27 July 2005

Mr Neil Bryon
Presiding Commissioner
Heritage Inquiry
Productivity Commission
PO Box 80
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

Dear Mr Bryon

PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION INQUIRY INTO HISTORIC PLACES

The following is provided as a submission on behalf of the City of Port Phillip to the inquiry into the policy framework and incentives for conservation of Australia's historic heritage places.

1. The City of Port Phillip municipality is one of the oldest areas of European settlement in Melbourne. Port Phillip is known for its many dynamic urban villages, a foreshore which stretches for over 11km, cultural diversity, magnificent heritage buildings, artistic expressions and beautiful parks and gardens. Together they make the environment a high quality liveable area.

2. Areas within the City of Port Phillip have been subject to urban conservation studies and associated heritage controls since 1975, include the Port Phillip Heritage Review 2000. Council is continually reviewing these heritage studies, including a comprehensive study of all heritage places in 1998 as well as two additional studies being undertaken in 2004 and 2005.

3. The identification of the level of significance of a place has varied between the heritage studies over the past 30 years. In the early studies a multi-tiered grading system was used, such as A for State grade to F for local precincts. Now a 3 level system identifies places as Significant, Contributory, or non-contributory to a heritage place.

4. The Heritage Policy in the Port Phillip Planning Scheme, Clause 22.04, assists with the management of heritage properties and defines the various levels of significance as follows:

   Significant heritage places include buildings and surrounds that are individually important places of either State, regional or local heritage significance or are places that together within an identified area are part of the significance of a Heritage Overlay.

Contributory heritage places include buildings and surrounds that are representative heritage places of local significance, which contribute to the significance of the Heritage Overlay area. They may have been considerably altered but have the potential to be conserved.

Non-contributory properties are buildings that are neither significant nor contributory. However any new development on these sites may impact on the significance of the Heritage Overlay, and should therefore consider the heritage characteristics of any adjoining heritage place and the streetscape as covered in this policy.

5. Approximately 70% of the area of the municipality of the City of Port Phillip is subject to a Heritage Overlay. Heritage protection is part of a larger suite of planning controls in Victoria. Zoning and other overlay controls are also relevant to many heritage properties in the City of Port Phillip.

6. The South Melbourne neighbourhood has been subject to heritage controls of some form for over twenty years. Indicators for the past five years indicate that these properties have increased in value, as shown below. This situation is similar for other parts of the municipality that are afforded heritage protection.

	12 month change	FOR YEAR 2002-2003 Median	FOR YEAR 2003-2004			5-year change
			Median	Lower Quartile	Upper Quartile	
Houses	6.5%	$535,000	$570,000	$455,000	$740,000	78.3%
Units	-16.4%	$359,000	$300,000	$255,000	$380,000	61.5%

Source: www.reiv.com.au

7. The effect that heritage protection has on the value of properties is only a part of the overall influences, which include market forces and other external influences.

8. The City of Port Phillip is one of four inner city councils that have recently released the *Draft Inner Melbourne Action Plan* and *Draft Inner Regional Housing Statement*. These documents can be downloaded from www.melbourne2030.vic.gov.au

9. The *Draft Inner Melbourne Action Plan* responds to the demands of Melbourne 2030 and sets out 11 regional strategies and 53 actions to address the objective of making the inner region of Melbourne more livable.

   Strategy 1 to be delivered collaboratively by the IMAP councils is: "*Celebrate the unique and concentrated 19th Century heritage of Inner Melbourne*".

   IMAP recognizes a need to identify the various elements within the inner region so that the overall character can be preserved, reinforced and repaired where necessary. It emphasizes that the inner region is a part of a creative city and refers to *The Rise of the Creative Class* by Richard Florida, in that *"economic growth is determined by the locations creative people choose to live and work in"* (p14). IMAP also states "*Creative people are attracted to places with high levels of amenity, diversity and tolerance. Inner Melbourne's*

unique 19th Century heritage is seen as a vital element in promoting the amenity of the city."

10. The *Draft Inner Regional Housing Statement* provides guidance and direction at a regional level for local councils in the development of their strategic planning work, in particular local housing strategies and structure plans.

    The Draft IRHS supports the objective of protecting the heritage assets of the inner region and demonstrates that there are adequate sites and opportunities to accommodate the projected dwelling increases.

11. The City of Port Phillip has embraced the reuse of heritage buildings, including town halls, the Linden Gallery - St Kilda, Gasworks - South Melbourne, the Swallow and Ariell building - Port Melbourne amongst many others.

12. The City of Port Phillip places great importance on heritage buildings and sites and supports these activities in a number of ways:

    - Allocates budget for operations and maintenance of Council owned or occupied heritage building and sites, including the three Town Halls; over 45 monuments and memorials as well as parks and gardens such as the St Kilda Botanical Gardens and Catani Gardens, St Kilda.

