

CONFERENCE REPORT

HOME HEAVEN HELL

Supporting historic
house owners in
Australia

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Inaugural Conference

SYDNEY 5&6 APRIL 2018



HOME HEAVEN HELL

A Conference of the Historic Houses Association of Australia

Sydney 5 - 6 April 2018

ABOUT HHA

The **Historic Houses Association of Australia** was formed to raise awareness and support for important local and national properties.

It began in Sydney in 1988, alongside the formation of the NSW Government's Historic Houses Trust. It brought together the "friends" of some of Sydney's most important buildings such as Elizabeth Bay House and Vacluse House. In 2014, the association became national and fully independent of government and is now a registered charity, not-for-profit and volunteer organisation, with a growing national membership and reach.

Our goal is to educate and inform the public, to support private owners and to build an environment in which historic properties and places are supported, valued and enjoyed.

We provide a forum for owners along with resources and expert advice. We advocate on their behalf to government and educate the public through a dynamic range of events and activities. We also support research to understand the special issues faced by owners of historic properties.

We welcome new owners and actively seek private and corporate supporters to protect and promote our shared national heritage.



ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The HHA held its Inaugural Conference in April 2018 in order to canvas the issues faced by owners of historic houses across the country. The conference was sold out with 250 people attending from around Australia.

This was the first time in Australia that owners had an opportunity to share their stories which they did so with great passion and enthusiasm.



CONTENT

Almost every owner talked of themselves as **custodians, rather than owners**. They saw themselves as the temporary custodians of something of great value to their respective communities and which they wished to pass on to future generations. These were people who work hard to protect and maintain these wonderful assets and willingly share their properties with visitors. They demonstrated a great generosity of spirit.

The conference also heard from government agencies and professionals about the information and support that is available to owners. But it was very apparent that the financial and other **contributions of owners far outweighs the relatively meagre support**, and sometimes expensive and overbearing control, they are sometimes subjected to.

Some felt the victims of bureaucratic systems and processes (from '*The Club*' as one owner put it) that owners seemed excluded from, yet had to bear the consequences of.



A range of professional practitioners spoke of the knowledge and skills available to owners, but it also heard that one of the best schemes for owners – local government heritage advisers – has been all but phased out despite 30 years of extraordinary success at very low cost. As one Keynote Speaker said “We are at a nadir of government interest in heritage issues”.

The two overseas speakers spoke of the benefits that had been brought through government grants, taxation advantages and the collegiality of their own associations, which have been operating for many years.

« ...It covered an extraordinary breadth of relevant issues for owners of historic properties which were given great “texture” by the range of speakers from across Australia. »

*Scott Carlin, Narryna House
Tasmania*

OUTCOMES

The conference was designed to create a discussion platform for the future of the HHA as a representative body for private and independent historic property owners.

During the last session, the delegates were invited to discuss the key elements of the the conference to shape the HHA's future. Here are the key outcomes:

1. The need to 'tap into' the enormous energy of owners to generate a **national collective voice** on behalf of owners so they have a 'place at the table' along with the bureaucrats and myriad of expert professional consultants.

2. The need to **develop statistical data** to demonstrate the scale of the issue and the needs of owners so as to mount a case for additional support.

3. The need to generate a **list of achievable and practical goals** and advocate for them vigorously. These might include:

- Tax deductibility for maintenance costs of listed buildings;
- Improvement in the scale of grants, loans and professional advice available;
- Improvement in trades training;
- A consistent and collective approach to property insurance.

4. The need to **work with other organisations** to achieve goals and not to duplicate and dilute effort.

5. The need to provide **collegial and practical support and advice** to owners who are facing threats from developments.

6. The need to take advantage of a **collegial approach** where owners share their experiences, knowledge, marketing and other opportunities with one another. This may include:

- Future conferences;
- Specialist sub-committee's and online forums eg tax, insurance, technical advice, tourism;
- Regional marketing programs.

7. The need for readily **accessible information** about a range of matters including tradespeople, technical and legal information, implications of heritage listing etc.

8. The need for state tourism agencies to show greater support for **cultural and heritage tourism**, especially in the private sector.

9. The need to develop a **governance framework** for the HHA that is national in focus, lean, inclusive, culturally diverse, forward thinking and targeted.

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CONFERENCE PROGRAM

SESSION 1: Setting the scene

SESSION CHAIR: Peter Watts AM

Historic Houses Association - The UK Experience
Keynote Speaker: James Hervey-Bathurst CBE DL

The European Experience with an Emphasis on France
Keynote Speaker: Anne-Sophie Bellamy-Biard

The Australian Experience and Approach - The Long View: Successes, Failures, Lessons and Issues
The Hon. Acting Justice Simon Molesworth AO QC

SESSION 2: Case Studies to Focus the Mind

SESSION CHAIR: Maisy Stapleton

Anlaby, South Australia: Following New Ownership
Andrew Morphet

Camden Park, NSW: Keeping the Family House and Anticipating the Future
John Macarthur-Stanham

Bungaree Station: South Australia: Maintaining a Sixth Generation Family and Building New Income Streams
Victoria Stewart and Sally Hawker

Nindooibah, Queensland: Change of Ownership and Modernisation
Dr Robert Riddel

Bishops Lodge, Hay, NSW: A Balancing Act - Local Community Action
Mary Lou Gardam

The Manse, Moruya, NSW: Temporary Government Intervention
Peter Freeman

Do We Want It? - An Inherited House
Brian Seidler

Mid-Century Modern: What the Market Wants
Marcus Lloyd-Jones

Lessons from Paddington: Private Values vs Public Values
John Richardson

Mawallok: Barbarians at the Gate
Stephen Mitchell

SESSION 3: What support is there for owners?

SESSION CHAIR: Stephen Davies

The State Government Framework: The Stick and Carrot of Protection and Support that is in Need of Underpinning
Geoff Ashley

Re-invigorating Heritage at the Local Government Level
John McInerney AM

A Lot for a Little: The Heritage Advisors Program - Past and Present
Elizabeth Vines OAM

Owners: Connecting and Cooperating
Jane Tenniswood

Finding Your Way Through the Heritage Maze
David Logan

Heritage Listing: Road to Heaven or Path to Hell
Stephen Davies

What Technical Support is Available?
Mary Knaggs

SESSION 4: What are the key issues to ensure the best conservation and community outcomes for important historic houses

SESSION CHAIR: Peter Watts AM

Changing of the Guard: New Owners for Old Houses
Richard Allen

Should we Have Bought it? Trials and Tribulations - Surviving the Process
Ann Sherry AO and Michael Hogan

The Legal Maze
John Balazs

Where to From Here?
Tim Duddy

« It was refreshing to spend time with other historic house owners and know we're not alone »

Andrew Morphett, Anlaby, South Australia



HHA 2018 Conference speakers

The conference was just a beginning. It finished on a high note with many people offering to assist in carrying these issues forward and encouraging the HHA to forge a national agenda, and pathway, to achieve positive outcomes for owners.

The day following the conference delegates had the opportunity of visiting four historic houses in the Sydney region that demonstrated many of the issues that had been raised at the conference.



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