

Hornsby Advocate

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**Press Release from Society of Heritage Owners NSW [SoHONSW] in support of Planning Minister Sartor's heritage reforms and criticising Mr Quint and the NSW National Trust**

SoHONSW states this sudden interest claimed in property owner's rights from Mr Graham Quint and the NSW National Trust deeply suspicious and frankly, unbelievable.

"These are the same individual and organisation who harass owner's of private property and seek to further entrench few if any appeal rights for owners of actual or potentially heritage listed properties. They are deeply anti-private property rights, believe private owners should lose tens or even hundred of thousands of dollars in their property values to subsidize the heritage hobbyists and their fellow travellers, the heritage industry specialists" says Chris Hayward, President of SoHONSW.

The Society of Heritage Owners NSW applauds Planning Minister Sartor's heritage law reform in general and "in particular welcome the recommendation that finally, after 30 years of operation, will give property owners the right to lodge a direct, user friendly appeal over any heritage listing they dispute" says Chris Hayward.

"For the past 30 years heritage fanatics in NSW had a huge influence in designing and extending the current punitive, owner-hating heritage listing system. They have had free rein to trample over property owners rights and indeed, exhibited consistent disdain and even hostility to any notion of owners rights, so this sudden claim to be interested in property owner's rights needs to be judged against this backdrop of the past 30 years" Chris Hayward said.

"One of the best heritage reforms in the Sartor Cutting Red Tape planning reforms is a straight-forward user friendly appeal against a heritage listing. For the past 30 years, owners who disputed the validity of their heritage listing, were required to lodge a Development Application for demolition and redevelopment with the same Council who heritage listed their property. The cost of such a DA is well over \$30,000, often around \$50,000 and in some cases can run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Even in cases where the owner asserts the heritage listing was fraudulent or can prove the wrong street number was heritage listed in error by the Council, owners were still forced to pay massive costs of rectifying such mistakes. The NSW National Trust has come out strongly against all heritage planning reforms which include this basic democratic right for owners to be able to directly appeal a heritage listing they say is wrong. If the Mr Quint or the NSW National Trust has any genuine interest in owner's rights they would not be opposing this. The public needs to ask why are they so afraid of owners having decent heritage appeal rights. I suggest it is because they know full well what the 2006 Federal government Productivity into Built Heritage report found, which was rampant heritage over-listing and failure by local government to heritage list according to any professionally acceptable heritage criteria. This is the shonky heritage listing system they don't want improved. They seek to continue to deny property owners appeal rights

appropriate to a modern democracy and in this regard should be condemned just like Mugab'e Zimbabwe. " says Chris Hayward.

"Heritage fanatics, those deeply hostile to the notion of private property rights and those who line their own pockets with specialist heritage 'consultancies' have exploited and abused the NSW Heritage Act and NSW heritage listing procedures for three decades. The NSW National Trust engages in heritage stunts, such as heritage listing the sky or dangerous ones such as lodging submissions opposing rural communities like Point Plommer, who seek to have their dangerous dirt roads tar-sealed. The National Trust claim the dirt road is 'heritage.' They repeatedly put purported heritage interests over and above that of human life and safety, harass often aging property owners such as many living in the Pettit and Sevit projects homes on the North Shore and identify heritage sites to protect on the basis of online voting from their members, not on the basis of professionally accepted heritage assessment tools. It is no wonder that the NSW Heritage Office refuse to heritage list items they nominate. " says Chris Hayward

"Mr Quint the NSW National Trust are running a scare campaign and simply feigning interest in property owner's rights. Do not fall for it. The truth is the only rights they are interested in are those of their members to either increase their heritage consultancy income and/or for private property owners to lose substantial value in our properties by being forced to subsidize the heritage hobbies of the few" commented Chris Hayward

C. Hayward

President

Society of Heritage Owners NSW