



Collecting, preserving and promoting local history

To: [Productivity Commission - Housing Supply Regulation Inquiry \(sent 14/10/2026\)](#)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your Interim Report for this Inquiry.

Who we are

Glen Eira Historical Society (GEHS) is a small community not-for-profit 100% volunteer-run organisation. Our interest is in the history and heritage of all the suburbs in the City of Glen Eira in Melbourne, extending from Elsternwick through Caulfield to Murrumbeena and Bentleigh/Bentleigh East (15 suburbs in all).

Our purpose is collecting, preserving and promoting our local history.

Why we are submitting

We view the City of Glen Eira's built heritage as an important connection to our purpose.

- GEHS was established in 1972 as a result of the then growing community surge to identify and protect our local history and heritage.
- Now 50+ years later, we continue to be active in supporting our local built heritage by participating in Council and the Victorian State Government's Planning Amendment processes. On occasion, we have participated in VCAT cases and nominated places to the Victorian Heritage Register (at times successfully eg Caulfield Racecourse, Red Cross Rest Home at Caulfield Hospital).
- As one of the many stakeholders in the subject of your Inquiry, we want to ensure that you hear views from our experience at the grassroots as well as the bigger players you have chosen.

We support the call for more housing. At the same time, [it is not an "either/or" situation – increased housing whilst protecting our heritage is totally achievable](#) as our Council and many others have repeatedly stated and proven.

- We urge you to take this approach rather than one of increased housing at the cost of heritage and other "barrier" regulations.

Terms of Reference

We note the focus on economic viewpoints. We also note that the Scope of the Inquiry includes at page iv:

*The inquiry should identify examples of the existing housing regulatory system across jurisdictions that have the greatest impact on housing supply, housing affordability and construction productivity. However, **this should also consider the benefits of the regulations and their objectives.*** (Our highlighting.)



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In our reading of the Interim report, this has been taken as only requiring negative examples on the basis that the *existing housing regulatory system* is harming housing supply.

- Further, the benefits of the regulations and their objectives have not been included or tested in any meaningful way in the Interim report.
- We ask that the Final report does properly address the benefits of *the regulations and their objectives*, including seeking relevant expert advice about heritage and planning, as well as other issues such as environment issues and planning.

Interim Report

Unfortunately, the Interim Report has not included input from all stakeholders - much expertise has been overlooked including that of heritage experts in planning, and also local government who have decades of experience and have substantial expertise in all the facets of planning. The 74 mentions of "heritage" in the Interim Report provide little meaningful input and actual expertise for heritage and associated planning.

We note the list of invited Roundtable participants overlooked a range of stakeholders including local government, heritage experts & proponents amongst many others.

Final report

It is vital that a comprehensive examination is undertaken which goes beyond the property development industry and their supporters.

- Planning for housing requires that all planning issues are properly considered, not excluded or glossed over.
- We ask that the Inquiry fully scopes out the relevant stakeholders and seeks proper advice from them if it is not comprehensively to hand through submissions – including from heritage experts and local government.

Other points

Extensive reference has been made to cited reports but claims in those have not necessarily been tested:

- Some very broad claims are made about the extent of heritage-protected land in reports referred to in the Interim Report eg p15 example that *heritage protections cover at least 50% of residential land in 50 suburbs across Greater Sydney* & p46 that *Heritage overlays are widespread, covering 21% of residential land within 10km of the central business district (CBD) in Sydney and 29% in Melbourne (Coates 2025, p. 23)* - these claims need to be carefully tested.
- While it is hard to check the exact details and extent of their claim for the City of Glen Eira from the Coates report in their map of this claim (no actual data available in their report



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for the Grattan Institute), we do have some contrasting information for the City of Glen Eira.

- The City of Glen Eira's *Heritage Work Program Update 2026* (Item 4.2 from 21/7/2026 Council Minutes) includes the following data for the municipality. We have also attached an excerpt of the Item to our submission:

<https://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/about-council/meetings-and-agendas/council-agendas-and-minutes/special-council-meeting-tuesday-21-july-2026>

- 217 Heritage Overlays
- 4900 properties approximately in an Heritage Overlay (significant and/or contributory plus non-contributory), which is 6.9% of all properties in the municipality

All this points to further investigation being needed by the Inquiry to backup claims such as those by Coates.

We also draw your attention to the issue of approved planning permits not being acted upon ie nothing built. At its 16/12/2025 Ordinary meeting, Glen Eira City Council considered a report by Council officers *Dwelling Construction Pipeline in Glen Eira* at Item 10.6 (excerpt attached).

