



NATIONAL TRUST

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Heritage hurdles for new Minister

The National Trust today welcomed the appointment of The Hon. Tony Kelly MP as Minister for Planning. Minister Kelly has previously demonstrated an understanding of the challenges presented to heritage by development imperatives but there are still many planning challenges to overcome. The Trust looks forward to meeting with the Minister as soon as possible to discuss the continuing threat to Ku-ring-gai, Currawong, Catherine Hill Bay and other areas of community and conservation concern.

Mr. John Neish, National Trust Executive Director said: “Minister Kelly has convincingly demonstrated his credentials as a spokesperson for heritage. Nevertheless, the National Trust is disappointed that the Premier has elected to retain heritage as part of the planning portfolio rather than create a new Ministry. The Trust maintains that heritage needs to have an independent voice in Cabinet.”

“The Premier as former Minister for Planning would appreciate the tension created by the internalisation of decision-making where potential conflict exists between development and heritage values. The potential loss of 79% of the Urban Conservation Areas in the Ku-ring-gai Town Centres is testament to this existing lack of transparency.”

Planning is more than housing numbers but a question of context. The NSW Government’s continued emphasis on dwelling targets irrespective of setting and neighbourhood character demonstrates that it has not listened to the community. For example, community outrage in Ku-ring-gai was ignited by the existing 3,000 dwellings that are complete or under construction. Catherine Hill Bay demands certainty with respect to the protection of heritage values to preserve the sense of place in the face of a new development application from Rose Corp. The proposed sale of Currawong to Eco Villages will also place development pressure on a place which should be left alone.

Mr. Neish added that: “The National Trust believes that an opportunity exists for Minister Kelly to restore confidence in the planning system in its treatment of natural and cultural heritage and do the right thing by local communities and special places.”

ENDS

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