



MEDIA RELEASE

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Councils failing to make most of heritage tourism

Some councils are failing to list items of heritage significance on their Local Environment Plans, an opportunity which the National Trust says could help boost tourism to rural areas.

The National Trust of Australia (NSW) is aware of a number of councils who are failing to meet the requirements of listing heritage items on their Local Environment Plans (LEPs), set out by Department of Planning directives.

Graham Quint, Advocacy Manager for the National Trust said: "We're extremely concerned that some councils are neglecting to investigate and list some of the most important heritage items in the state. Not only does it put these places under threat of demolition for redevelopment, it also directly affects their tourism pull."

Mr. Quint continued: "We want to encourage local communities to hold their councils to account on matters of heritage. The protection of heritage often begins in the local community with your local LEP. The National Trust believes it is possible to balance the need for development and still retain the most significant examples of our past. One example is adaptive reuse of heritage buildings. Councils have an obligation in their LEP to show that the way forward involves embracing the past."

Some of the councils identified by the National Trust include Gundagai and Balranald which have very few heritage items on their LEPs, and Kyogle which has not acted on its earlier Heritage Study.

Mr Quint continued: "The National Trust itself has for many years listed significant heritage places in these towns on its own Register and is calling on councils to properly recognise and celebrate their heritage. Bathurst Council has set a high standard in heritage conservation and shown that this approach boosts tourism, the local economy, sense of place and local pride."

Mayor of Bathurst, Paul Toole said: "The importance of heritage to Bathurst's tourism is immense. We have many businesses that are historic that add to the tourism experience – museums, restaurants and cafes, pubs and accommodation."

ENDS

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