<https://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/about-council/meetings-and-agendas/council-agendas-and-minutes/ordinary-council-meeting-tuesday-16-december-2025>

- In essence this highlighted that in the period 2021-2024, there was an overall reduction in the number of planning permits issued, dwellings approved, and dwellings constructed across all dwelling types compared to the previous 2017-2021 report."
- Along with their conclusions about why this was so for the various categories, we also suggest that, simply, developers are making decisions to act upon/not act upon approved planning permits on the basis of their updated projected returns ie the substantial reduction to 2024 in dwellings constructed is the result of higher costs outside of the approval process. This in turn highlights that removing "constraints" does not guarantee increasing the numbers of dwellings to match demand.

Other relevant reports pertinent to Victoria, and likely relevant more broadly, from key organisations follow:

- Heritage Council of Victoria's expert research and guidance including
 - *Valuing Victoria's Heritage 2023* – this report looks at the value of cultural heritage via three key areas: economic, social and environmental. It includes research from Australia and overseas, with over 200 sources cited.
 - *Shaping the future of the Victorian Heritage Register 2023* – this report looks at the results of The Future Directions of the Victorian Heritage Register survey which asked participants to share their views on the heritage that holds significance in their lives.



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- Inquiry into Victoria Planning Provisions amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274
<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/vppams>
 - This Inquiry attracted 299 submissions and held 3 days of hearings, indicating the widespread stakeholders in planning.
 - The Final Report was tabled in Parliament on 13 May 2025 and the Government response was tabled on 2 June 2026.
 - While the Victorian State Government's response was mixed in taking on board the recommendations, the submissions and transcripts of the hearings hold much information relevant to this Productivity Commission Inquiry.
- We ask that you consider and draw on the submitters' knowledge and expertise in developing recommendations about heritage in your final deliberations and report via their reports and direct contact as needed.

Lead organisations with expert knowledge and expertise in heritage and planning which we interact with are likely also making submissions to you:

- National Trust Victoria <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/vic/>
- The Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) and their Heritage Committee
<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/>
- Federation of Australian Historical Societies (FAHS)
<https://www.history.org.au/advocacy>
- We ask that you consider and draw on their knowledge and expertise in developing recommendations about heritage in your final deliberations and report

Finally, here is an excerpt from the Planning Panel Report of 27/3/2026 for Planning Amendment C240glen McKinnon (to the Glen Eira Planning Scheme). It sums up what has been a very established approach to heritage which we support:

<https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/All%20schemes/amendments/C240glen?schemeCode=glen>

Planning policy objectives

The Panel agrees with Council's submission regarding the Amendment's alignment with planning policy objectives.

Clause 71.02-3 of the Planning Scheme seeks integrated decision making by weighing up competing policy objectives to achieve net community benefit and sustainable development. Several submissions assert that seeking to apply the Heritage Overlay to identified heritage will affect policy objectives that seek housing affordability and supply. These are hypothetical propositions at this stage of the planning process because the Heritage Overlay:

- *identifies properties with heritage significance to ensure any future development responses sensitively to the heritage fabric – it does not prohibit development*
- *enables a landowner to apply for a planning permit to develop, alter and*



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(cont) demolish buildings

- *enables a landowner to maintain the property (such as painting and repairs) if it does not change its appearance without a planning permit.*

Accordingly, it would be incorrect to suggest that policy objectives relating to heritage compete with those seeking housing growth and other development.

This is consistent with previous Panel findings and a Victorian Supreme Court decision.

As found in Dustday Investments Pty Ltd v Minister for Planning [2015] VSC 101, the Amendment assumes a strategic role in setting the appropriate statutory planning framework for assessing the potential impact of future development on existing heritage fabric.

Accordingly, it says:

Later, when a permit application is made to the responsible authority the policy framework governing the application is appropriate having regard to the particular characteristics or significance of the land or the buildings on the land.

The Panel agrees with Council that the Heritage Overlay identifies locally significant heritage and seeks Council to assess any future development proposal accordingly. It does not prevent housing growth, though it may discourage certain purchasers and may affect the degree of growth.

This is consistent with the Victorian Supreme Court decision which states a planning scheme amendment seeking to apply the Heritage Overlay should not engage in 'tradeoffs' against other competing objectives and Planning Scheme provisions. Rather, it should consider whether the land has the characteristics or significance to justify applying the Heritage Overlay.

Relevantly, the Panel observed new multi-storey development including housing in the McKinnon Activity Centre on Commercial 1 Zone properties with the Heritage Overlay – along McKinnon Road between Elm Grove and McKinnon Railway Station.

Policy objectives such as those related to housing affordability and supply may be relevant during the planning permit process when an actual development proposal exists and its details are known.

This two-staged approach to heritage is consistent with extensive Panel findings and Victorian Supreme Court decisions.

Conclusion

Again, we thank you for your consideration of our submission and ask that you take our concerns and requests into your deliberations to ensure that all stakeholders are given fair hearing and consideration in your final recommendations.

Regards

Anne Kilpatrick – Secretary