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**COVER:** The campaign to save Catherine Hill Bay: National Trust joins with local community.  
Photo: Graham Quint

## from the president

The last few months have been an eventful period for the National Trust and the heritage scene.

The Trust Board has resolved to put significant staff resources into the Catherine Hill Bay advocacy campaign. Our attendance at the mass rally, ongoing submissions, acute monitoring of the developments and excellent media coverage confirm our primary commitment to community advocacy.

The Trust has also embarked on a media campaign to fight the reforms recommended in the Heritage Act Review and the Report on 'Improving the NSW Planning System', which downgrade heritage and reinforce the erroneous view that heritage is an impediment to development.

A particular sticking point in the Heritage Act Review is that the recommendations collectively centralise decision-making to the Minister for Planning including the selection of the members of the Heritage Council and review panels. The concentration of power in one individual may throw into question the application of due process in the selection criteria and appointments of these bodies, which is essential to ensure that community concerns about their independence and expertise are addressed.

Of utmost concern for the Trust is a proposal to remove all organisational representatives, including the Trust, from the Heritage Council, in favour of 'skill' based positions. The Review rightfully acknowledges the National Trust as the 'peak community-based non-governmental organisation for heritage conservation in NSW'. Its membership of the Council is crucial as the independent representative of the community state-wide and not merely in the cities.

The Trust has issued an open invitation for dialogue with the Minister on his and the Government's stand on heritage. What happens in the NSW government may set a precedent for heritage management that may influence other States.

The National Trust Festival theme for 2008, Our Place, has been warmly received with nearly 400 events statewide. The EnergyAustralia Heritage Awards again showcased the best examples of heritage conservation and promotion from within the broad spectrum of the community, from corporate and government bodies, local councils, to individuals in regional areas.

The Board has recommended that NSW will join the national magazine, Trust News, for the August-October issue. The national magazine will be supplemented by a NSW insert which will be done in-house by staff and will result in substantial savings to our publications budget.

Plans are now being finalised for the Regional Board Meeting to be held in October in western NSW to visit the Trust properties in the region and meet all our hardworking volunteers there. The Board looks forward to this visit very much.

It is with great pleasure for the Trust to announce that Graham Quint, who has served the Trust for 27 years, has been appointed Conservation Director. Steve White has been appointed Acting Executive Director and Soma Somavarman has been appointed Acting Finance Director. Graham, Steve and Soma are stalwart members of the staff and they serve the Trust admirably and outstandingly well.

I am always so overwhelmed by the excellent standard of work and the dedication of the Trust family and all the good things that they manage to achieve with the resources they are given and I thank them wholeheartedly for it on behalf of the Board. Our advocacy campaign against the government may now put our own funding at risk, and result in a budget deficit next year, but that threat will not stop us from doing the work we are meant to do. It is not only our membership but also our volunteers who are crucial to our continued success. My heartfelt wish is that Trust members may be encouraged to help the

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## What would you say has been your main contribution to promoting an appreciation of art, architecture and history?

I have curated a number of exhibitions which I hope have inspired people to appreciate our cultural heritage, from my exhibition on *Heirloom Flowers, Fruit and Vegetables* at Old Government House in 1997 to my most recent exhibition *The Flower Paintings of Margaret Coen* at Eryldene. I am currently curating an exhibition with Joanna Capon, *Yin-Yang, China in Australia*, which will explore the cross-cultural influences between China and Australia, most creatively and visually interpreted in art.

Writing is my great love. My first book was *The Grecian Pagoda and the Architecture of Eryldene*, which won the inaugural National Trust Heritage Award, and my most recent published work was a biography, *William Hardy Wilson: Artist, Architect, Orientalist, Visionary*. In between I have published monographs on Australian architects and architecture, as well as biographies of two great Australian photographers, Harold Cazneaux and Max Dupain. A work in progress is editing the *Biographical Register of Architects of NSW* with the help of RAIAs Anne Higham. It has been put on hold until I can snatch some free time to give it the attention such an important work deserves.

## What do you see as the future of the National Trust, and how will you go about achieving it?

I believe that advocacy is the main role of the Trust and the one that differentiates it from other heritage organisations. The integrity of its charter as an independent, non-government community organisation is indisputable. The Trust is also special in that it is a grass roots organisation, able to operate throughout the entire State thanks to the commitment of its large team of volunteers. They need to know they are valued, and that their skills and numbers will be nurtured.

We must also continue to raise the profile of the Trust. We have a very strong, pure brand which is recognised and valued the world over. We must promote this brand, but also protect it.

## What do you plan to tackle first?

There are a few 'mis-perceptions' of the Trust, which persist and which must be changed.

First is the widespread belief that we are 'government' and therefore funded by government. We certainly receive assistance in the form of government grants for specific projects and programs - and for this we are most grateful - although the funding is never enough to do all the work we need to do.

The Trust is a charity. We rely on membership, private benefaction and government grants. It is a hand to mouth existence. A major challenge for the National Trust is to woo Australians to give to a cause that is currently perceived as 'intangible'. It is imperative that we promote ourselves in a way which touches hearts, with issues that are current and vital and impact on the health and heritage of our country.

