

# 1. Listing Heritage Items

## OBJECTIVE:

*The community will have access to quality and timely information about statutorily-listed New South Wales heritage through the State Heritage Inventory and the legislative framework.*

## The State Heritage Register

The State Heritage Register is a list of places and items identified as being of particular significance to the people of New South Wales. It was established under the Heritage Act in 1996. There are 1,506 items on the State Heritage Register, of which approximately 50% are in government ownership. The ongoing work to make the register a comprehensive list of places and items of State heritage significance continued in 2002–2003 with the addition of 49 new items.

Items can be added to the register by the Minister on the recommendation of the Heritage Council, following an assessment of their significance and consultation with owners and the community. Proposals to add items to the register are advertised for public comment.

## Items Added To The Register

Forty-nine new items were added to the register in 2002–2003. Key listings included:

- a prestigious collection of railway carriages – these five movable heritage items demonstrate the status of New South Wales Government Railways in the days when rail was king and include the ‘Old Commissioner’s Train’ and the 1919 Premier’s Car;
- New Italy Settlement near Woodburn – New South Wales’ multicultural heritage is highlighted in the story of New Italy which was built through the tenacity, forbearance and technical skills of a unique group of Australian settlers. This site is particularly significant for the Italo-Australian community and descendants of the displaced Italian migrants who settled there after being allowed assisted passage to Australia by Sir Henry Parkes after the ill-fated Marquis de Rays expedition of 1881;
- Knuckey’s Store at Wellington – this Federation corner store is a fine example of the many country stores that were once community meeting places as well as centres of commercial activity in the 20th century. The store had great importance for the local Aboriginal community, acting as the local ration store and providing a shady verandah for people to gather and meet;



This year State Rail identified a collection of railway carriages dating from the 1910s for listing on the State Heritage Register. *Photograph courtesy of State Rail Archives*



Grace Knuckey (right) with her father and mother in the family shop in Wellington in about 1960, and standing proudly out the front of the store 40 years later. Knuckey’s Store was listed on the State Heritage Register in October. *Photographs courtesy of Grace Knuckey*

- significant 20th century heritage items – three very different items from our more recent past were listed this year: Sharpies Golf House Sign in Sydney, a unique example of 20th century advertising and the only original animated neon sign in the State known to be still operating; Harry Seidler’s radical Williamson house in Mosman, which was designed and constructed in 1952 and is an early important example of a Modernist (Post-war International style) house in Australia; the Scone Civic Theatre which was built in 1938 and today is one of the last theatres designed by prominent theatre architects Crick and Furse to survive intact in New South Wales;
- religious properties – St Thomas’ Anglican Church in Port Macquarie was built to instructions from Governor Brisbane after the site was selected by Governor Macquarie and is one of the few remaining buildings in Port Macquarie dating from the convict period. Cathedral Church of Christ the King in Grafton, completed in 1884 to a design by radical colonial architect and eccentric John Horbury Hunt, is considered the culmination of his unique ecclesiastical design ideas;
- nearly 30 items of engineering heritage owned by Sydney Water ranging from reservoirs, to sewer vents, pumping stations, pipes and drains and reflecting 120 years of Sydney’s history and the government’s provision of water. Often landmark structures, these surprising heritage items were the template for the development of the city.

### The State Heritage Register Project

This year saw the first listings resulting from the State Heritage Register Project in the Central West. Bathurst led the way with the listing of Ben Chifley’s House and the Government Cottages on the State Heritage Register.

The State Heritage Register Project aims to identify place and items which demonstrate the key stories in the historical development of New South Wales. In 2001 the Central West region was chosen as the pilot study for a regional approach to this process.

In this reporting year the project moved into documentation of the heritage items identified so far. The Heritage Office received nominations for a number of items including a Cobb & Co. coach, Errowanbang Woolshed near Carcoar, Denison Bridge and street lamps in Bathurst. These items are now being considered for listing.

The project has been marked by local participation and community consultation. All nominations were prepared locally by the heritage advisor for the area. Owners were involved in the process and helped with the preparation of a conservation management strategy for their item. This document was part of the nomination process and provides broad conservation strategies for the future care of the heritage place or object.

