



Ms Rebecca Vassarotti  
Minister for Heritage  
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cc Treasurer; Andrew Barr, barr@act.gov.au,

## Heritage Resourcing in the ACT

Dear Minister

1. The GNCA thanks you and the government for your work on heritage protection. But, as the outstanding Heritage Festival 2024 draws to a close, the GNCA was disappointed to read about the Heritage Council Chair's concern about lack of resources (*Canberra Times* 21 April 2024). The Festival showed the level of interest in heritage in the community, its role in community cohesion and well-being and its value in increasing tourism. It also underscored that we are stewards of our heritage for the generations to come.
2. The GNCA urges the government to:
  - (i) Recognise the economic and social value of heritage protection, as well as community expectations about its responsibilities, and
  - (ii) allocate sufficient funds for the achievement of proper heritage protection, particularly in light of recent inquiries.
3. The GNCA refers to the following recent reports and developments.
  - (i) The ACT Heritage Jurisdictional Review report on *Celebrating Heritage in a Growing City* (in November 2023 but published in February 2024).<sup>1</sup> Its recommendations are predicated on acceptance of the basic proposition that monitoring and enforcement activities must be strengthened and resourced appropriately.
  - (ii) The Report of the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity (SCECCB) on its Inquiry into ACT's Heritage Arrangements (Report 9 of the 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly) of October 2023.<sup>2</sup> It recommended:

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<sup>1</sup> [https://hdp-au-prod-app-act-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/5617/0832/0401/ACT\\_Heritage\\_Jurisdictional\\_Review\\_-\\_Consultation\\_Report.pdf](https://hdp-au-prod-app-act-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/5617/0832/0401/ACT_Heritage_Jurisdictional_Review_-_Consultation_Report.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/2307019/Report-9-Inquiry-into-ACTs-heritage-arrangements.pdf](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/2307019/Report-9-Inquiry-into-ACTs-heritage-arrangements.pdf)

- increasing the budget and resourcing for the ACT Heritage Unit to meet community expectations and statutory deadlines for decision-making (Rec 27).
- undertaking a functional review to ensure staff in the ACT Heritage Unit are appropriately resourced and trained to perform the unit's required functions (Rec 28).

(iii) The Heritage Amendment Bill 2024 presented on 11 April 2024<sup>3</sup> that increases the responsibilities and size of the Heritage Council will require more resources.

(iv) The increase in the number of delegations under the *Heritage (Authorised People) Appointment* 2024 NI 2024-194 of 19 April 2024 to 64, noting that, ten years ago there were only four heritage delegations<sup>4</sup> with a significant increase occurring in 2019.<sup>5</sup> It is assumed that the SCECCB report's recommendation 12 about a review of delegations has resulted in this increase. It will require more co-ordination, training and reporting.

4. The GNCA also draws attention to the evidence of community involvement in heritage in the numbers attending Heritage Festival events and the many hours of unpaid work from volunteers. The submissions to the recent inquiries are also evidence of community involvement in this issue.

5. Heritage awareness and protection is a jewel in the crown of Canberra and the GNCA urges that it be adequately resourced.

Yours faithfully



Dr David Denham AM  
President  
GNCA

24 April 2024

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db\\_69498/](https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_69498/)

<sup>4</sup> *Public Sector Management (Heritage) Delegation 2014 (No 2)* NI 2014-282  
<https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/ni/2014-282/>

<sup>5</sup> *Public Sector Management (Heritage) Delegation 2019* NI 2019-40  
<https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/ni/2019-40/>

