



## **Why has Government gone quiet on promised heritage ‘conversation?’**

The National Trust wonders why the State Government has gone quiet on the local heritage debate that generated huge controversy last year. Do they think the best way to deal with the debate is to just hope it goes away? After promising to ‘reset the conversation’ on ill-considered ‘reforms’, they have not followed through with their promise of a wide-ranging consultation.

Five months on we have yet to hear when the ‘conversation’ - with councils and communities - will begin. There have been no responses to the outpouring of public indignation. No offers to meet. Nothing...

**“The National Trust’s great fear is that the next thing we will see is a draft Bill, based on what the Government wants to happen,” said President Professor Norman Etherington. “Its chosen approach to complex situations seems to be to act then defend, rather than consulting.”**

There is certainly a lot to talk about. Within weeks of releasing the discussion paper the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) had received 183 formal public submissions. More than 200 other people made their views known through written comments to the Adelaide City Council and the National Trust’s online survey.

“When you consider the recent Royal Commission on the Nuclear Fuel Cycle received 250 submissions in a whole year, that gives you a pretty good idea of how important the heritage issue is to people in this State,” Professor Etherington said.

“The response made it the biggest survey of South Australian opinion on heritage issues since the 1970s, and one of the four biggest surveys ever conducted in Australia.”

Submissions were received from 30 Councils, 12 residents’ groups, 19 historical and heritage societies, and several professional and industry associations, as well as hundreds of individuals. **The almost unanimous demand was for more consultation ahead of any legislation.**

The Local Government Association has stated that “further consideration, clarification, and consultation is required prior to development of any draft Bill incorporating local heritage reforms” and the Adelaide City Council has said it does not support “the next engagement step being commenting on a Bill by itself.”

“Surely Minister Rau and his Department do not intend to ignore the expressed will of so many councils and associations by drafting a Bill ahead of the promised conversation,” Professor Etherington said.

“We want to know when to expect a second DPTI paper based on the unprecedented outpouring of public concern.”

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