Old Errowanbang Woolshed is one of the most interesting and rarest woolsheds in the State. The architect-designed, multi-storied sheep shearing complex has 40 stands and is one of the largest woolsheds in the Central West. It was identified as a significant heritage place by the local community during the Central West strategic project.



### Interim Heritage Orders

During the year 12 interim heritage orders were made by the Minister for Planning and the Minister Assisting the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning [Planning Administration] on the recommendation of the Heritage Council. The purpose of an interim heritage order is to provide a ‘breathing space’ of no more than 12 months during which a full heritage assessment can be completed.

The majority of interim heritage orders are made in response to community representations or concerns raised by local government. Temporary in nature, they are not a de facto planning tool, but are only used in relation to items which are believed will be found on further investigation to be of local or State significance.

In 2002–2003 the following interim heritage orders were made under section 22 of the Heritage Act:

Weatherboard Cottage and gardens	100 Shirley Street, Ourimbah	Wyong	8/07/2002
Eccles Estate	Eccles Avenue, Ashfield	Ashfield	26/07/2002
Sirius Hoe (No 5) and Houses	5, 7, 9 and 11 Raglan Street, Mosman	Mosman	30/08/2002
Federal Hotel	77 Main Street, Alstonville	Ballina	20/09/2002
Darling Villa	68 Darling Street, Balmain East	Leichhardt	25/10/2002
House	15 Field Street, Huskisson	Shoalhaven City	26/11/2002
Merewether Beach Pavilion	Memorial Drive, Merewether	Newcastle City	25/02/2003
Brise-de-Mer	118 North Steyne, Manly	Manly	28/02/2003
Houses	14-16 View Street, Blaxland	Blue Mountains	28/02/2003
Ferndale	31 Camden Street, Newtown	Marrickville	2/05/2003
The Evatt House	69 Junction Road, Wahroonga	Ku-Ring-Gai	12/05/2003
Jadda Centre (former Athenaeum Theatre)	The Broadway, Junee	Junee	26/05/2003



This 1930s residence was home to Clive Evatt, a former Labor Minister, and brother of “Doc” Evatt, a former federal Labor leader and president of the UN General Assembly. This year an interim heritage order was placed on the property to halt its possible demolition and allow time for its heritage significance to be assessed. Photograph by Anthony Mitchell

## Historic Shipwreck Registers

The Heritage Office has statutory responsibilities for the maintenance of a register of historic shipwrecks located within New South Wales and Commonwealth waters adjacent to the State. These responsibilities arise from legislative requirements within the NSW Heritage Act and the *Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*. The Commonwealth responsibilities are conferred upon the Director of the Heritage Office as the Commonwealth’s nominated delegate in New South Wales.

The Heritage Office’s Underwater Cultural Heritage Program has been developing a comprehensive database of ships lost in State waters and in Commonwealth waters adjacent to the New South Wales coast. This database of over 2000 records provides the basis for both the New South Wales Historic Shipwrecks Register and the New South Wales component of the Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Register. It is available online at NSW Maritime Heritage Online: <http://maritime.heritage.nsw.gov.au>.



The *Collaroy* was a remarkable sight after running ashore during thick fog on the 20th January 1881. The large 54.86 metre iron vessel lay on the southern end of the beach for a number of years before being salvaged. Photograph courtesy of the State Library of NSW

# Reflecting the diversity of the State's heritage

## Built Environment: Ben Chifley's House

An exceptional addition to the State Heritage Register this year was a modest house in Bathurst. This Victorian cottage was the home of Australia's popular post war prime minister, Ben Chifley. It is rare to find a house such as Chifley's in which a prime minister lived throughout his parliamentary career and which still retains its contents. The modest house near the railway yards in Bathurst was home to Ben Chifley throughout his terms as Treasurer (1941–45) and then Prime Minister (1945–49).

Now a house museum owned by Bathurst City Council, the house tells us about the domestic life of a Labor prime minister whose lifestyle and political views had been formed, in part, by growing up in the Bathurst district during the economically hard times of the 1890s–1900s, and working at the nearby railways. The frugal nature of the Chifleys' lifestyle was used to develop an empathy with people and communities across the nation, and to project an image of Ben Chifley as "a plain man".

This year the Bathurst community and visitors were able to celebrate the listing of Ben Chifley's house as a State significant place that will enable people to understand the influences in the life of one of our nation's leaders.



