereby any additions of non-government owned properties to the National List occur only after a conservation agreement with the owner has been entered into, and that the property remains on the list only while an agreement is in force. Consistent with its stated preference of relying on agreements for the management of world and nationally significant historic heritage places, the Australian Government may wish to make this a statutory requirement under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

9.2

State and Territory governments should modify heritage legislation to ensure that any additions of non-government owned properties to their statutory heritage conservation lists occur only after a conservation agreement with the owner has been entered into, and that the property remain on the list only while an agreement is in force.

9.3

State governments should require their local governments to add non government owned properties to a local heritage conservation list only after a conservation agreement with the owner has been entered into and remains in force.

The maintenance of the current system is which allows listing, interim protection and the right of appeal. It ensures the protection of heritage stock, a potential economic resource.

9.4

State governments should put in place systems for their local governments to request compulsory acquisition in cases where this becomes the only way to ensure cost-effective conservation of places of local significance.

This recommendation should only be used as a last resort as there is still the cost of ongoing maintenance.

Local Government without doubt should have access to significant funds

9-7

State and Territory governments should modify their planning legislation and regulations to remove any requirement to take heritage considerations into account in relation to any individual property other than those requirements relating to zoned heritage areas.

This is a disastrous recommendation and would compromise Australian heritage.

Many historic/heritage places and potential ones would be lost when heritage considerations are removed from the planning legislation and regulations outside zoned heritage areas. Natural Disasters could remove whole areas currently protected and individual items may be all that are left.

RECOMMENDATIONS

8-1

Privately-owned properties should be included on a national, State, Territory, or local government statutory heritage list only after a negotiated conservation agreement has been entered into and should remain listed only while an agreement is in force.

I advocate strongly for the maintenance of the current system. This system allows listing, interim protection and the right of appeal. It ensures the protection of heritage stock, a potential economic resource.

The three levels of governments and their various departments need to practise what they preach by conserving historic heritage places to a high standard. This would provide opportunities to demonstrate, train and publicize appropriate principles and practices to encourage private owners to preserve their own property.

3-1

All levels of government should put in place measures for collecting, maintaining and disseminating relevant data series on the conservation of Australia's historic heritage places.

Various levels of government need to have the resources for measuring, maintaining and disseminating information on the conservation of Australia's historic heritage places relevant to their region or responsibilities of concern.

The impact on heritage should be part of any planning and developing applications.

Informed decisions will be enhanced by the combination of government resources, community concerns and the owners/occupiers intimate knowledge of the historic/heritage places.

7-1

The Australian Government should phase out the Register of the National Estate for historic heritage purposes, beginning with the closure of the Register to any new nominations.

7-2

State and Territory governments should remove any reference to the Register of the National Estate from their planning and heritage legislation and regulations.

9-5

Private owners of already listed properties, where the listing occurred after purchase of that property, should be able to apply for a negotiated conservation agreement and for listing to continue only if an agreement is reached.

9-6

Private owners of already listed properties, where the listing occurred prior to the purchase of that property, would remain covered by the existing "package" of restrictions and concessions (if any). These arrangements would be reassessed at the time of any substantive development application when negotiations for a new conservation agreement would occur and listing would continue only if an agreement is reached.

Closing the existing Register of the National Estate does nothing to engender community confidence to the long term conservation of historic/heritage places. The current listings need to be maintained or at least incorporated into any new type of record maintained by the government, particularly when there is encouragement for other levels of government to maintain such heritage lists. Lists on their own do little beyond raising heritage awareness which encourage mostly negative [responses in](#) the wider community.

A Heritage Schedule would be more appropriate by including more supportive information. It could include a

- property profile,
 - structural report,
 - community context,
 - financial considerations
 - time line
 - maintenance plan
- and most importantly the
- owners and occupiers aspirations.

This could then form the basis for appropriate information, guidance, training, encouragement, sustain ability and confidence in the heritage process and for it to be perceived as a privilege rather than a frightening encumbrance and lost of choice.

7-3

Those State governments that have specific legislation governing the operations of the National Trust should repeal such legislation.

State Governments need to work with National Trusts to amend their legislation to encourage their integrated approach rather than being dependent on their own heritage departments. National Trusts have a large, be it an ageing membership who maintain many rural and regional properties with large volunteer input and commonsense. This organization and its branches have integrated with the community and are generally greatly respected. They are a grass-roots organization supporting heritage interests and concerns both positive and negative.

However I am not suggesting that they go on with no change rather leadership needs to be developed, and confidence enhanced with appropriate training to encourage responsibilities to historic/heritage places. This will encourage the next generation to participate.

9-8

State and Territory governments should remove the identification and management of heritage, zones, precincts or similar areas from their heritage conservation legislation and regulations, leaving these matters to local government planning schemes.

The responsibility of identification, and management of historic/heritage places needs to be recognized, shared and financially supported across all levels of government. This must not be a cost shifting exercise.

Is the productivity of the environment and our culture being measured adequately? The highlighting, listing, or recognition of historic/heritage places is the bridge between the environment and culture. Heritage is an integral part of both the environment and culture. Historic/heritage places are set in an environment which place them in an easily understood context. They often house cultural items, and remind the community of alternative and sustainable practices. Any productivity measurement of cultural heritage must include recognition of intrinsic value.

Maggy Ragless
22 February 2006

