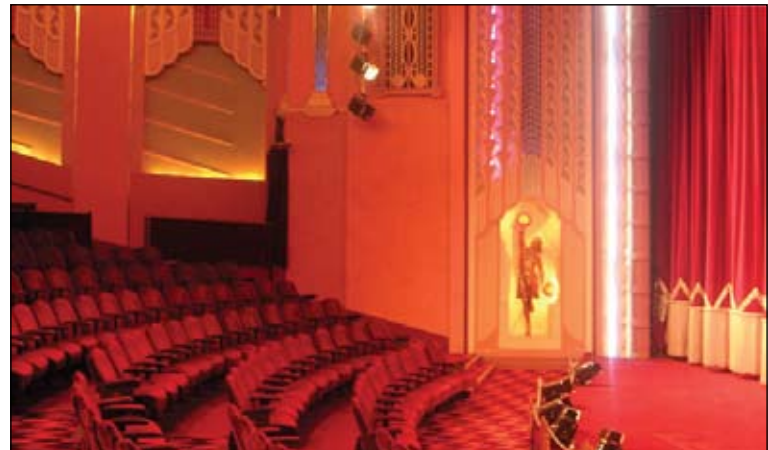




The National Trust of Australia (NSW)

Advocacy Agenda 2011



NATIONAL TRUST

National Trust Advocacy Agenda 2011

The National Trust of Australia (NSW) is the leading independent guardian of Australia's natural and cultural heritage. The National Trust is the defender of our sense of place and belonging in a changing world.

The National Trust represents 22,000 members in NSW alone. Its autonomy

enables the organisation to offer objective and informed opinion on heritage matters.

The Advocacy Agenda 2011 articulates the National Trust's position on a variety of issues. The intent is to communicate consistent advice to the community, commerce, industry and government with

respect to the protection of this State's places and objects of significance.

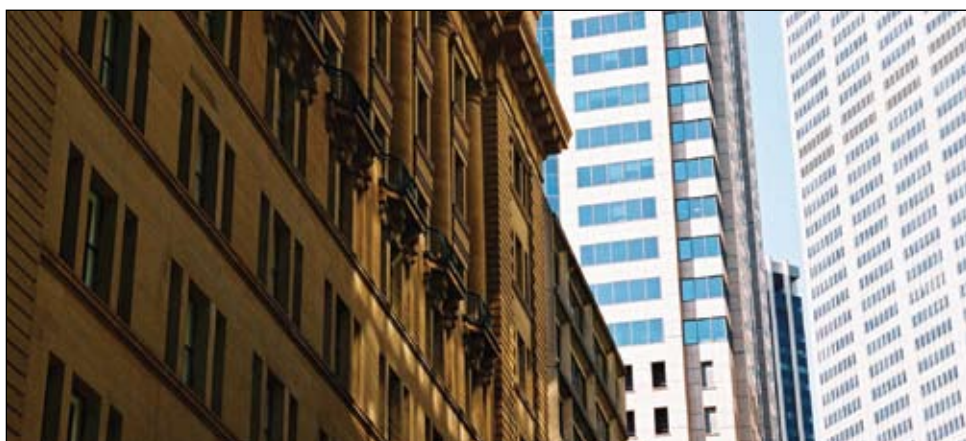
The National Trust remains collaborative, consultative and constructive in pursuit of its mission. The Advocacy Agenda 2011 is an expression of shared values and purpose. This is what we believe.

Principles

Heritage has become synonymous with high amenity and sustainability. Outstanding neighbourhood character is greatly valued and often quantified by the real estate market.

Premium property prices are typically a product of exceptional cultural and natural heritage values. Aesthetic values create a sense of place that appeals to our well being and enrich our lives. There is strong demand for areas with access to bushland and water views as well as suburbs with distinctive architecture such as Victorian terraces, Federation houses and inter-war bungalows. Examples include Woollahra, Paddington, Haberfield, Glebe, Bundanoon and Ku-ring-gai.

