**NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT**
**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT & THE ARTS**

# SUBMISSION TO THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION ENQUIRY INTO THE CONSERVATION OF AUSTRALIA'S HISTORIC HERITAGE PLACES

**OCTOBER 2005**

## INTRODUCTION

This submission has been prepared by the Northern Territory Government's Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (NRETA). It presents an overview of heritage management in the Northern Territory, and also includes two attachments:

- Attachment A: a response to some of the key questions raised by the Commission
- Attachment B: Paper entitled "In Search of 'A Town Like Alice'"

Some clarification is required about the material being presented in this submission, and about a related submission being received by the Commission.

In the Northern Territory, there is no independent Heritage Council as there is in other jurisdictions in Australia. The Heritage Advisory Council (HAC), as the name suggests, acts in an advisory capacity to the relevant Minister.

It is not within the powers of the HAC to make a separate submission to the current Productivity Commission enquiry into heritage matters. However, the Minister for Natural Resources Environment and Heritage has noted the desire of the HAC to present a paper to the Enquiry entitled "In Search of 'A Town Like Alice'", and has agreed to forward this paper to the Commission as part of this submission (see attachment B).

The Commission would be aware of a separate submission being made by the Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand (HCOANZ). The NT Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts made a financial contribution to the preparation of this report and has had input into its preparation, as has the Chair of the HAC. It is agreed that the submission is likely to contain much that is useful to the Commission, and best efforts were made to ensure that the submission reflected the situation in the Northern Territory. However, neither NRETA nor the Minister are in a position to formally endorse the submission made by the HCOANZ, not least because it was not possible, given time constraints, to see a final copy of the report prior to its submission to the Commission.

## THE HERITAGE OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

It is often said that “the Territory is different”, and this is certainly true of the heritage in the Northern Territory and the way in which it is managed. It is essential that this point is grasped by the Commission, because what is true elsewhere may not be true of the Territory.

The Territory has a unique history. Its northern coast is on Asia’s doorstep, and this influence resonates throughout the history of the Territory. European settlement started late and grew slowly. Early settlements struggled. Buildings constructed by early European settlers were often, out of necessity, pieced together with whatever materials were available. Especially in the north, to suit the needs of the tropical climate, buildings were often of lightweight construction – steel, timber, and bamboo. Even as settlement became more established, there were few grand buildings constructed. Cyclones, war, the failure of many ventures, and the extremes of the environment have all taken a toll, and many early buildings have been lost as a result.

This helps to explain the passion with which many people in the Territory defend their built heritage today, even though to the eyes of a person from ‘down south’ it might seem scanty and in some ways unremarkable – not ‘real heritage’. The built heritage that the Territory community has inherited from the past is highly valued precisely because of its scarcity, and for the way it reflects the unique history of the Territory.

This simple picture of course belies a much richer story. Much discussion about heritage matters in Australia revolves around the built heritage that dates from after European Settlement. Anywhere in Australia, this is only part of the story. In the Territory, there is a particularly rich Aboriginal heritage that dates from prior to European arrival, which is still visible and still valued by contemporary Aboriginal people. There are also areas of natural significance of an amazing variety, ranging from the wetlands of the north to the deserts of the centre.

It is often the case in the Territory that these layers of significance overlap. It is recognised that the Commission is only dealing with built heritage, but the point is made that in the Territory the interaction with Aboriginal and natural heritage is in many cases unavoidable and in fact our heritage is the richer for it.

Another key factor is that the Territory is big – almost twice as big as New South Wales. Settlement is scattered and so are heritage places. There are heritage places in areas where settlement has now been abandoned (for example Arltunga, a former mining town), and in small towns without a significant economic base (for example Newcastle Waters). Transport infrastructure is limited, and the environment is always a limiting factor. There are places that can only be reached via a dirt road after driving hundreds of kilometres, and then only in the dry season. All this provides particular challenges for heritage management in the Territory.

## THE FRAMEWORK FOR HERITAGE MANAGEMENT IN THE TERRITORY

The key characteristic of heritage management in the Northern Territory is that it is highly centralized. This makes it different from the States. It is critical that the Commission appreciates this distinction and how it affects heritage management in the Territory.

For example, in NSW, cultural heritage places can be provided with statutory protection by being listed on the State Heritage Register (SHR), or as a heritage item under an Environmental Planning Instrument such as a Regional Environmental Plan (REP) or Local Environmental Plan (LEP). This divides the responsibility for heritage management and in fact devolves a great deal of responsibility to local government, which has responsibility for the vast bulk of listed places in NSW.

