

I would firstly like to pay tribute to the major contribution that our outgoing CEO Will Holmes à Court has made to the National Trust, both as Treasurer and Director on the board for almost 10 years, and as CEO for the last two years.

Will stepped into the CEO role when it was clear that the income and expenditure model set up by his predecessor was unsustainable and had to be changed.

Will made the difficult and unpopular decision; to reduce the head office staff by about half and started the process of diversifying the organization's income base. He worked tirelessly to keep in contact with our crucial volunteer and membership base and properties across NSW and alert the NSW Government to the difficulties the Trust is now facing.

Will's unique skills and passion for the Trust will be missed by staff and volunteers throughout the organization. He will be a hard act to follow and I am well aware of the huge task before us to bring expenditure in line with income and secure the Trusts long term future.

**In spite of the troubled waters, the National Trust achieved some significant milestones, with the dedicated staff adjusting to the effects of the redundancies and taking on additional workloads.**

- The Advocacy work done by Scott Woodcock and Graham Quint during the last financial year made a very significant contribution to protecting New South Wales heritage with the changes that were ultimately made to Barangaroo and other campaigns.
- The huge achievement made by Gerry Hayes and his small team in securing, implementing and acquitting, the Federal Government's stimulus grants to renovate and improve Trust heritage buildings cannot be overstated.
- The beautifully refurbished Trust Centre Complex is just one example while there were four projects completed across the regions.
- The fact that membership showed a slight increase last year during difficult times is a great credit to staff and volunteers.
- The Trust's Bush Management Service won over 150 contracts with councils and government agencies generating substantial income against increasing competition that are engaging in unsustainable price cutting to win contracts.
- The National Trust's newly created "Bush Week in the Cities" and the very successful Heritage Week and Awards are helping to build awareness of the Trust's respected and refreshed brand and the staff and volunteers involved are to be commended.
- While it is dangerous to single out a Committee, among the many successful fundraisers, I can't not congratulate the Women's Committee for another excellent year.

**Now what of the future with a new CEO?**

I am fully committed to working with the board to do what is necessary to make the National Trust of Australia (NSW) sustainable over the long term.

Our first task is to have input into the Terms of Reference and fully cooperate with the NSW Government's Performance Review of the Trust to demonstrate our excellent systems and ability to handle any increased revenue that may be provided by the government.

As CEO of Landcare Australia for 19 years, I developed a model which relied on a diversified income stream of Government, Corporate, Bequest and "Fee for Service" income.

The Trust manages a number of high cost buildings which are owned by the State Government (including the World Heritage Listed Old Government House at Parramatta) for which the Trust receives very little State Government funding for maintenance and operation.

Now, I know that there are some members and volunteers who feel that accepting government money reduces our independence to effectively advocate. But we have for many years received some government grants for projects – why shouldn't we receive (as the West Australian Trust does) regular recurrent funding to maintain our government owned properties?

We believe that there is a good case that we can present to government during this 4 month review.

I have other ideas for diversifying the Trust's income including "tapping" into the mining boom by engaging the Trust's Bush Management Services in stabilizing carbon offset bush land on selected mining companies' surplus land for "fees for service" income. This can often lead to opening the door for untied sponsorships.

I am also looking to establish an Electronic Raffle in coffee shops and other outlets to boost the Trust's untied income to pay for administration. This would be a user friendly "Opera House Lottery" similar to the Western Australian model.

**It is going to take time but I am confident that we CAN turn the Trust's outlook around and develop a more sustainable model for the future.**