Protection of Australia's heritage is therefore more than a matter of principle; it is intrinsic to our nation's character and identity. Today's heritage is not ours to own but is held in trust on a full repairing lease for future generations.¹



1. Adaptive Re-use

The National Trust supports adaptive reuse of heritage buildings where appropriate and consistent with the principles of the Burra Charter. Australian Technology Park, Eveleigh is an outstanding example of adaptive reuse. Its current function as a technology park, blacksmiths and event venue is sympathetic to its previous life while presenting a dynamic and vital interpretation of the building. Similarly the Westin's presentation of the former GPO is a fine example of adaptive re-use.

What is Needed?

A regulatory and financial environment that encourages the adaptive re-use of existing Australian cultural heritage, where appropriate.

2. Building Tomorrow's Heritage

The National Trust believes that modern architecture presents an opportunity for today's designers to make a positive contribution to Australia's sense of place. Heritage did not end in 1901 but continues to be created and interpreted through successive generations. The National Trust looks to the future, learning from the lessons of the past.

What is Needed?

Broader public recognition of distinctively modern buildings that possess heritage value consistent with the spirit of the Australian Institute of Architects National Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture and The National Trust Register listings of contemporary designs.



3. Independent Voice

The incorporation of heritage within the Ministerial planning portfolio presents a very real conflict of interest. Heritage is presently perceived and is in practice subservient to competing land use agendas. This is typified by Currawong where State Heritage Listing was deferred pending consideration of a development proposal. Similarly the geographical extent of the Catherine Hill Bay state heritage listing could be perceived as being tailored to fit a major development application.

Listing of significant items offers a series of opportunities and constraints that inform the assessment of a development application. The National Trust maintains that an area's heritage significance exists independent of its commercial value.

What is Needed?

Recognition of the Heritage Council's independence and removal of Heritage Branch from the planning portfolio.



¹ Paraphrased from - Thatcher M (1988) October 1988 Speech, Conservative Conference; Brighton UK. "No generation has a freehold on this earth. All we have is a life tenancy - with full repairing lease."



4. Regional Heritage

Regional heritage properties capture the country's achievements for local residents, tourists and students. Regional heritage museums assume a higher level of importance as educational and learning resources in the absence of the diversity of cultural opportunities available in Sydney.

Nevertheless, regional NSW properties incur equivalent maintenance costs with significantly lower patronage making them comparatively less self sufficient than city examples. The National Trust maintains that regional heritage properties retained for public benefit in NSW should be funded at a level commensurate with metropolitan museums and galleries.

What is Needed?

Equitable funding arrangements to maintain regional heritage properties at a standard enjoyed by similar metropolitan assets.



5. Reviving Cinemas

The National Trust believes that significant heritage is best preserved through continued use. There are approximately only 20 surviving historic cinemas in NSW, with most in regional areas.

The majority of Australia's remaining cinema heritage is being maintained by independent operators often showing art house pictures. For example cinemas such as the Randwick Ritz, Collaroy Cinema, Leeton Roxy and Hayden Orpheum represent an integral part of Australia's rich art deco legacy.

Independent cinemas have survived the introduction of video recorders, DVD and home theatres. However, the growing requirement for digital presentation is a financial challenge beyond the normal costs of maintaining a heritage theatre.

While local film production enjoys taxpayer investment there is no guarantee that Australian motion pictures will secure a screening at major cinemas. Heritage cinemas have a niche role in bringing Australian stories to the public and providing a vital community focus in country towns.

What is Needed?

Direct government subsidies for heritage cinemas and theatres to complement existing Commonwealth financing of Australian film production.

6. Undue Financial Hardship

Recent amendments to the *Heritage Act 1977* have allowed undue financial hardship to be used as a reason to delist state heritage items prior to demolition. For example a coal mining operation has sought to delist Wambo Homestead near Singleton in the Hunter Valley on the grounds that retention of the buildings will cause undue financial hardship.

The Trust advocates that the maintenance requirements of a property should not detract from the merit of a heritage listing. Despite legislative checks, it remains common practice for developers to purchase heritage buildings and allow them to deteriorate to a point that supports an argument for demolition in favour of redevelopment. The recent amendments only serve to reinforce such practices.

