



# HERITAGE COUNCIL OF NSW

## MEETING MINUTES – 546

4 February 2026 | 9:00 am – 12:28 pm

Meeting Room 14, Level 29, 4PSQ & via teleconference

## ATTENDANCE

### Members

Sally Barnes	Chair
Dr Nicholas Brunton	Member
Alan Croker	Member
Vanessa Holtham	Member
Dr Brian Lindsay	Member
Steve Meredith	Member
Anthea Sargeant	Member
Julian Siu	Member

### Apologies

Nil

### Heritage NSW

Sam Kidman	Executive Director
Elizabeth Owers	Director Customer Services
Rochelle Johnston	A/Director Assessments
Lucy Albani	Director Policy & Strategy
Matthew Clark	Director Policy & Strategy
Anna London	Senior Manager Heritage Listing Programs
Alison Lamond	A/Senior Manager Major Projects
Katrina Stankowski	Senior Manager Major Projects ( <i>item 2.1</i> )
Caroline Ford	Policy Manager ( <i>item 3.2</i> )
Julia Dowling	Manager Strategic Policy ( <i>item 3.2</i> )
Gabby Delange	Project Officer Policy Delivery & Implementation ( <i>item 3.2</i> )

### External Presenters

Flavia Scardamaglia	Senior Environment Officer, TfNSW ( <i>item 2.1</i> )
Rakhsbir Singh	Project Manager/Engineer, TfNSW ( <i>item 2.1</i> )
Bob Rimac	Deputy Project Director Maritime, TfNSW ( <i>item 2.1</i> )
Denis Gojak	Senior Specialist (Heritage), TfNSW ( <i>item 2.1</i> )
Camille Bonnot	Senior Specialist (Heritage), TfNSW ( <i>item 2.1</i> )

### Committee Services

Olgica Lenger	Manager Committee Services
Jo Pickles	A/Senior Project Officer
Lily O'Connor	Assistant Policy Officer

## IN-CAMERA SESSION

The in-camera session commenced at 9:00 am. This item was not minuted.

### Item 1. Welcome and Formalities

The Chair, Sally Barnes, opened the meeting at 9:00 am, delivered an Acknowledgement of Country and welcomed the attendees.

It was noted a full quorum was present.

#### Item 1.1 Conflict of Interest Declarations

The Council reviewed the conflict-of-interest declarations and confirmed that there were no new conflicts since the previous meeting.

The Chair, Sally Barnes noted prior employment with Port Waratah Coal Services, Newcastle; the Council agreed that this did not constitute a conflict of interest.

#### Item 1.2 Out of Session Decisions

Nil

#### Item 1.3 Minutes from the Previous Meeting – 2 December 2025

<b>Resolution 2026-01</b>
The Heritage Council of NSW resolved to:
1. <b>Confirm</b> the minutes of the previous ordinary meeting (2 December 2025) as a complete and accurate record of that meeting, with a minor amendment.
Moved by Nicholas Brunton and seconded by Brian Lindsay

#### Item 1.4 Matters Arising

Nil

#### Item 1.5 Action Report

The Heritage Council noted the report.

## Item 2. External Presentations

### Item 2.1 TfNSW: Balls Head Coal Loader Wharf Complex

The Heritage Council received a paper from Heritage NSW and a presentation from Transport for NSW (TfNSW) on the proposed 'Make Safe & Retrieval Works' (MSR works) at the Balls Head Coal Loader Wharf, ahead of consideration of a new section 60 application at the March 2026 meeting.

The Council noted that the proposed works are safety-driven and include the removal of unstable timber elements, retention of the 1976 steel framing, and storage of salvaged timber for potential reuse. Members raised concerns about the potential for the MSR works to adversely impact the heritage interpretation of the site and emphasised the need for a high-quality interpretation strategy which should inform the nature and extent of removals as far as practical.

### **Item 3. Legal, Policy and Administration**

#### **Item 3.1 Options for Heritage Council and Committees Structure in 2026**

The Heritage Council received a paper and presentation from Heritage NSW outlining further details to consolidate its existing committee and panel structure in 2026. This paper follows previous verbal briefings from Heritage NSW to the Heritage Council on the proposed planning reforms.