The second mis-perception is that the National Trust is only concerned about 'old buildings'. For decades we have worked to protect natural environments and ecosystems - but much of that work has been behind the scenes, developing policies, lobbying and campaigning to protect lands under threat. The Catherine Hill Bay campaign is a prime example of our work in this regard.

We must address indigenous issues. So many of our properties have a definable link with Aboriginal people and traditions, and we need to identify, acknowledge and appreciate this.

I want to get the message across that the National Trust is of the people, and for the people. Our heritage belongs to everyone, and every single problem - big or small - will impact on everyone. Heritage is all about our future - our generations and next generations. We should, as Hugh Mackay states, 'lift our gaze above the back fence and begin to pay more attention to the life of the neighbourhood and the wider community'. And indeed the world.

## What is your dream for the National Trust?

For someone to knock on my door and say: 'I believe in what you do, here is a million dollars to spend where the Trust needs it most!'.

National Volunteers Week  
12-18 May 2008

THANK YOU

On behalf of the National Trust, we would like to express our warmest appreciation for the extraordinary work of our 3000 dedicated volunteers. Your contribution is the lifeblood of the Trust and we gratefully acknowledge it.

Zeny Edwards, President  
Steve White, Acting Executive Director

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## from the president

Trust by becoming private benefactors and contributing to our fighting fund. I would love to hear from members so please call me via the Executive Office on 9258 0171.

Last but not least, the Trust bids farewell to two of the hardest working members of the Trust family.

Sadly, we farewell Tina Jackson, Trust Executive Director. Tina has been an energetic presence at Observatory Hill and a wonderful representative and spokesperson for the Trust. She has left knowing that the Trust is well placed to continue its proud history of protecting the environment and the places we hold dear. The Board is deeply grateful for her valuable contribution to the Trust.

### National Magazine

The Board of the National Trust (NSW) has resolved to join the other state and territory National Trusts to enhance member benefits by providing a national member magazine. From the next issue onwards, NSW members will receive the national magazine, *Trust News*, together with a supplementary NSW insert containing the NSW events calendar and coverage of key NSW issues. *Trust News* will be published under the management of Western Australia while the NSW insert will be published inhouse by the staff at Observatory Hill. This change will allow economies of scale and cost savings, but importantly, it will allow us to continue to bring members items of interest relating to heritage in NSW, as well as providing coverage that is national in scope.

Tina acknowledges that none of her achievements would have been possible without the support of the National Trust family – the dedicated staff, the volunteers, branch and committee members, supporters, sponsors, donors, corporate and government partners and its members. She states: 'The National Trust is first and foremost a membership organisation; membership is its lifeblood and its great strength. It has sustained the Trust for over 60 years and will continue to do so.'

She personally conveyed her appreciation to me: 'I felt very honoured when approached in 2005 to lead the Trust, and the subsequent years have been a wonderful experience', she said. 'I am very proud of the Trust achievements during my tenure and grateful for the privilege of serving such a vital organisation. Thank you for this opportunity and for your support.'

Tina has given us two and a half years of excellent service and we wish her well for her future career.

The Board and Trust directors were unanimous in their appreciation of all the years John Leary OAM, Chairman of the Friends of Woodford Academy, dedicated to Woodford Academy, to the whole of the Blue Mountains and to the National Trust. His absolute loyalty to the Trust is second to none and he is a shining exemplar of volunteering. We wish him well in his retirement.

Uncle Greg Simms, Elder of the Darug tribe, in his traditional welcome during the 150th anniversary of Parramatta Park, said: 'We do not own the land, the land owns us'. We are just custodians of this place. I hope we leave it a better place for future generations.

Zeny Edwards  
President

# meet the National Trust's new president, Dr Zeny Edwards



*Dr Zeny Edwards, writer, curator and passionate advocate for heritage, has long been a supporter of the National Trust. Deputy President of the Trust throughout the year 2007, Zeny was recently elected President of the Board. She talks to Angela le Sueur about what motivates her, the issues currently facing the National Trust – and the way ahead.*

## When did you first become involved in the Trust?

I joined the National Trust in 1991, but my interest started a long time before that when I attended a house inspection of *Eryldene*, organised by the Trust Women's Committee. I loved *Eryldene* straight away, and still do – it has such a calm, peaceful atmosphere. I acquired my first heritage plant there, and that led to an appreciation of historic houses. It was an easy progression for me as I have lived in Ku-ring-gai since I first came to Australia from the Philippines in 1974, and have

always enjoyed its tree-lined streets, established gardens and dignified old homes.

When I first arrived I lived with a family in a large old house opposite *Rippon Grange* (John Williams Hospital) in Water Street, Wahroonga. Talk about six degrees of separation! *Rippon Grange* was designed by Sir John Sulman, who became the subject of my doctoral research. And I have now become very involved in saving the property from a development proposal which is so insensitive to the heritage significance of the site and character of the neighbourhood. It is a direct threat to the environmentally significant Blue Gum Forest.