    - Employs of a number of professional staff trained in areas of Aboriginal heritage, heritage planning, heritage collection management, local history research and archiving.

    - Established the Urban History Consultative Committee, which provides advice to council on heritage issues.

    - Initiates heritage awareness-raising projects including the proposed Urban History Centre, Heritage Recognition Program and an Icon Study – see Appendix for further information.

    - Maintains the Port Phillip City Collection comprising over 5000 items including photographs, plans, maps, correspondence, ephemera that is used by residents, planners, architects, developers and estate agents to obtain heritage information.

    - Utilises the Cultural Development Fund to provide grants to support community-generated heritage projects such as publications requiring primary research on the built form, such as "*A Place of Sensuous Resort: Buildings of St Kilda and Their People*" by Richard Peterson and "*The Story of Excelsior Hall; Port Melbourne*", by Pat Grainger.

    - Commissions public art which builds on the histories of local residents. "Margins, Memories and Markers" is an example, which was developed in partnership with VicHealth's Art and Environment Scheme. It is explained at http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/marginsmemories_markers.html

13. The City of Port Phillip have entered into formal service agreements with the local historical societies, providing funding plus free accommodation to those groups to enable them to undertake valuable historical research and collection management, as well as run public programs which benefit the local community.

14. Managing funds and the competing objectives within government can be the cause of conflict for the conservation of public heritage places. Priority is often given to infrastructure works rather than heritage maintenance such as that required for memorials and monuments. External funding from a State or Federal level, possibly provided on a dollar for dollar basis, could enable this work to be considered separately from other competing projects and provide additional incentive to undertake this work.

The City of Port Phillip supports the inquiry into the policy framework and incentives for the conservation of Australia's historic built heritage places. Should the Commission have any queries or require any further information, this will be provided.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff Oulton
Acting Chief Executive Officer
City of Port Phillip

Examples of Port Phillip programs

1. Heritage Recognition Program

The primary aim of the Heritage Recognition Program (HRP) is to provide information about important historical sites that is not evident by being at those sites.

Policy context

The City of Port Phillip Cultural Vitality Pillar informs the policy and strategy for the Heritage Recognition Program.

http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/heritage_recognition_program.html

A potential site must adhere to all of the following criteria. It must:
- be recognised for its cultural or social significance to people of Port Phillip over a period of time
- be a site for which a heritage marker would offer significant information not otherwise evident unless the site was marked
- not already be identified by a plaque or sign giving historical information
- be an individual site (rather than an area or group of elements)
- have sufficient historical information available
- be publicly accessible
- contribute to an equal distribution of heritage marking across the City within the designated annual budget

St Kilda Cemetery

This is one of the oldest suburban cemeteries in Melbourne, having been laid out by Surveyor-General Robert Hoddle in 1851. Since the burial of ten year old Charlotte Green in 1855, over 55,000 people have been buried here. The cemetery holds the mortal remains of many eminent people including Sir Ferdinand von Mueller, Alfred Deakin and Albert Jacka V.C.

Address: Dandenong Road, East St Kilda

Postcard of front entrance to the St Kilda Cemetery, c1900-10. Port Phillip City Collection

2. Urban Icons

An *Urban Iconography Study*, 2002 has been undertaken of places within the City of Port Phillip and lists over 300 local icons that are valued, unique and characteristic of the City of Port Phillip and its neighbourhoods. Local people understand that the status, presence and significance of local icons provide a personal sense of security and connect them to a place's unique identity. In recognising this, the City of Port

Phillip is documenting local icons that are valued and give character to our neighbourhoods. These resources provide insight into the identity characteristics and lifestyle qualities that underpin and influence the overall urban character of each neighbourhood.

http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/urban_icons.html

3. Urban History Centre

Working with Sean Godsell Architects, plans are underfoot to transform the former Emerald Hill Post Office building in Bank Street, South Melbourne into an active Urban History Centre and refurbished library. The Centre will provide physical and virtual access to Council's important collection, and opportunities to share ideas, foster networks, and participate in documenting our local history.

The project has now moved to the next phase, which requires significant funds to be raised from sources external to Council before the design can be developed further. A fund-raising plan is currently being prepared to provide guidelines for this activity.

4. Collaboration with other government departments

St Kilda Pier Kiosk Interpretation panels are being prepared to complement the Kiosk reconstruction project in partnership with Parks Victoria who own that land.
http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/stkilda_pier_kiosk.html

St Kilda Pier Kiosk was destroyed by fire in September 2003. It was a familiar and well-loved landmark of St Kilda and Melbourne and residents, regular users and visitors have felt its loss. The 1904 building was of social, aesthetic and historical significance at a state and national level prior to its destruction. Both the building and its site are listed on the Victorian Heritage Register. The building was also designated as a significant building under the Port Phillip Planning Scheme. The tourism value of this place, as well as its historic significance, has resulted in the current reconstruction of the former St Kilda Pier Kiosk.