



RHSQ

Royal Historical Society of Queensland

13 FEB 2014

The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for the Environment
PO Box 787
CANBERRA ACT 2601

6 February 2013

Dear Minister

Min No: C	Link:
Division: <i>WMM</i>	Date: <i>13/2/14</i>
DLO: <i>NA</i>	
RECEIVED 13 FEB 2014 Environment Minister	
<input type="checkbox"/> Covering Brief <input type="checkbox"/> VIP Reply <input type="checkbox"/> Minister Reply <input type="checkbox"/> CoS/Adviser Reply <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to...	<input type="checkbox"/> Departmental Reply <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Action <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For information (NFA) <input type="checkbox"/> Campaign <input type="checkbox"/> Advice/Min

RE: (SUBMISSION ON AN AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE STRATEGY)

On behalf of The Royal Historical Society of Queensland, I would like to submit our suggestions for an Australian Heritage Strategy, as advertised through your government website and media releases.

We apologise for the late submission, however our organisation is passionate about the role of historical societies to the Arts and heritage scene in Australia and hope that you will accept our document for consideration along with the other public submissions.

Yours sincerely

Helen McMonagle
President

- value Australia's social and cultural capital by recording histories, and maintaining its built environment including transport;
- incorporate social capital in local and regional settings into policy analysis;
- take into account the role that historians (both professional and local) can play in recording, publishing and promoting the cultural heritage values and the built heritage;
- acknowledge that cultural tourism in suburbia and regional Australia stimulates economic and societal growth. These enterprises depend on the integrity of the natural and built heritage sites, which need to be valued and promoted by the Australian government;
- support the preservation of the distributed national movable heritage collection (as outlined below);
- provide appropriate financial support for the Heritage Division in the Department of Environment; and
- provide a clearer and stronger policy and level of support for peak heritage organisations, and a higher level of support for local heritage through local government.

The RHSQ also raises for the Commonwealth government's consideration in the new heritage policy that built and natural heritage sites will deteriorate through natural disasters and local developments. The recent natural disasters in Queensland – two floods in Ipswich and Brisbane, the central Queensland and western Darling Downs floods have demonstrated our contention very clearly. Many towns severely affected by flooding and cyclones (*Larry, Yasi and Oswald*) have been able to retain their heritage collections because they are stored in heritage buildings (government owned) constructed at the outset of European settlement when government surveyors have selected the government precincts on high ground. These outcomes have illustrated the value of historical research as an input to planning new housing developments and community facilities.

The RHSQ is also particularly concerned that recognition and provisions to support the preservation of the distributed national movable heritage collection be included in the new Heritage Strategy.

Volunteers in historical and other like-minded organisations across Australia are managing and preserving important local movable heritage artefact and document collections and taken together they include considerable material that is not represented in state and federal government museums and archives. To this end, we applaud the Community Heritage Grants scheme administered by the National Library of Australia in recent years and hope that this will continue.

The RHSQ is one of hundreds of organisations maintaining valuable collections which have benefited from this scheme. We further commend to the Commonwealth government that digitisation be undertaken of the collected memory in documents in local historical museums.

The RHSQ believes it is vitally important that the new federal heritage strategy provide for competitive grants for these organisations to enable the proper care of those collections for the benefit of current and future generations. Such funding, the RHSQ believes, should enable the proper care of those collections for the benefit of current and future generations but should also provide for the interpretation and attractive public exhibition of items for local interest, educational and tourism purposes. The value of the presentation of these collections to the tourism industry is currently quite considerable but improving the standard of their public display will certainly increase their value in that regard.

The RHSQ also believes that the new federal heritage strategy should encourage training for volunteers from these organisations in the care of historical collections, to ensure that professional standards are better met across Australia.

Helen McMonagle

Helen McMonagle
President



