

25th June 2021

The Hon Shayne Mallard MLC
Chair, Review of the Heritage Act 1977
Upper House Committees | Legislative Council
Parliament of New South Wales, Macquarie St
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Chair

Museums & Galleries of NSW (M&G NSW) appreciate the opportunity to contribute this submission to the *Review of the Heritage Act, 1977*.

M&G NSW is an organisation that helps small to medium museums and galleries and Aboriginal cultural centres create exciting experiences for audiences and, through this focus, thriving local communities across NSW.

- Established in 1999, Museums & Galleries of NSW (M&G NSW) is a well-recognised not-for-profit company funded by the NSW Government through Create NSW. M&G NSW is recognised Australia-wide as a leading provider of services for museums, galleries and Aboriginal cultural centres, helping to create exciting and inspiring experiences for audiences and visitors, while contributing to strong, thriving local communities.
- While our attention is primarily on the 500 plus small to medium organisations in NSW, the impact and reach of our touring exhibition program is nationally recognised and our widely distributed website resources are used across Australia and referenced internationally. M&G NSW's work aims to inspire communities and audiences to engage with, experience and be captivated by art, artefacts, stories, histories and the challenge of connecting these to contemporary culture and ideas.
- We work closely with Local Government NSW in providing support for our local government owned organisations.

- In the context of this submission, our support of small to medium organisations includes building capacity to care for moveable cultural material; supporting audience and tourist growth; supporting development of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Arts Association (ACHAA) as an independent peak body. Many of the organisations we support are also housed in heritage facilities.
- We are also mindful that the NSW Government is in the process of developing a state-wide Museum Strategy which will inform our practice, and crosses over with heritage related activity.

Our Purpose is:

To support small to medium galleries, museums and Aboriginal cultural centres to maximise their impact and help create strong and thriving local communities.

Our Vision is:

For gallery, museum and Aboriginal cultural centre programs to be at the centre of communities and audiences in NSW.

In response to selected Focus Questions in the Discussion Paper, M&G NSW offers the following commentary and recommendations:

Focus Question 2: How should Aboriginal Cultural Heritage be acknowledged and considered within the Heritage Act

Our organisation supports the development of Aboriginal cultural centres and keeping places. This includes supporting management and care of moveable Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Recommendation:

We believe that a standalone, workable, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act is needed to comprehensively support Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, including moveable, intangible and significant Aboriginal places.

Focus Question 5: How can the NSW Government legislation better incentivise the ownership, activation and adaptive reuse of heritage?

Use of heritage spaces by cultural organisations is an accepted method to simultaneously honour the integrity of a heritage building while providing access to community.

Museums & Galleries of NSW previously received devolved funding through the Heritage Council of NSW to run the Building Improvement Grant program. This funding has now ceased.

The grant allowed for either a Building Assessment Report or for Building Works to be carried out.

Previous recipients include:

- Lithgow State Mine Heritage Park and Museum who were able to repaint heritage corrugated iron roofs to ensure ongoing conservation and protection of collections inside the buildings.
- Old Courthouse Museum were able to install new insulation in the ceiling and floors to improve the comfort of volunteers and visitors, as well as ensuring more stable conditions for the collection.
- Armidale Folk Museum were successful in getting a Building Assessment Report that recommended purchasing block out blinds, repairing the handrailing on the front veranda and repair of double entry doors
- National Trust listed Woodford Academy conducted a Building Assessment Report which identified that the museum's building required urgent repairs and stabilisation. Based on the report's findings Woodford Academy subsequently applied to the Building Improvement Program for funds to help repair the issues identified in the Report and carried out urgent repairs.

Recommendation:

That the Building Improvement Grants are reinstated, with a focus on buildings that are heritage listed across all categories.

Focus Question 18: How could we improve heritage tourism or help activate heritage places for tourism?

Cultural and heritage tourism is an important economic contributor to regional economies - which has grown with the current pandemic.

Museums & Galleries of NSW works with our many stakeholders to grow this audience. We believe that Destination NSW has a role to play in dedicated support of cultural and heritage tourism throughout regional NSW. Destination NSW's focus on supporting Events and Conferences do not always align with the activities of the cultural and heritage sector. Organisations showing exhibitions and collections receive steady streams of visitation over longer periods of time, as opposed to the short-term 'event based' approach. This longer durational visitation still drives economic investment to regional areas, but often misses out on funding and marketing focusses.

Recommendation:

That Destination NSW work with relevant stakeholders to carry out regular marketing campaigns to grow regional cultural and heritage tourism.

That Destination NSW provide opportunities to develop marketing initiatives for cultural and heritage tourism.

M&G NSW also believes that the focus should be on engaging respectful tourism, not activation.

Yours sincerely,



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