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## from the president



Our Heritage Festival is the highlight of the National Trust year. Right across the State we engage in a wonderful array of events in celebration of what we have built up, and its conservation. The culmination of months of planning and hard work, our inaugural National Trust Day was launched on 18 March.

Thousands visited the National Trust at Observatory Hill after walking the Bridge, and were delighted to hear the Governor, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO speak.

The Trust, through its many members and staff, works hard to assure the future of our past. While we need no convincing of its value, it is sad that in the wider community heritage sometimes is unappreciated, at least until it is too late. Yet here, on that wonderful Sunday in March, we saw a massive salute to the 75th birthday of a true heritage icon – the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Many visited the Trust for the first time, and over 100 signed up for membership. We invited visitors to contribute a 'Message to the Future' for the next generation of their family when our time capsule is opened in 2032.

Two weeks later, hundreds of thousands of people, perhaps millions, turned off their lights throughout Sydney and across NSW, as a practical gesture of concern about climate change.

These two events should encourage us about the support out there for what the National Trust stands for and is striving to achieve. In the rush of everyday life it is easy to imagine that the wider community is too busy to worry about conservation of the built, cultural and natural environment, let alone doing anything about it. But the enthusiasm brought out by these events – the Heritage Festival and National Trust Day, the Bridge walk and Earth Hour – shows there is concern, even alarm. The message for me is that if we can provide the platform, the community will stand up on it.

There is much to be done in strengthening that platform. The Board of the Trust is transforming our economic management to put our financial position on a sounder footing, and to modernise how we support the work of the many branches and volunteer groups. We have consulted with the Chairs of these bodies, and later this year the Board will spend a weekend reflecting on how best to go forward. But the events of March suggest that the glass is at least half full!

If you have any comments or suggestions about any of the work of the Trust, or how we should be going forward, please feel free to get in touch with me at [jniland@nsw.nationaltrust.org.au](mailto:jniland@nsw.nationaltrust.org.au)

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