

Our objective: Heritage Council role and functions will be clearly understood

Heritage Council Policy

Our goal: the Heritage Council will have a clear position on the social, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation.

Participating In National Forums

National Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand

The Chair of the Heritage Council of NSW and Director of the NSW Heritage Office participate in a regular forum for the heads of Australasian heritage agencies. This group meets every year to drive forward new directions in heritage management across Australia and New Zealand. The NSW Heritage Office hosted the August 2003 meeting and the Heritage Council of Western Australia hosted the March 2004 meeting.

This year the Heritage Office initiated and reported on the following projects on behalf of the National Heritage Chairs and Officials:

- *The Economic Value of Heritage* – this report was commissioned from the University of Western Sydney's Property Research Centre. The report built on earlier work by the university on the economics of heritage listings;
- *Heritage and Sustainability; A Discussion Paper* – prepared by the Heritage Office, this paper introduced heritage and sustainability to a wide range of relevant stakeholders. A draft national policy is now being developed;
- *Cultural Landscape Charette* – this charette was held in August 2003 at the Heritage Office (see page 45 for a full report);
- *Feasibility Guidelines for Heritage Development Applications* – the Heritage Office engaged the University of Western Sydney's Property Research Centre to carry out this study, which aimed to establish a framework for the presentation of financial information relating to major developments affecting heritage places. Jointly funded by all Australian agencies, this work will provide a model template to help agencies to assess development applications where the conservation outcome is tied to the achievement of a certain level of development. The Heritage Office will trial the template in the second half of 2004.

Environment Protection and Heritage Council

The Heritage Office participates in the Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC) as NSW's expert body on heritage. This standing committee was established in 2001 and incorporates the National Environment Protection Council (NEPC), the environmental protection components of the Australian New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council (ANZECC) and the heritage ministers' meeting.

Director of the Heritage Office, Reece McDougall, chairs the EPHC National Tourism and Heritage Taskforce. This year, as part of an initiative to identify opportunities for sustainable heritage tourism, the taskforce produced *Going Places: Developing Natural and Cultural Heritage Tourism in Australia*. This paper, developed in partnership with the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage, presents a national overview of the issues and opportunities for integrating heritage and tourism. It will assist in raising awareness of the diverse issues involved in protecting heritage places and building a sustainable tourism industry in regional Australia;

Heritage Council Decisions

Our goal: the community will have access to and understand the decisions of the Heritage Council.

Promoting Media Coverage

An important aspect of our work is to seek coverage of Heritage Council decisions and activities through the media. This is important not just to heighten the visibility of the council and its work, but also to reflect back to the community the variety and value of projects supported by the Heritage Incentives Program. It also plays an important role in educating the public on the value of heritage generally.

During the year the administrative assistant position in the Heritage Office's Promotions Team was upgraded to a professional Heritage Communications and Events Officer position. Advertising for this position was conducted prior to the end of the financial year.

Making Minutes Available

We are committed to giving the community access to the minutes from Heritage Council meetings to increase understanding and foster transparent decision making. Agendas from meetings of the full Heritage Council, the State Heritage Register Committee and the Approvals Committee are available on the Heritage Office website. Minutes from the meetings are available online once confirmed at the subsequent meeting.

Key Strategies for Next Year

In 2004-05 we aim to:

- produce a comprehensive policy document that clearly articulates the Heritage Council policies on appropriate change to heritage items;
- continue to improve the management of Heritage Council meetings through development of protocols such as presentations to the Heritage Council.



The Heritage Council of NSW. *Photograph by Paramount Studios*