In the Northern Territory, the legal framework for heritage management is provided by the Northern Territory *Heritage Conservation Act* (1991), applicable across the Territory. Local Government has no role as, unlike other jurisdictions, it has no statutory responsibility for town planning.

The scope of the *Heritage Conservation Act* includes built heritage, other European cultural heritage, Aboriginal archaeological sites, and sites of natural significance.

The Act is similar in its basic construction to comparable State Acts. It establishes a Heritage Advisory Council and a Register of heritage places. The Act provides for the protection of registered heritage places by, for example, not allowing work to be carried out without approval.

However, the Heritage Advisory Council (HAC), as the name suggests, only offers advice to the Minister. The Act has a strong focus on the power of the responsible Minister. The Minister decides whether a place is declared as a heritage place under the Act. The Minister authorizes work to heritage places. The Minister may revoke the declaration of a heritage place, and authorize the demolition of a heritage place. All of these actions are subject only to the Minister taking into account the advice of the HAC.

The process of registering a place under the NT *Heritage Conservation Act* is reasonably involved and, in practice, time-consuming. It is broadly as follows:

- Any person may make an application to have a place declared to be a heritage place (s21);
- The Heritage Advisory Council (HAC) then assesses the application (s22);
- If the HAC decides to proceed with a ‘proposed recommendation’, it must notify the owner and place advertisements requesting comments from the public (s24);
- The HAC may then recommend to the Minister that a place be included in the Northern Territory Heritage Register (NTHR) as a heritage place; this recommendation must contain a ‘statement of heritage value’, a copy

of all comments received by the HAC in relation to the proposed recommendation, and “Council's suggestions, if any, on possible ways of resolving any conflict which may arise as the result of the proposed registration” (s24 & 25);

- The Minister must then, within 90 days, select one of the following options:

    (a) declare the place as a heritage place
    (b) refuse to make a declaration
    (c) refer the matter back to the HAC for further information.

This rather involved process is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, places only become declared after a thorough assessment process and after the owner has been given every opportunity to comment. It is rare for a place to be declared over the objections of the owner. This means that for declared heritage places, there is high degree of consensus about its importance and the need for it to be protected.

On the other hand, the process allows for long delays in processing nominations and this has its own problems. In a situation where there is no automatic protection provided to places that have been nominated to the NT Heritage Register, places can be at risk.

The current Government has recognized all of this. It has looked at the current Act and concluded that it is highly centralized; invests a great deal of power in the Minister; has a lengthy and rather complex procedure for registration of heritage places; and limited provision for interim protection of places under threat. All of these issues have been addressed in a review of the Act which commenced in 2002 and is now close to completion.

## GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT ON HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

It is understood that a primary focus of the Commission is on the rationale for Government intervention in heritage management, including questions about when and how government should intervene. These questions are dealt with in some detail in Attachment A. This section provides an overview of the way in which the Northern Territory Government manages the heritage of the Territory, with a particular focus on programs which directly contribute to the maintenance of heritage places and objects.

Day-to-day heritage management in the Territory is the responsibility of the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts.

NRETA ensures that the Northern Territory *Heritage Conservation Act* is administered effectively, and that the principal object of the Act is achieved -

that is to provide a system for the identification, assessment, recording, conservation and protection of heritage places and objects.

There are many functions fulfilled by NRETA in achieving this objective, including:

- supporting the Heritage Advisory Council
- provision of advice
- promoting heritage and encouraging good conservation practice
- overseeing the Heritage Incentives Program
- overseeing the Repairs and Maintenance Program for NT Government-owned heritage assets
- providing financial support to the National Trust

The section within NRETA that has responsibility for heritage management has an annual budget of approximately $2.6 Million.

The programs which provide the most direct support towards the maintenance of heritage places are the *Heritage Incentives Program* and the *Repairs and Maintenance Program for NT Government-owned Heritage Assets*.

The Heritage Incentives Program is aimed at the private owners of historic places and non-profit community groups. The main plank of this Program is the $200,000 p.a. provided under the NT Heritage Grants Program. The Grants program gives priority to physical conservation work on declared heritage places but can also provide assistance for research or documentation.

Other aspects of the Heritage Incentives Program are a rates rebates program, and the provision of free specialist conservation advice for the private owners of heritage places.

