Mr Fidler discussed his experience as a regulator or ‘standard setter’ at the national government agency, English Heritage. In the 1990s, technical expertise seemed to be more limited than suggested by the lists of practices with “interest or expertise” retained by professional organisations. The testing of job applicants with postgraduate qualifications in conservation suggested that 17% had poor technical competency. English Heritage decided to gather information and put in place a robust response. The following is a précis of Mr Fidler’s full presentation, which is also available on www.heritage.nsw.gov.au

**UK context**
- Conservation, repair, maintenance and improvement (CRMI) make up 49% of total construction industry output in the UK;
- 4% of UK building stock is of heritage value;
- CRMI work will increase as part of construction work as available sites for new build are exhausted in UK (expected to be by 2030).

**UK Conservation Education-prior to accreditation**
- Many post graduate conservation courses were established, particularly in the 1980s, but by 2000s many are part time and under threat;
- Few architects are undertaking postgraduate training;
- Most conservation courses are undersubscribed and catering for arts/humanities graduates;
- Academia seemed to have become detached from technical info; there was insufficient expert faculty and text books were dangerously outdated.

**English Heritage’s view of quality and standards**
- The professional institutes had unsatisfactory, non-transparent means to offer clients advice on which professional to hire.
- Testing of job applicants with postgraduate qualifications in conservation suggested that 17% had poor technical competency.

**Accreditation-more pros than cons**
- Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) proposed a specialist register for conservation in 1999-arguing that a register increases credibility with clients;
- It also anticipated that specialist qualifications would enhance the development of postgraduate education and research;
- Conservation is the single specialist accreditation that the RIBA provides;
- There are now UK accreditation systems for architects, building surveyors, engineers and conservators;
- All UK schemes are based on the accreditation of individuals, not practices;
- A competency framework assists in self-assessment and helps to direct continuing professional development;
- The peer-review process reinforces the “client service” nature of professional institutes and accreditation bodies;
- Accredited professionals have an advantage in marketing and tendering for more and better jobs;
- The new system counters the fallacy that life-long competency is guaranteed by a single test for general practice early in the professional’s career.
Strategic Plan
• English Heritage set up a Sector Skills Development Group with the Construction Industry Training Board;
• The group formulated a business plan, commissioned labour market survey and analysis and prepared a plan of action.

Research Questions
• Demand for services: degree, distribution, type and quality?
• Supply: perceptions of clients and employers-confidence in order book, number of retirees, foreign workers, new branches, offers of new posts, shortages of staff and of skills?
• Education & training: graduates per year, full or part time, skills after training, employment prospects before and afterwards?

Future training needs?
• Career guides to attract and signpost students;
• Agreed model syllabuses and performance specifications to focus education and training;
• Incentives to attract students to CRMI route;
• Scholarships to continue postgraduate training after vocational training;
• Common strands of teaching with town planning, urban design, building surveying and structural engineering?

Accreditation / training / quality / job security
• Accreditation drives professions towards training and continuing education;
• The quality of university training improves against vocational objectives;
• Accredited professionals achieve better quality work;
• The market trusts accredited professionals and increasingly prefers them.