NSW Premier, Bob Carr, at Ben Chifley's house in Bathurst in December to announce its listing on the State Heritage Register. Bob Carr's first proposition to his local Labor Party branch at the age of 15 was that Ben Chifley's home should be preserved as a historic memorial.  
*Photograph courtesy of the Western Advocate*



Ben Chifley's house in Bathurst – the significance of this unassuming house with its collection of Chifley possessions has now been recognised with this year's listing on the State Heritage Register.



Deputy Premier, Andrew Refshauge, surrounded by descendants of New Italy settlers at a celebration at the New Italy Museum in August to mark the listing of the site on the State Heritage Register. Photograph by Murray Brown



Bocce at New Italy in the late-19th century. Photograph courtesy of the New Italy Museum



Italian settlers sieving grass at New Italy. Photograph courtesy of the New Italy Museum

## Multicultural Heritage: New Italy

Immigrants have come to Australia from all over the world to make a new home. The result is a culturally diverse nation with a unique identity. Working with communities to celebrate the physical evidence of this diverse heritage is an important part of the work of the Heritage Council and Heritage Office.

This year one of Australia's most unusual settlements was listed on the State Heritage Register. New Italy was once a thriving Italian village in remote northern New South Wales, south of present day Ballina.

The story of this unique group of Australian settlers began in 1881 with the arrival in Australia of 217 Italian migrants, accepted by New South Wales after a disastrous expedition to settle an island off the coast of Papua New Guinea. Within a year the refugees, principally from the Veneto region, had arrived on the North Coast selection with the aim of creating a new community.

The settlers built houses from materials available on their selections: clay, bark, wattle and daub. With agricultural skills, and a particular knowledge of vines and olives, they succeeded in creating a farming community in an unfamiliar and challenging landscape. Today the site of their amazing enterprise is interpreted by the popular New Italy museum.

This initial listing encompasses two small parcels of land of what was actually a much larger site originally settled by the Italian group. A conservation management plan is currently being developed to guide future interpretation of this important site. This plan will assist the New Italy museum to chart the important contributions made by Italian migrants, past and present, to the identity of New South Wales, the North Coast and Australia.



After 44 years of operation, the Sharpie's golfer has hit the ball over 17 million times. Now, after listing on the State Heritage Register and emergency funding from the Heritage Incentives Program, Sydney's favourite golfer will continue his game. *Photograph courtesy of News Limited*

## Built Environment: Sharpie's Golf Sign

Sometimes community concern for a place or item can play an important role in identifying valued heritage items. This year a Sydney icon, much loved by the community, was listed on the State Heritage Register.

Sharpie's Golf House sign is one of Sydney's most recognised and best loved signs. Generations of train travellers have watched the neon golfer hit a hole-in-one over the building in Elizabeth Street, near Central Station.

This unique example of 20th century advertising, comprising 80 neon tubes, was installed in 1958 and is now part of Sydney's visual fabric. The sign is the first animated neon sign to be recognised through a State heritage listing.

Having fallen into disrepair, the sign was considered a safety problem. Widespread community concern about the possible removal of Sharpie's Golf House sign led to negotiations that resulted in its protection and emergency funding to assist in conservation works.

## Built Environment: Williamson House

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The Heritage Council and Heritage Office are working to raise awareness of the need to protect significant places from the twentieth century. This striking house is among a handful of early surviving buildings by Harry Seidler, the internationally renowned Australian architect and pioneering modernist.

Built in 1951 for George Lawrence Williamson, it represented a radical new style of domestic design and construction. Its vivid and crisp structure stood in contrast to the conservative architecture of the 1950s and the traditional social mores of that period. It was the first Australian house to use flat-slab construction with special reinforced concrete developed by Sydney engineer Peter Miller that did away with extensive masonry foundations.

The assessment and listing of this item followed a proposal to demolish the house. Mr Seidler was subsequently invited by a sympathetic new owner to design an extension to the house and to restore it, removing later modifications to reveal the original inventive design which remains intact. These works have been assessed and approved by the Heritage Council.



The Williamson House in Mosman (nicknamed the "Igloo House" by journalists of the time) was a revolution in design for the 1950s. It was the first Australian house to use flat-slab construction and its innovative structure challenged the thinking of the day. *Photographs by Max Dupain*

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