Under the rates rebates program, the owners of buildings used for residential purposes receive a rebate equal to 75% of the rates paid on the property. For buildings used for commercial purposes, the figure is 25%. Owners apply directly to NRETA and are paid the rebate on production of evidence that the rates have been paid. This costs government approximately $40,000 p.a.

Private owners of heritage places are also eligible to receive free specialist conservation advice from a qualified heritage architect in relation to proposed changes to their property.

The Repairs and Maintenance Program for Government-owned Heritage Assets is intended to ensure that heritage places owned by the Government are properly maintained and managed, and that the Government is seen to be leading by example in this area. This Program commenced in the 2004/05 financial year, and has a budget of $1 Million p.a.

NRETA also provides an operational subsidy to the National Trust of Australia (Northern Territory) of $114,000 p.a.

## ATTACHMENT A

- *What is the rationale for government involvement in historic heritage conservation and what principles should guide that involvement?*

At the most basic level the rationale for government involvement in historic heritage conservation in Australia is that it is the broad community's desire that our heritage places be protected and conserved. Heritage legislation (and government involvement) arose because of the failure, in the eyes of the broad community, of the private sector to adequately conserve the community's heritage. Legislation implemented by government was seen as the only viable alternative.

As an example, the NT *Heritage Conservation Act 1991* essentially arose as a result of community pressure following the demolition of several historic properties in Alice Springs.

- *What are the current pressures and emerging trends influencing the conservation of historic heritage places and, in light of these, how can the policy framework be improved?*

Increasing interest in sustainable practices and cultural heritage tourism provide opportunities (ie the right 'breeding ground') to encourage the retention, use and where appropriate adaptive re-use, of heritage places as part of a sustainable approach to the use of our resources.

- *Is there a need for a comprehensive survey of historic heritage places in Australia? If so, who should fund such a study and how would its findings be used?*

It would be important to be clear about the purpose of such a survey, and to ensure that the funding of such a survey was followed up by further funding to assist in the implementation of the survey findings, such as further detailed assessment of places, conservation work and management plans.

- *Are market failures present in the conservation of historic heritage places? If so, do they differ in significance or scope from those which may exist in other forms of conservation?*

If there were not market failures in the conservation of Australia's heritage government involvement would not be necessary. Government involvement is necessary in order to ensure the community as a whole can enjoy the benefits of conservation.

- *Does government involvement in heritage conservation displace private sector involvement which would otherwise occur? If so, to what extent?*

In the NT, Government involvement is not seen as displacing private sector involvement. It is clear that sometimes the private sector does not have the capacity or the commitment to the conservation of the Territory's heritage without government involvement.

However it should also be noted that government involvement may not always guarantee conservation, particularly where owners allow places to deteriorate through wilful neglect rather than accept offers of government assistance to conserve a place. This was the case with the former Wesleyan Church in Darwin. Following an unsuccessful attempt in the Courts to force the owners to undertake repairs and maintenance, the owners eventually agreed to allow the government to relocate the Church to government owned land. While the building has been restored and is now maintained in good condition its heritage values were compromised by the move.

- *What are the costs of government involvement in the conservation of historic heritage places and who bears them?*

As outlined in the main body of this submission, the direct cost to the NT Government of heritage management is about $2.6 million p.a.

- *Have these costs changed as a result of economic trends? For example, have pressures on government finances limited the amount of resources available for public heritage conservation?*

There is always pressure on government finances and limited resources available for heritage conservation, but the NT Government has shown an increased commitment to heritage conservation over the years, most recently by the allocation of $1.0 million per year for the repair and maintenance of Government owned heritage assets.

There is a tendency in some sectors to view heritage conservation as a luxury, to be funded in good economic times but something that could be done without during economic downturns. However the NT Government recognises the need to provide consistent levels of funding, and argues that spending on heritage conservation should be seen not only as an economic investment, but also a social investment, particularly in rural and regional areas. In many of these areas in the Territory a community's heritage assets represent one of the very few, and in some cases only, potential resource that may be utilised to contribute to economic development through avenues such as cultural heritage tourism.

- *How do these costs vary depending on the nature and extent of conservation?*

Conservation costs vary according to several factors including but not necessarily limited to:

- the location and size of the place being conserved (higher costs in remote areas);
- the nature of the work being undertaken (ie it may involve specialist tradespeople from interstate who charge accordingly or may involve use of special products or techniques);
- the time taken to complete the works; and
- availability of suitable tradespeople to undertake the works.

