

SUBMISSION BY THE BRAID WOOD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION (**BRASS**) TO PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION INQUIRY INTO THE CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC HERITAGE PLACES

BRASS, the Braidwood Residents Association, formed in 2004, has two aims: to promote the heritage listing of Braidwood by the NSW Heritage Office, and to oppose developments that threaten the integrity of the historic town of Braidwood, in southern New South Wales.

This submission to the Productivity Commission will address Items 1 and 6 of the Scope of the Inquiry, viz. the main pressures on the conservation of historic heritage places, and possible policy and programme approaches for managing the conservation of Australia's historic heritage places and competing objectives and interests.

Item 1. The main pressure on the conservation of the historic town of Braidwood is that of **development**. The NSW Heritage Office plans to list Braidwood and its setting on the State Heritage Register in November of this year. The Statement of Significance for the NSW Heritage Office listing proposal points out that Braidwood is of state significance because of its intact Georgian period town plan dating from the 1830s and the integrity of the 19th century buildings in the main street. It also notes Braidwood's rarity for two important reasons: the significant historic form and fabric of the town, and the views to the surrounding countryside. The juxtaposition of an historic town set with an historic pastoral landscape is also unique.

Yet this important town, recognised by the NSW Government, the National Trust and a listing on the Register of the National Estate, is facing its greatest crisis ever from housing developments. Palerang Council has recently passed two controversial large developments that will sit on the southern and eastern edges of the intact Georgian town plan. These housing developments could add another 600 or so inhabitants to the town. Both of these developments threaten the integrity of Braidwood, one of the reasons for the proposed listing of the whole town by the Heritage Council of New South Wales.

At a state level, it is important to realise the amount of government funding spent on Braidwood, particularly to fund the many reports prepared for Braidwood over the last 30 years:

- Bridges P. (Historic Buildings section, Government Architects Branch), Braidwood: A Preservation Report, 1975.
- Cox Tanner Pty. Ltd., Inventory of Identified Buildings of Architectural and Townscape Significance, 1977.
- Cox Tanner Pty. Ltd., Braidwood Conservation Study: A report on Conservation Planning for the Historic Town of Braidwood, 1977.
- Howard Tanner, Restoration of External Elements of Significant Buildings in Braidwood, 1980.
- Cox Tanner Pty. Ltd. and Cox and Corkhill Pty. Ltd., Braidwood Conservation Study: Draft Conservation Plan, 1981.
- Cox Tanner Pty. Ltd. and Cox and Corkhill Pty. Ltd., Braidwood Local Environmental Study, 1982.
- Freeman Leeson Architects and Planners, Braidwood Urban Conservation Guidelines, 1.996.
- JRC Planning Services, Braidwood Perimeter Heritage Planning Study, 1997.

- Clive Lucas Stapleton and Partners Pty. Ltd., Tallaganda Shire Rural Heritage Study, 1997.

These reports now sit idle in the local Council offices. It is also important to realise that Braidwood, per head of population has received more heritage funding from the State Government to protect its character than any other town in New South Wales.'

Item 6. Braidwood has been recognised as a unique historic town at both a state and federal level, yet we are let down at the local level by a pro-development local Council. The only solution we see is that the NSW state government, through the NSW Heritage Office, should take over the planning of important places such as Braidwood. To quote the background to this inquiry 'Places of historic significance reflect the diversity of our communities. They provide a sense of identity and a connection to our past and to our nation'. If we are to retain that sense of connection to our past, changes need to be made to the way the conservation of historic heritage places are managed by governments, at both state and federal level.

Forbes Gordon President

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' **Email, Howard Tanner to the Hon. Diane Beamer, NSW Minister responsible for Heritage, 25 June 2005,**