



THE PADDINGTON SOCIETY INC  
FOR COMMUNITY AND HERITAGE  
EST 1964

12 July 2025 / LG

Environment and Heritage  
Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water  
Locked Bag 5022, Parramatta NSW 2124

## Re: Draft NSW Heritage Strategy

We are a community association that advocates on behalf of residents for heritage in our precinct. We strongly support the NSW Heritage Strategy's aim to "recognise, protect, enhance and celebrate our heritage".

### Importance of Heritage to Us

Heritage is tangible history. It provides a sense of continuity and community, linking us to past and future lives in a locality. Retention of good built examples of our past, such as Paddington, can guide us to successful future urban development. It is also testimony to past craft skills and construction techniques which can be put to ongoing use. Its importance is underlined by its tourism value.

From our establishment in 1964, the Society has advocated for the significance of the whole Paddington precinct as an exemplary, globally recognised, consistent Victorian era townscape. We work with Councils to avoid inappropriate redevelopment and to enhance the public domain.

The draft NSW Heritage Strategy does not clearly state what the problem with the current Heritage Act is, nor specifically how it might be changed. We uphold the value of the current Heritage Act and consider that only minor changes should be made.

Nonetheless, our responses to the Objectives in your Draft Strategy follow:

### Objective 1: Embrace and reflect the diversity of our heritage

Heritage NSW needs to explain the broader nature of heritage on their website and in any changes to the Heritage Act.

We support the consideration of the history of Aboriginal and migrant communities in the Paddington area, including Southern European and Chinese immigrants. Plaques and walking apps which include these histories are suggestions.

Significant 20th Century architectural heritage needs to be included in the Inventory.

### Objective 2: Empower owners to conserve heritage

We strongly support the need for heritage education resources to inform owners and the general community about maintenance and appropriate alterations to heritage properties. This should include website links to the Inventory, local history, technical guidelines, heritage products and trades. We also support your suggestion for an annual professional forum to promote discussion and knowledge of heritage practitioners. Short courses in heritage could be made available, to help both

owners, building practitioners and the general public. Registration and Continuing Education for heritage professionals should be effected, with the registered list publicly available and free.

Good examples of heritage conservation need to be celebrated and awarded, and available online at Heritage NSW.

House Museums such as Museums of History NSW portfolio could be expanded to include Victorian and Federation homes, the major eras for housing heritage in NSW, as a tool to inform the public.

Provide financial assistance to owners, acknowledging their ongoing role in heritage conservation and the extra cost that entails, both in development approvals and in the building process – this could be in the form of discounted Council fees, taxation and insurance incentives, and substantial grants. Pre-DAs with Council's heritage officers should be financially encouraged.

Provide a streamlined process for owners to effect necessary maintenance without jeopardising quality, by making education and professional resources available, and by monitoring.

Heritage advisory skills at both Council and State government levels need to be resourced and improved and made available to owners. Training for heritage trades is urgently needed, and should be rewarded with financial incentives such as discounted TAFE fees.

Identify under-used publicly owned heritage properties, and make them readily available for community use.

To improve the alignment between heritage and the planning system, move Heritage NSW back into the Planning Department and make heritage one of the pillars of its Planning Policy. Heritage NSW needs to have a higher profile – at present it is buried within a somewhat inappropriate Department, the Department of Climate Change, Energy the Environment and Water.

The switching off of the Heritage Act for all State Significant projects seriously undermines the heritage systems and should not be allowed.

Advocate for heritage owners, not as NIMBYs but as custodians of heritage for future generations.

### **Objective 3: realise the benefits of heritage**

Protect Heritage Conservation Areas (HCAs) from inappropriate housing uplift, by limiting the scale of new developments in these areas to 3 storeys if in a 2 storey context. Encourage the creation of new, sensitively-designed, strata, dual occupancy and secondary dwellings on heritage sites.

Emphasise the sustainability aspect of the conservation of heritage buildings (embodied energy and carbon sequestration), and encourage the sensitive retro-fit of insulation and solar glazing to improve the sustainability of these buildings – again, provide financial incentives to owners.

### **Objective 4: Improve the state heritage system**

Review and adjust Heritage Items and HCAs periodically, (every 5 years if not sooner) and allow professionals and the public to contribute to this process.

Highlight the significance of HCAs and protect them, as listed Heritage Items are, from new re-zoning legislation which allows 6-8 storeys infill development that will destroy their consistent scale (an important part of their significance).

Compliance of heritage properties with development approvals and exemptions, as well as the danger of unauthorised works or demolition by neglect, needs to be heavily monitored and enforced, to safeguard heritage – suggest re-instatement, substantial fines, compulsory education. Councils and Heritage NSW need the legal power, resourcing and skills to do this.

## General

The Strategy must consider and integrate local and state significant heritage places, through both the Heritage Act and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, to avoid the downgrading of local heritage. In particular, significant HCAs such as Paddington should be considered equally with State listed individual buildings, rather than to be of secondary importance in the heritage framework, as is currently considered.

We note that Commissioner Bunning underlines the importance of HCAs when he recommended in 1968 that *"The Paddington Area...should be declared ... a precinct of architectural & historical merit' where the listing of particular buildings was unnecessary since buildings would be protected by Council planning controls.*

We also ask that Heritage NSW make available any definite actions, and any proposed changes to the Heritage Act for public comments, before finalisation.

Thanking you for this opportunity,

Yours faithfully



**Esther Hayter, President**

**The Paddington Society**

Per

Linda Gosling, Vice President

Mobile: 0406 614217