

**Parliament of SA Environment, Resources and Development Committee:
Heritage Inquiry**

*Submission from the History Council of South Australia (prepared on behalf of the
Council by Dr Susan Marsden, Immediate Past President), September 2018*

The History Council of South Australia (HCSA) is a peak body, providing a representative voice on historical issues, while working to celebrate and raise the profile of history and heritage in South Australia. Our organisation members include the main bodies concerned with history and heritage in this state and many regional historical societies, as well as individuals. Many of these organisations and individuals are helping to identify, protect and celebrate South Australia's heritage, and play an essential role in these processes, and so, the HCSA is pleased to make this timely submission to the Inquiry into the operation of the heritage system in SA.

For further information please contact the HCSA President Professor Peter Monteath (peter.monteath@flinders.edu.au), the Secretary Lauren Gobbett (historycouncilsa@gmail.com) or Dr Susan Marsden (smarsden@bigpond.net.au).

Note, the Inquiry's terms of reference have been addressed collectively.

The criteria for evaluating heritage places in Australia are similar whether for local, state or national listing; the main difference lies in the *levels* of heritage significance, that is, whether heritage places are judged to reach certain thresholds for local, state or national significance.¹ However, as historians (for example) often point out, heritage value and therefore, levels of heritage significance are evolving rather than fixed designations, due to historical change and the re-evaluation of past histories and their heritage. The use of Historic thematic frameworks can help to broaden and enlarge the understanding and listing of heritage places.

There are many examples of places on the national and SA state registers that were originally judged to be of 'lesser' state or local significance respectively; and there are many places on SA local registers that should be re-evaluated as being of state or even national significance.

There are also differences in the priorities given to heritage – in particular at state and local level in SA, development issues are often given greater weight than heritage values, both in

¹ See: <https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/c6c7a87e-d4a6-4001-b62b-04ebd0ae2aef/files/heritage-listing-guide.pdf>.

decisions about listing and subsequently, in managing listed places; and many listed heritage places are demolished or damaged in favour of development.²

The process for managing heritage places depends in the first instance on sufficient and ongoing historical research and heritage assessment, and on a sufficient body of expertise. The long run-down in national and state funding for historical and heritage institutions and organisations, and in particular, for heritage surveys and further assessment, and the lack of support for local heritage research and management has damaged this process and SA's heritage at large.

Recommendations:

- Support local and state historical and heritage activities that form the basis of the SA heritage system
- Consolidate SA's Heritage laws into one Act, and combine the current two-part state and local heritage system in SA, under a heritage rather than a planning portfolio
- Local heritage (and other SA heritage matters) should be managed by an appropriately dedicated Cultural Heritage Department rather than by DPTI, in partnership with local government and cultural institutions.
- Consideration be given to establishing one consolidated heritage register for SA
- Place all heritage places dating from SA's first century of European settlement (1836-1936) under protection as local heritage places
- Ensure that historians and relevant historical community groups are included in reviews of heritage listings
- Update and make greater use of the SA historic thematic framework in identifying, assessing and promoting wide appreciation for SA's heritage
- Evaluate state-listed places and areas be for nomination to Australia's national list and the World Heritage List, and provide advice and support for community-led national and world heritage bids.³

Appendix:

Excerpt from HCSA submission to SA planning reform report Think design deliver (prepared by S Marsden, 2014)

...[Reform] should also include cultural heritage and cultural landscape character ...

Reform 10 Place heritage on renewed foundations

1. Heritage should be recognised in the planning system as relating to place, culture and community development, and not simply physical structures.
2. Heritage laws should be consolidated into one integrated statute, either as part of the planning legislation or as a separate statute with clear linkages.
3. Introduce an integrated statutory body to replace existing multiple heritage bodies. This could be based on the existing heritage council or form a subcommittee of the planning commission.

² For example, consideration is presently being given to demolish the state-listed Newmarket Hotel in favour of a new hospital.

³ For example, the Mt Lofty Ranges bid for national and World Heritage listing. See: <http://www.mountloftyranges.org>.

4. Governance arrangements for heritage should embrace the capabilities and expertise of the state's key cultural institutions.
5. A new integrated heritage register should be established to include existing state and local listings and have an expanded capacity to recognise special landscapes, building fabric and setting and to place historic markers.
6. Legislation should provide for a new heritage code of practice to outline how listed properties can be maintained and adapted.
7. The legislation should allow accredited heritage professionals to undertake specified regulatory functions for private property owners, on a similar basis to private certifiers.
8. Existing heritage listings will be audited to better describe their heritage attributes.
9. Financial subsidies, such as discounts on property-related taxes, should be considered as part of the legislative framework for private owners of listed properties.

We support Reform 10. Heritage is being overlooked or downgraded in current planning action, particularly in fast-tracked large-scale development. Nor is there a recognition of the importance of maintaining and referring to heritage assets including documentary records (including State Records). There is great confusion about the existing multi-level heritage lists and agencies responsible for them, and also there is rarely a clear distinction to be made between 'local' and 'state' or even 'national' places, as is often shown up when new studies are undertaken, in my own experience.

Dr Susan Marsden, for History Council of South Australia