What is Needed?

Repeal recent amendments to the Heritage Act that enable financial stress to be used as grounds for delisting of heritage items





7. Complying Development

Recent amendments to the planning legislation categorise demolition as complying development provided the subject property is not heritage-listed or within a heritage-listed conservation area. The Trust recognises the importance of expediting development applications but the amendment assumes that all items of heritage significance have been listed. Accelerated decision-making should not compromise best practice planning.

Many mid and late twentieth century buildings designed by eminent architects, which in time may be added to the heritage register as seminal examples of their style and period, are now under threat. Heritage registers vary dramatically between local government authorities. For example the City of Blue Mountains has close to 900 listed items while Gilgandra Council has no heritage items recognised in its LEP.

What is Needed?

Recurrent NSW Government funding of regular local government heritage listing surveys to inform LEPs to reduce the loss of potentially significant heritage items as a consequence of complying development.

8. Public Transit

The National Trust supports various public transit initiatives centred on rail rather than motorway construction proposals because of their less damaging impacts on landscapes and places of heritage significance. The National Trust has been encouraged by recent proposals which include:

- The light rail proposal to Millers Point with the potential to service a cruise ship terminal at Millers Point (Barangaroo); and
- The EcoTransit/Australian Conservation Foundation's nine point transport plan supported by Sydney City Council, the University of NSW and the AJC, Randwick which proposes a light rail system that would replace the need for:
 1. Quadruplication of the M5 motorway which would destroy bushland previously saved and regenerated by the National Trust;
 2. Construction of the M6 motorway which would destroy the Trust's Gwawley Bay Landscape Conservation Area; and
 3. Construction of car parking in Moore Park to service the Sydney Cricket Ground.

What is Needed?

Public transport funding rather than road funding where transport proposals compete equally to satisfy the end use demand.

9. Rail Infrastructure

The National Trust supported Sydney Metro's Design Principles and Performance Criteria for the protection of heritage items across the proposed rail network. The National Trust encourages RailCorp to incorporate these principles and performance criteria into all future contracts for the construction of new stations.

What is Needed?

The incorporation of the Design Principles and Performance Criteria for the protection of heritage items into all future contracts for the construction of new railway stations



Places

There is an unresolved tension in NSW between the recognition of heritage values and market forces where the latter seeks to convert properties to a perceived higher economic use. The National Trust mediates these conflicts by advocating constructive solutions which interpret an area's historical importance while recognising that change can be beneficial.



1. Barangaroo

Barangaroo has a rich and diverse maritime history. Henry Moore, as the first P&O agent in Australia, established Moore's Wharf in the 1830s. The P&O Steamship Wharf was soon built to meet growing demand. Cruise ships at Barangaroo would be simply reclaiming their *berthright*. The current Barangaroo proposal will bury, dismantle and demolish this legacy.

What is Needed?

- i. recognition of Miller's Point's rich maritime history;
- ii. retention of a permanent multifunctional cruise terminal at Millers Point; and
- iii. removal of the hotel tower from the harbour.



2. Ku-ring-gai

The National Trust estimates that potentially 692 family homes of some heritage significance will be demolished in the Ku-ring-gai Town Centres to accommodate medium to high density development. The plan will raze 79% of the National Trust's Urban Conservation Areas and erode the remaining 5% of the critically endangered Blue Gum High Forest and Ironbark-Turpentine Forest.

What is Needed?

