

6 Aug 2024

Meaghan Scanlon
Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works
Dept of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works
Via email
housing@ministerial.qld.gov.au; Gaven@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Minister Scanlon,

RE: IMPROVING THE PROTECTION OF BUILT HERITAGE PLACES ACROSS QUEENSLAND

I am writing on behalf of the Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA), Queensland Chapter to candidates for the Queensland State Elections. The RAIA Queensland Chapter, as the peak body for architecture in Queensland, promotes protection and re-use of heritage buildings and heritage places. Our aim is to encourage all elected State Members of Parliament to champion better protection of heritage places across Queensland.

As stated in the Queensland Heritage Advisory Panel Final Report September 2023, "Queensland has a diverse range of heritage places that are a connection to our past and evoke special meaning for us. They reinforce our sense of local and regional identity. They help enhance the quality of our lives, improve our sense of wellbeing, and are catalysts for social and economic change. Queensland's heritage places are not only valuable in their own right for what they offer people in the way of culture and enjoyment, but also for the significant contribution they make to the economy. Heritage conservation combined with business planning and innovative interpretation provides distinctive tourism offerings to unlock economic opportunities, especially in regional areas. Adaptive re-use and the rejuvenation of historic areas bring considerable opportunities to renew urban, regional and rural environments".³

In 1992 the Queensland Government enacted legislation to recognise, protect and manage Queensland heritage places. Today the Queensland Heritage Register (QHR) is the primary reference point for identifying and recognising Queensland's important heritage places. This is in addition to the places which are locally heritage listed in the regions. After 30+ years of practice, and the loss of some important places, the Queensland Heritage Council undertook a thorough review with recommendations about how heritage places in Queensland can be better protected. This advice is set out in the following reports:

The **Queensland Heritage Advisory Panel final report** (September 2021) arranged 22 recommendations around three themes:

1. Legislative reform and strengthening Queensland's heritage framework
2. Support for heritage stakeholders
3. Better communication, understanding and engagement about Queensland's heritage places.

As the Queensland Heritage Act 1992 (Heritage Act) has passed its 30th anniversary, and with lessons learnt from the circumstances surrounding several recent high-profile heritage places, an

³ Queensland Heritage Advisory Panel Final Report September 2023,
https://www.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/330763/qld-heritage-advisory-panel-report-sept-2021.pdf

evaluation of Queensland's heritage protection system was timely and necessary. Through the QHAP process, an analysis of Queensland's heritage protection system was undertaken. This identified key issues, compared interstate legislation and practice, and identified pathways to deliver improvements.

Queensland Heritage Implementation Strategy⁴ recommendations:

- Clarify and strengthen the powers and processes for identifying and protecting Queensland's heritage places
- Better support heritage stakeholders, in particular heritage place owners
- Improve how the value of heritage places is communicated and promoted

Four issues are paramount in the Implementation Strategy:

1. Increase funding to State Heritage (DESI) to get Queensland heritage protection to be proactive rather than reactive.
2. Support amendments to the Qld Heritage Act to allow more effective protection of cultural heritage items on the Queensland Heritage Register.
3. Strengthen heritage protection to ensure no demolitions take place, no heritage places fall into disrepair and ruin, and that communities who value heritage are heard and supported.
4. Promote Qld heritage with more events, such as Open House, Australian Heritage Festival and Qld Heritage Awards and Conferences.

We are encouraging all elected State Members of Parliament to support the recommendations of these reports.

We are asking that as part of your campaign for election, you champion better protection of our heritage places across Queensland, remembering that heritage lies at the heart of the communities under your tenure as a Queensland Government representative.

Should you wish to discuss the issues around heritage protection in Queensland in further detail, please contact this office and a representative from the RAIA Heritage committee will happily meet with you to discuss the key issues that are pressing in our communities.

Best wishes for your success at the upcoming Queensland government elections.

Kind regards,



Russell Hall
Queensland Chapter President
Australian Institute of Architects

⁴ Queensland Heritage Implementation Strategy 2022,
https://www.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0023/330764/qld-heritage-implementation-strategy.pdf