



THE NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (NSW)

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NATIONAL TRUST (NSW) SEEKS BRAINS TRUST FOR THEMES 2020 SUMMIT OVERLOOKS

The National Trust has called on the Federal government to address the key issue of recognising the value of Australian heritage as the keystone to our national identity. Because of the absence of heritage in the 2020 Summit agenda, the National Trust will hold its own Brains Trust Forum to help bring forward the valuable lessons of our history and heritage.

Dr Zeny Edwards, President of the National Trust (NSW) said, “The knowledge base for the 2020 Summit is embedded in Australia’s heritage – built, natural and cultural. Yet heritage is not on the 2020 Summit agenda.

“We are calling for nominations for the Brains Trust, open immediately. We want ten of the best brains in the country, people at the very top level of their professions, people who have a deep understanding of our society, our diverse cultures and both our natural and built environment, to explore how the lessons of the past can improve decisions about the future.

“Australia’s heritage is a treasure chest filled with all the stories of the development of our society. This knowledge, accessible through an understanding of the past, provides the best possible guideposts to the way forward.”

Prominent architects are particularly dismayed that the important contribution the built environment makes to enrich our heritage and culture has been completely overlooked. More broadly, the community represented by the National Trust is committed to ensuring that heritage conservation remains top of agenda in government decision making at all levels.

Key issues relating to our heritage that should be acknowledged, promoted and discussed, and which the Brains Trust will consider, include:

- The integral role of Indigenous Australian cultures as the foundation of our heritage.
- Australia’s cultural pluralism -- engaging our multicultural society to participate in and value heritage as Australians, while respecting their own diverse cultural identities. Migrants need to feel engaged, connected, and to belong.
- The effects and repercussions of climate change on our heritage.
- The interrelationship between sustainability and heritage.
- Our collective accountability and responsibility in conserving our heritage – natural, built and cultural. Like Noah, we are building the ark, but we ourselves are causing the flood.

The National Trust is Australia’s oldest conservation charity. It is not-for-profit and independent, relying on support from its members and the community to assist its work – which includes advocacy for the protection of built, natural and cultural heritage, conservation and education.

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- Our responsibility to properly care for our own heritage and wellbeing before dictating to our neighbours and taking the "big brother" approach.
- The need to ensure the accessibility of our heritage to the entire community through appropriate legislative and funding measures to conserve heritage sites and items in perpetuity for future generations; through education of the young; and through intensive government initiatives to promote heritage at every possible opportunity.
- The need for a whole-of-government approach to heritage conservation. Natural, cultural and built heritage considerations should be integrated into policy development and decision-making across all portfolios, from Agriculture to Regional Development, to Immigration and Citizenship.

The first session of the National Brains Trust will be held on Monday, 28 April 2008 at the iconic Seidler Apartment in Milsons Point, Sydney, courtesy of Penelope Seidler. Mrs Seidler has kindly offered the venue to highlight her concern that the government has ignored the importance of Australia's Built Environment in the 2020 Summit.

Nominations are invited by email to Dr Edwards at zedwards@nsw.nationaltrust.org.au or telephone her at the National Trust on 02 9258 0171. Further information is also available from Dr Edwards.

Deadline for nominations is 20 April 2008.

Dr Edwards is available for comment.

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