- i. Recognition of the National Trust's Urban Conservation Areas in the *Ku-ring-gai Local Environment Plan (Town Centres) 2010*;
- ii. Preference given to single residential development consistent with the existing character of the garden suburbs within the National Trust's Urban Conservation Areas;
- iii. Restriction of development of five storeys or more in the Town Centres to the commercial core or the redevelopment of land supporting an existing residential building of three or more storeys where those buildings are not of heritage significance;
- iv. Creation of transition zones between the National Trust Urban Conservation Areas and the remaining Town Centres in which development will be limited to a maximum of three storeys;
- v. No further erosion of remnant critically endangered Blue Gum High Forest and Turpentine-Ironbark Forest communities. That all sites affected by the presence of Blue Gum High Forest and Turpentine-Ironbark Forest be excluded from the LEP until relevant Threat Abatement Plans and a Recovery Plans are prepared to protect the last remaining 5% of these critically endangered communities;
- vi. Examination of opportunities for high rise development on sites where existing medium density housing has exhausted its economic life and where those buildings are not of heritage significance; and
- vii. Amendments to the NSW State Government strata laws to facilitate development on sites where existing medium density housing has exhausted its economic life and where those buildings are not of heritage significance. The National Trust proposes that where a significant majority is achieved (80%) to terminate the strata scheme that the dissenting voters be afforded the opportunity to be heard in an independently convened arbitration panel that can consider issues of hardship by making a determination on conditions of development or appropriate levels of compensation.

The impact on Ku-ring-gai is not a question of numbers but of context. Increased emphasis should be given to settings and the protection of neighbourhood character.

3. Catherine Hill Bay

The proposed state heritage listing for Catherine Hill Bay is five times smaller than that proposed by the Trust for national heritage listing in 2008. The state nomination excludes the headland, hinterland and mine site.

After more than 40 years working to protect the unique landscape and heritage of Catherine Hill Bay, The National Trust is concerned that development on a massive and inappropriate scale is being proposed for the area.

What is Needed?

The expansion of the State Heritage Register listed area to protect the headland and the coastal strip.



4. Exeter – Sutton Forest Conservation Area

In 2000 The National Trust opposed the major expansion of a basalt quarry at Exeter in the Southern Highlands. The Trust is now concerned at reports that the potential for long wall coal mining is being investigated beneath the Exeter/Sutton Forest Landscape Conservation Area listed by the Trust on its Register in 1998. Over 50 individually listed properties also occur within this area.

Potential threats from the long wall coal mining may include damage to creek lines, subsidence, building cracking, contamination of bore water supplies and disturbance from heavy truck usage.

What is Needed?

Prohibition of long wall coal mining beneath all Landscape Conservation Areas including the Exeter/Sutton Forest Landscape Conservation Area.

5. Goat Island

The Trust considers that the NSW Government's draft Goat Island Conservation Management Plan (2009) disproportionately focuses on the sandstone gunpowder magazines. The current plan would see the removal of the last operating historic large crane on the harbour and largest surviving slipway on Sydney Harbour with the capacity to handle vessels up to 650 tons. Furthermore, it proposes that the National Parks and Wildlife Service relocate their boating activities from Goat Island. The Trust maintains that active ownership and occupation will better protect our heritage.

What is Needed?

- i. Retention of the shipyard crane on Goat Island and the continued operation of NSW's largest surviving slipway with the capacity to handle vessels up to 650 tons on Goat Island.
- ii. That National Parks and Wildlife Service retain an active presence on the island to maintain their fleet of craft as it is central to the protection of the harbour's many National Parks.

6. Newcastle

There has been considerable debate concerning the revitalisation of the Newcastle CBD. The National Trust advocates that the CBD's heritage is central to Newcastle's identity. Accordingly, any renewal should conserve as well as respond to the city's rich history and outstanding character. For example, the Court House, located in the historic heart of Newcastle, remains central to neighbouring courts, the police station and many legal practices.

What is Needed?

- i. Implementation of heritage principles that identify and promote the high cultural significance of Newcastle's CBD, eastern precinct or "Old Town";
- ii. Retention of frequent rail services to Newcastle Station along the 1858 rail corridor is integral to the regeneration of a sustainable Newcastle city centre;
- iii. Retention in situ and enhancement of the existing Newcastle CBD police and justice precinct;
- iv. Inclusion of the Coal River (Mulubinba) Cultural Landscape on the national register; and
- v. Pursuit of a redevelopment proposal for the CBD which respects the sight lines across its 1823 Dangar axis and the reinstatement of views from the Cathedral to the harbour foreshore.



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