

The Parliamentary Officer
Environment, Resources and Development Committee
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Submission from Prospect Local History Group to the Heritage Enquiry into the operation of the heritage system in South Australia 2018.

Formed in 2005, the Prospect Local History Group has been active in promoting community interest in history and recording and researching history mainly in the City of Prospect area.

Enquiry Topic 1

Highlighting the differences in, and consistency of, processes and criteria between listing and assessing local, state and national heritage.

Local heritage places should not be treated as of any lesser value than state or national heritage with the thresholds for all providing clear guidance.

The same criteria should apply to heritage evaluation whether national, state, regional or local. The only variation is that the local heritage places should not need to prove their significance beyond the council area.

While national, state and local heritage differ in geographical scope, there is no reason they should differ in the protection afforded them.

Interim heritage protection for properties under consideration must remain part of the process.

Prospect Local History Group strongly supports:

1. Items already listed should stay listed through the transition to any new legislation and not be subject to appeal.
2. Items proposed for listing in recent years, but not progressed, be at least 'considered' by any new heritage authority.
3. Council Historic (Conservation) Zones already existing should continue in any new system.
(Conservation areas are generally supported by the community and property owners who have invested in such areas).

Inquiry Topic 2

How heritage should be managed in the future; including, but not limited to investigating:

- a. How should the process for listings (from initiation to final placement on the appropriate register) be managed, and by whom;
- b. Who should have the right to be heard in relation to listings;
- c. Who should be the decision maker for listings and review; and
- d. What processes should be in place for the review of listings?

- a. How should the process for listings be managed and by whom:

With over 8,000 local heritage places, almost four times as many as there are state heritage places (some 2200), indicates that local government should retain the carriage of local heritage items as is the current situation in South Australia.

Councils should be the primary initiators and protectors of local heritage with Council approval is required to demolish a building located within a Historic (Conservation Zone) whether or not it is listed as local heritage place.

Interim heritage protection for items under consideration must remain part of the process to avoid pre-emptive demolition of potential listings and retain a degree of certainty for the community.

The identification of local heritage items could be streamlined as the current process of heritage surveys and Development Plan amendments can be time-consuming and costly.

Conservation areas may provide for more equitable forms of control as opposed to individual listings. Conservation areas may reduce the bulk of individual listings and enable a more balanced and representative system of assessment to apply.

Contributory Items should remain listed by Local Government and continue to be afforded protection from demolition without good reason.

Prospect Local History Group has supports heritage advice to come from recognised professionals outside the planning system with a heritage accreditation to expand the pool of qualified professionals and maintain expertise within Councils.

A well-regarded heritage advisory system is recognised as independent best practice.

Prospect Local History Group strongly supports a system of heritage advisors that work with local councils and local heritage groups (perhaps funded through a heritage lottery or tax).

b. Who should have the right to be heard in relation to listings

Prospect Local History Group strongly supports restoring the role of local communities in local heritage listing and management by:

- Increasing community participation in the decision making process through an open public nomination system for local heritage listing.
- Greater transparency in decision making through the provision of reasons for listing or non-listing.
- Introducing third party appeal rights in relation to local heritage listing decisions.
- Restricting ministerial powers to remove or disallow heritage listings.
- Reinstating citizen and community rights in planning and development decisions and appeal rights.

Property owners should be allowed to lodge an objection to any proposed listing affecting their property, and be given a right of review of that listing, based on reasonable grounds.

Instead of excluding communities from decisions about our heritage, we need to extend community participation and engagement to maximise the social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of recognising and caring for our heritage.

c. Who should be the decision maker for listings and review

Councils should be the primary decision maker as initiators and protectors of local heritage.

d. What processes should be in place for the review of the listings

The community should be entitled to nominate any place for listing for an independent heritage council's consideration.

Reviews of listings are not supported if they are to cull local heritage items or diminish heritage protections.

Listings should:

- Include statements of significance or tangible evidence of the item/place's significance with suitable interpretation information.
- Be comprehensively compiled.

Standard heritage assessment procedures for local government should be established and implemented to provide a consistent policy for the process of assessment, notification and consultation with property owners and the community.

Acknowledgements:

- Submission by Kristina Barnett, member of Prospect Local History Group: Response to DPTI "Heritage reform – an exploration of the opportunities" Local Heritage Discussion Paper 2016.
- Local Government Association SA Heritage Inquiry Discussion Paper August 2018
- <https://www.heritage21.com.au/heritage-listings-nsw/>, Paul Rappoport – Heritage 21, 25 October 2017

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