

Greens NSW

Heritage Policy

August 2012



Principles

The Greens NSW believe:

1. Heritage brings meaning to people through places, objects and practices, and enhances community engagement and well-being;
2. Aboriginal peoples have the right to own and control Aboriginal culture and heritage and must have the right to provide free prior and informed consent before activities which will impact on Aboriginal heritage are permitted.
3. The contribution of successive generations of migrant cultures must also be recognised and respected;
4. A system of managed heritage protection rather than managed destruction is optimal, with all levels of government – local, state, and federal – working together.
5. The community has the right and responsibility to preserve and maintain our heritage and ensure that it is not destroyed through neglect – wilful or otherwise;
6. Heritage landscapes, precincts and views are important considerations when significant change or development is proposed in an area;
7. While current National Parks (NP) and Nature Reserves (NR) are precious environmental assets, they do not protect the full range of biological diversity and natural heritage.
8. Knowledge of and respect for international conservation and heritage conventions are essential in formulating good heritage policy in NSW;

Policy Detail

The Greens NSW will work to:

1. Heritage laws and practices in NSW reflecting our international commitments, including:
 - a. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
 - b. The ICOMOS Burra Charter for buildings, precincts, places or landscapes;
 - c. The National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries for objects;
 - d. The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage for practices;
 - e. The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity; and
 - f. The United Nations World Heritage Convention and its associated guidelines.
2. Improved public discussion about all aspects of heritage, including funding and the potential for sustainable and environmentally-sensitive tourism.

Aboriginal Heritage and Culture

The Greens NSW will work towards:

9. Heritage legislation and practice in NSW which recognises and respects Aboriginal people's rights as custodians of Aboriginal culture, heritage and country, and the continued importance of Aboriginal cultures and heritage for NSW and Australia;
10. Ending the destruction of Aboriginal sites of heritage significance.
11. Introducing penalty provisions for non-compliance with heritage legislation, particularly in relation to Aboriginal heritage, which act as a genuine deterrent.
12. Ensuring that Aboriginal people have control over the right to grant or refuse consent for damage to, or destruction of, places and objects of cultural significance.
13. The return of all items of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island cultural heritage which cannot be identified as being voluntarily surrendered, to their rightful owners and custodians, where they can be identified and have agreed to such an arrangement.
14. Introducing legislation to ensure that Aboriginal culture and heritage is no longer managed through the National Parks and Wildlife Act and is instead governed by a stand-alone Aboriginal Heritage Act developed

in consultation with Aboriginal groups including the NSW Aboriginal Land Council.

15. The heritage protection of animal and plant species that are of cultural significance to Aboriginal Australians, indeed all Australians.
16. Reintroducing the allocation of funds from lands tax to the NSW Aboriginal Land Council in order to help fund their advocacy of Aboriginal heritage issues.
17. Improved funding, support and training for Aboriginal heritage staff in the Office of Heritage and the Environment and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

Heritage Assessment, Management and Organisations

The Greens NSW will work towards:

18. Improved state funding for organisations dedicated to the protection of heritage, such as the National Trust, the Australian Museum and the Heritage Office, in order to achieve common heritage objectives.
19. Proper resourcing of keeping places, museums, libraries and art galleries and archival institutions to care for objects and artefacts, including their long-term storage.
20. Having conservation management plans in place to guide effective conservation management of all places and items on the State Heritage Register (SHR).
21. Resourcing from local to state level to adequately curate, protect, study and display portable heritage items.
22. Supporting research on archaeological sites and or relics and improved dissemination of information from these sites to the wider community.
23. Introducing appropriate measures to safeguard intangible heritage, particularly through education.
24. Re-instating the concept of regional significance to the NSW Heritage Act.
25. Promoting and protecting the diverse cultures of migrant communities and recognising the importance and value of their ongoing contribution to the state through adequate funding of and engagement with communities by the NSW government.

26. Changing relevant laws so that ownership of objects from archaeological excavations, whether of heritage significance or not, belong to the State or the traditional owners where relevant.
27. The establishment of a state repository for archaeological material, along the lines of the state repository in Victoria.
28. Supporting the digitization of heritage, including the engagement of citizen researchers, to make as much heritage information public and shareable as possible.
29. A process of proactively identifying areas of national park to be assessed for National Heritage List and World Heritage values and, where appropriate, nominated and protected.
30. Ensure the independence of the Heritage Council by guaranteeing its funding and making it directly accountable to the NSW Parliament (as per the Ombudsman's Office) rather than to a Minister.

Heritage, Planning & Local Government

The Greens will work towards:

31. Introducing legislation to enable councils to ensure the maintenance of heritage assets.
32. Removing heritage-related exemptions from legislation, which undermine heritage protection in NSW.
33. Promoting adaptive re-use of heritage structures guided by heritage conservation values.
34. Promoting the importance of preserving significant cultural landscapes, precincts, streetscapes, street trees and coastal settings.
35. Heritage assessments and determinations being free from the influence of the proponents whose actions would see heritage destroyed or damaged;
36. Improved community consultation, participation and decision-making in relation to decisions concerning heritage;
37. Protecting local heritage by requiring councils to consider the listing of an item or place on a council's Local Environment Plan if the council is in receipt of a petition supporting the listing signed by at least 5,000 people or a number greater than 5 per cent of the ratepayers of the municipality, whichever is the lesser; and until such time as the council considers listing, the item or place is to have interim heritage protection.

38. Protecting state and regional heritage by requiring the Heritage Council to consider the listing of the item or place on the State Heritage Register if the Minister is in receipt of a petition supporting the listing signed by at least 10,000 people; and until such time as the Heritage Council considers the listing, the item or place is to have interim heritage protection.
39. The consent of the Heritage Council being required to remove an item or place from a Local Environment Plan (LEP), once it has been listed on an LEP.
40. Restoration, reconstruction, adaptation and compatible use being preferred to façading or other unsympathetic redevelopment, recognising that both the interior and exterior of buildings can have heritage significance.
41. Removing the ability of the Minister to deny consent to the listing of a local heritage item or place or a council's LEP.
42. Requiring local councils to report regularly to the Minister on the steps they have taken to protect and promote local heritage.
43. Encourage and fund local councils to revise and extend their local heritage registers.