Further to feedback already provided in response to the previous verbal briefings, members noted the government's focus on planning reforms will have an impact on both Heritage Council's role and the operations of Heritage NSW, particularly as they concern heritage approvals.

It was noted that the Development Coordination Authority (DCA) will commence operations from 1 July 2026 and will assume the Heritage Council's functions in relation to major projects and integrated development applications. The DCA will bring together experts from up to 14 NSW government agencies, with the intention of delivering faster and more efficient development decisions and greater consistency in timeframes and requirements for applicants.

In light of the anticipated changes, the Heritage Council discussed options to streamline operations of the Approvals Committee, the Heritage Advisory Panel and the Technical Advisory Panel. Under the proposed approach, the Heritage Council will undertake all approval considerations undertaken by the Approvals Committee. A new Heritage Specialists Register will be established to enable the Council and Heritage NSW staff to access specialised heritage-related expertise on a case-by-case basis.

Members expressed concerns that dissolving TAP and HAP and replacing them with a Heritage Specialist Register could lead to the loss of their highly experienced collective technical knowledge and diminish opportunities for the effective and efficient collaboration these panels provide. It was noted that members of TAP have expressed concerns about the proposed changes that they consider would be detrimental to the conservation of the state's heritage.

Members discussed ways to mitigate the potential loss of collective technical knowledge and current opportunities for collaboration with heritage experts. Heritage NSW explained that an engagement program is under development to include broader knowledge sharing and engagement opportunities between experts and managers of heritage listed areas through the 2026 Heritage Forum and a webinar series. It was noted that the Heritage Specialists Register is intended to provide a flexible mechanism for the Heritage Council and Heritage NSW to seek expert heritage advice. Members also discussed the need for an operational review of the Register and requested Heritage NSW to further develop a governance and operational framework for the new structure.

**Resolution 2026-02**

The Heritage Council of NSW resolved to:

1. **Note** that the changed operating environment through planning reform will significantly reduce the assessment and approval role of the Approvals Committee.
2. **Approve** dissolving the Approvals Committee by the end of FY25/26, with the Heritage Council resuming those responsibilities.
3. **Approve** dissolving the Heritage Advisory Panel and Technical Advisory Panel.
4. **Approve** establishing a Heritage Specialist Register to incorporate technical heritage expertise previously held in the Approvals Committee, Technical Advisory Panel, and Heritage Advisory Panel.
5. **Request** Heritage NSW to undertake an operational review of the Heritage Specialist Register after 18 months to assess its efficacy.
6. **Acknowledge** the significant and valued contributions of outgoing committee and panel members.

Moved by Sally Barnes and seconded by Nicholas Brunton

**Item 3.2 Heritage Strategy Implementation Plan**

The Heritage Council received a paper and presentation from Heritage NSW on the Heritage Strategy Implementation Plan, including the proposed implementation framework for planning, resourcing, and progress monitoring. The Strategy aligns with the Heritage Council's strategic priorities and will be implemented with quarterly reporting.

**Item 4. Executive Reports****Item 4.1 Chair, Heritage Council of NSW – Monthly Report**

The Heritage Council noted the report and verbal update provided by the Chair.

The Chair and Council formally acknowledged Ms Elizabeth Owers for her outstanding efforts and performance as Acting Executive Director of Heritage NSW over the previous 12-month period.

The Chair also formally acknowledged and thanked Dr Nicholas Brunton and Dr Brian Lindsay for their outstanding service on the Heritage Council, including their leadership as Chairs of the Approvals Committee and State Heritage Register Committee respectively.

**Item 4.2 Executive Director, Heritage NSW**

The Heritage Council noted the report and verbal update from the Executive Director Heritage NSW.

**Item 4.3 Planning Report (DPHI)**

The Heritage Council noted the monthly planning report.

**Item 5. Heritage NSW monthly reports**

The Heritage Council noted the monthly operational reports.

## **Item 6. General Matters**

### **Item 6.1 Forward Agenda**

The Heritage Council noted the forward agenda.

### **Item 6.2 2025-26 HC, SHRC, AC Leave Tracker**

The Heritage Council noted the status of the members' leave tracker.

## **Meeting Close**

There being no further items of business, the Chair, Sally Barnes, closed the meeting at 12:28 pm.



Sally Barnes

**Chair, Heritage Council of NSW**

4 March 2026