

## Part B

I believe there can be no doubt, from the background which I earlier gave, and from the Report which the Treasurer has just given, that the financial condition of the Trust is most serious, and that the Board, and the Trust as a whole, must take significant steps to address the situation and to preserve the Trust to perform its critical role in relation to our Australian heritage, particularly that of New South Wales.

In his following Report, the newly-appointed Chief Executive of the Trust will give greater detail, but I wish to advise you of some of the steps which the Board has taken:

FIRST, and keeping in mind my earlier caveat regarding the need to maintain an effective and efficient Head Office, we will be making further staffing reductions and rationalizations, both at Head Office and in the Regions.

SECONDLY, we will be pursuing with increased intensity our efforts to develop new and reliable revenue streams.

THIRDLY, we will be pursuing with the other State and Territory Trusts opportunities for cost savings by the co-operative provision or procurement of goods and services.

FOURTHLY, we will be working with the properties to assist them to improve their financial returns with the objective of making them self-sustaining, excluding the costs of significant capital works which are commonly funded by with grant moneys.

FIFTHLY, we have appointed a Taskforce to review our portfolio of Properties to determine if better rental returns can be derived from those which are rented or if Properties can be used to greater advantage by the Trust.

At this point, I wish to assure members who may have been disturbed by media reports that Properties may need to be sold or mothballed, that no – I stress no – proposals to that effect have to date been presented to the Board or considered by it.

SIXTHLY, we will be promoting increased volunteering for the Trust, both in the Regions and at Head Office, and fostering a culture which connects to and values our volunteers. At a time when limited financial resources constrain our ability to employ staff, volunteering assumes an even greater importance for the Trust, is that is possible.

SEVENTHLY, and as has also been reported in the media, the Trust is in discussion with the New South Wales Government regarding an increased investment by it in the heritage of New South Wales through the National Trust. The financial condition of the Trust in New South Wales makes it imperative that we do so.

Currently, the New South Wales Government provides funding of some \$20 million per annum to Historic Houses Trust. Given that the properties of Historic Houses Trust are almost all located in and around Sydney, that funding is very Sydney-centric. On the

other hand, the National Trust, which maintains multiple properties across New South Wales, receives negligible recurrent Government funding.

While not denigrating the work of Historic Houses Trust, we have strongly pointed out to the Government the inequity of heritage funding which is so skewed to the city as opposed to the regions of the State.

The Government, through the Minister for Environment and Heritage, Hon Robyn Parker MP, has responded positively to our representations. Before, however, making any financial commitment to invest in New South Wales heritage through the Trust, the Minister, quite understandably and properly, wishes to have her Department, the Department of Environment and Heritage, review the affairs of the Trust and provide her with a Report to form the basis of any submission to Cabinet which she may determine to make. The Report is to be delivered to the Minister by 31 March 2012. The Board has established a Taskforce, chaired by the Treasurer, to work co-operatively with the Minister and her Department in the conduct of the Review.

Before inviting the new Chief Executive to deliver the Chief Executive's Report, I wish to extend the Trust's sincere thanks to its recently-retired Chief Executive, Will Holmes a Court. Will has a passionate interest in and concern for our heritage, and has given approximately 12 years of service and commitment to the Trust, first as its Treasurer for approaching 10 years, and then as its Chief executive for almost 2 years. With his wife Jane, he traveled widely and regularly throughout New South Wales visiting the Trust network, meeting its members, volunteer and supporters and profiling the Trust, particularly in the regional areas of the State. On behalf of the Trust, its Board, its Members and its Staff, I thank Will and Jane for their long and dedicated service to and support of the Trust.

It now gives me great pleasure to introduce to you the newly-appointed Chief executive of the Trust, Mr Brian Scarsbrick AM.

Brian joined the Trust approximately 18 months ago and, prior to assuming his new role, held the position of Director of Marketing, Communications and Bush Heritage.

Before joining the Trust in 2010, Brian was Chief Executive of Landcare for 19 years from 1990 until his retirement from that position in 2009.

Brian has a Bachelor of Arts (Biological & Earth Sciences) from Macquarie University. In 1995, he was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to study Sustainable Land management and Sponsorship Marketing, and in 2009 he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for services to the environment through Landcare.

Brian, on behalf of the Trust, I welcome you to your new role, and assure you of our support and assistance in performing it in these difficult times. I have given Brian a true "hospital pass" in asking him to deliver a Chief Executive's Report after such a short

time in office, but he was happy to accept the pass. Please welcome Brian to his new role and to the rostrum to deliver the Chief Executive's Report.

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