



MEDIA STATEMENT

15 May 2009

Heritage Amendment Bill

In response to Planning Minister, Kristina Keneally's Heritage Amendment Bill 2009, John Neish Executive Director of The National Trust of Australia (NSW) said:

"Successive governments have wrestled to get the balance right between heritage protection and the need to allow people to live their lives and look after their properties as freely as possible.

"The Heritage Amendment Bill presented this week suggests that there is potential for fewer items to be listed on the State Heritage Register, the impact of which we may not see for many years to come. We support the Bill's intent to allow the concerns of owners and developers to be heard and considered.

"However, it is clear that the Minister is giving herself, and her appointees, more control over heritage issues, which is something we are concerned about and a position which will need careful monitoring. The current Minister, Kristina Keneally, has clearly put her heritage cards on the table, as seen with her recent decision on Currawong but what about future decisions by her and her successors? Our hope is that the controls in the Bill will be used judiciously and transparently.

"The National Trust is delighted to have a seat on the Heritage Council, one it will use to help the government get the balance right. We are a true independent voice on heritage issues, there to encourage sensitive and appropriate development but also to be the hand of caution when development runs the risk of ignoring the conservation and protection of our past that we hold in trust for future generations."

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