

14 April 2008

Dear St George and Sutherland Leader Editor,

I note Ms Voysey, representative of the Little Garie, Era and Burning Palms shacks, believes their 1993 National Trust NSW classification as an "important pieces of heritage" somehow saved them [Leader 8 April]. The fact is that a heritage 'classification' or listing by the NSW National Trust carries no legal weight - zip, nada, none.

Mr Michael Collins past Chair of the NSW Heritage Council, complained the practice by the National Trust's practice purporting to heritage 'classify' properties caused "confusion." The NSW National Trust must be stopped from engaging in conduct that tricks the naive into believing their heritage 'classification' has any effect. It's outrageous for the Trust to persist in heritage 'classifying' properties where the lawful bodies with the power to make that decision have refused to heritage list the same item.

This situation was so out of control in Tasmania, that they enacted legislation to stop the Trust from engaging in non-statutory heritage listings, because of the confusion it created. The Trust appear to be the only beneficiaries from sowing these seeds of confusion, as it means they continue to erroneously enjoy public credit for saving properties they heritage 'classify' (such as with the National Park beach shacks).

SoHONSW calls on the Minister for Planning Frank Sartor and the NSW Minister for Local Government Paul Lynch to implement a law in NSW to stop any group or individual in this state claiming a property is heritage listed, classified, or categorised, other than those lawfully delegated the statutory authority to do so. Already affected owners or those threatened with having their properties heritage listed can contact us for support at sohonsw@gmail.com

Christine Hayward

Society of Heritage Owners NSW