

To whom it may concern,

I have read the Draft Report and attended a hearing in Adelaide.

I have about 25 years experience in all aspects of the conservation of built heritage in Australia, Malaysia and Indonesia. My projects have received awards at National, State and International levels.

I have been involved in the establishment of heritage and planning legislation in South Australia.

The Productivity Commission has made an important and timely contribution in its Draft Report to not only the built heritage debate in Australia but also to the wider planning debate on the extent to which individual property owners should carry the cost of the imposition of community values/cultures through State and Local Governments in the form of planning and heritage legislation. It is important that the Commission holds to its argument in respect of this issue in order to bring about much needed reform.

The argument for greater adaptation to be allowed for most heritage listed buildings (all except the finest) is sound. There are many examples of unused or underutilized heritage listed buildings remaining so because of heritage constraints. There are examples of original uses relocating from heritage buildings because of these constraints which stem from interpretation of the Burra Charter of Australian ICOMOS which requires uses to be compatible.

Actually the true heritage of built form in Australia is one of adaptation innovation and renewal. Heritage controls have had the effect of curtailing this tradition and establishing an entirely new culture of preservation of the vernacular.

So called heritage experts view the world in terms of their own heritage philosophy and not through the traditions of the disciplines involved such as architecture. The effect of this is often confusing compromise and the setting aside of robust traditions. The tradition of building in the style of the day has been overturned in established urban areas for example.

It is my hope that Commission will go further to consider the wider implications of the imposition of heritage controls. There is a wealth of case study which will clearly demonstrate the damage to productivity brought about by zealous interpretation of heritage philosophy at the expense of common sense and tradition.

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