

President's Message



This issue of the magazine again highlights critical issues which could become turning points for the future of our urban and rural environments. The redevelopment of Barangaroo and the questions that must be resolved go well beyond architectural considerations. The Trust's concerns include the future character and uses of the site including historic areas which are already being affected by it; Millers Point, Sydney Harbour and its environs, and to the importance of creating an outstanding development that reflects our Australian culture. Read more about this in **Trust Action**.

The first steps taken by the O'Farrell Government are heartening for the future of heritage of all kinds. The establishment of a portfolio dedicated to heritage and the environment is a vital step in providing a framework for effective management, as is the reinstatement of the former Heritage Branch as an entity independent of Planning. The infamous Part 3A legislation which brought so much heartbreak to individuals and communities has been revoked, and we will continue to press for the reversal of damaging decisions made under that legislation during the final months of the previous government.

Similarly, as we learn more about transactions entered into by the previous government as its term of office drew to a close, such as the granting of exploration rights which override the rights of property owners themselves, it is clear that we have much to do, and quickly, to protect rural landscapes, townships and livelihoods throughout the state from irreversible change and destruction.

Much of the change felt most by individuals and communities lies in the hands of local government. In 2002 the Trust produced its State of the Heritage Report which provided detailed assessment of the performance of local councils across the state in recognising, listing and providing support for the conservation of places of heritage significance.

The Trust is now preparing its 2011 State of the Heritage Report which will provide even more detail on how councils manage places of heritage significance. This will be an invaluable means of measuring change and comparing policy and performance. There is a remarkable variation in how local councils handle their responsibilities for the listing of environmental heritage in Local Environmental Plans. Some have over 1000 items listed, while others have none. The Trust will post its findings on its Advocacy Website www.heritagespace.com to allow residents and community groups to make their own assessments and comparisons and encourage a more positive and consistent response to this important responsibility.

Our National Trust is not just about difficult issues. It is also about enjoying and celebrating the special heritage we have. Among the many memorable events I have attended recently was the colonial-style celebration referred to in our cover story (at which I am pictured above, talking to our wonderful Governor and National Trust Patron in New South Wales). I extend congratulations go to the Lithgow and Regional Branch of the Trust for their deep commitment to the rich heritage of the area, and for bringing to fruition such a significant project and event.

Ian Carroll OAM, President



National Trust President, Ian Carroll OAM, with Marcia Osterberg-Olsen and Graham Johnson

The future for heritage in New South Wales

The recent change of government in New South Wales was a long hoped-for opportunity to halt the rapid erosion of the value of both built and natural heritage which had become a hallmark of the former government. While new statutory changes overrode the provisions of environmental and heritage legislation, the downgrading of local government and Heritage Office powers significantly reduced the power of communities everywhere to challenge decisions affecting heritage, quality of life and the environment at all levels. A few months on from the election, Minister Robyn Parker outlines for the National Trust magazine the changes made during the first months of the O'Farrell Government, and her visions for the future.

From the Hon Robyn Parker MP Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage



Conserving our heritage while ensuring the growth of the NSW economy, is a priority for the NSW Minister for Heritage, Robyn Parker, and for the NSW Government. The Minister said it was a testament to the importance this Government places on our past that, for the first time, we have a dedicated Minister for Heritage.

'The Government has acted immediately to deliver its heritage election commitments by installing me as Minister for Heritage, thus ending the potential conflict of interest within the former Planning

portfolio when making major State planning decisions affecting heritage places.

'A vital part of this direction has been to move the Heritage Branch out of the Planning department and into a dedicated entity, the new Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH). This action has already been delivered and I am now meeting with key experts and stakeholders involved in heritage and environment issues.

'I am developing detailed proposals for new action to protect assets and traditions from our past, improve government efficiency and service for today, and take the strategic steps needed to endow future generations with the benefits we currently enjoy. I will also continue the strategic listing process to protect the most important parts of NSW's heritage.

'Early action in the heritage space will be to implement the transparency and efficiency measures promised in the election campaign – timelimes for heritage listing, an end to the use of a ministerial review panel, and the publication of information about ministerial decision making.

'History is important because only by listening to the lessons of the past, can we make the best choices for our future. In many ways the world has become ever more homogenous, so conserving and experiencing heritage items connects our community and future communities to our history – and we are culturally and educationally richer for it.'



The Governor talked with chef Raymond Teu, who flew from Melbourne with caterer Eugenie Osterberg-Olsen for the event