These costs can vary from a few thousand dollars to undertake some minor roofing repairs in an urban context, up to hundreds of thousands of dollars to undertake substantial repairs (eg roofing, re-rendering, re-pointing and limewashing) to masonry buildings in remote locations.

- *What are the benefits from government involvement in the conservation of heritage places and to whom do they accrue?*

The benefits of government involvement are that places are conserved that would not otherwise have been; government funding (in whole or part) of conservation works or other incentives benefits the owners, the users of a place, the tradespeople who were employed to undertake the work, which in turn means that the community benefits through these direct flow on and multiplier effects.

- *What are the benefits to tourism from heritage conservation, and what impact does heritage tourism have on the conservation of heritage places?*

Cultural tourism is a growing sector of the tourism market, and historic heritage places play a key role in developing additional destinations and building on existing market strategies. The impact of tourism on heritage places may be positive e.g. in that it may provide funds to ensure a place is continually maintained and/or restored, it allows people to experience their heritage or another culture, increases public awareness of our heritage etc. However not all heritage places are appropriate for tourism owing to their fragile nature or other reasons such as ownership by the private sector who do not wish the site to be accessible to visitors.

- *Do governments and public funding bodies use benefit-cost analysis in allocating funds between heritage conservation projects? Are any types of benefits or costs commonly omitted from these analyses? Are alternative approaches used, such as cost effectiveness?*

- *Can the benefits and costs of the conservation of heritage places be satisfactorily quantified to aid decision making?*

- *How should tangible costs (such as repair costs) be compared with intangible and diffuse benefits (such as educational benefits and 'sense of community belonging')?*

As noted in the Commission's discussion paper benefit-cost analyses of heritage conservation projects are problematic owing to difficulty in quantifying the nature of some of the benefits. The Heritage Advisory Council, when making recommendations to the Minister regarding the NT Heritage Grant Program, considers the following when assessing proposals received under that program:

- Whether the place or object is a declared heritage place or object registered on the Northern Territory Heritage Register; if not, whether it has been nominated to the Northern Territory Heritage Register;
- Whether the work is necessary;
- Whether the work is urgent;
- Whether there is a Conservation and Management Plan or Conservation Study in place;
- Whether the proposed work is of benefit to the heritage values of the place/object;
- Whether funding is available from other sources;
- What the applicant is contributing to the work;
- Whether the applicant has previously received funding through NTHGP;
- Whether the work is routine maintenance for which the owner should be responsible;
- Whether there is a tangible outcome (eg a research report, publication, repairs to a building, a conservation and management plan);
- The capacity of the applicant to complete the project successfully within a reasonable time frame (preferably within 12 months);
- Whether it is vital for all of the funds requested to be provided, or whether it is possible for a lesser amount to be given, whilst still producing an appropriate outcome;

Detailed studies overseas demonstrate the direct and multiplier effects of heritage conservation activities. However, there will always an 'x-factor' in terms of diffuse benefits such as contributing to a sense of community belonging, urban enhancement and quality of life.

- *What proportion of historic heritage places are owned by the private sector?*

- *What are the strengths and weaknesses of private ownership of historic heritage places?*

In the Territory, the private sector contributes to the conservation of historic heritage places through direct ownership of 50% of places on the NT Heritage Register (includes all places on the Register, not solely historic places). Of these places, 25% are currently occupied and maintained either for private use or as commercial premises. The majority of the remaining privately owned places are not suitable for occupation (eg old stock routes, cemeteries, historic trees).

Some of the strengths of private ownership are that owners can directly experience the positive benefits of 'heritage places', and then inform others of the experience. Maintenance and day-to-day management is largely borne by the owners rather than at taxpayers' expense. Changes in tenure (from individual owner to owner) can be both a strength and weakness, depending on the attitude of individuals to a particular heritage place.

- *Have shortages of skilled tradespeople acted as an impediment to historic heritage conservation? If so, to what extent do these shortages reflect economic cycles in the building industry?*

A shortage of skilled tradespeople is an impedient to historic heritage conservation in the Territory. It can also be difficult to get tradespeople to travel to remote communities, even to quote for the job, let alone actually do the work.

- *Are there specific issues for certain groups who own or manage historic properties?*

- *How do non-government organisations contribute to the conservation of historic heritage places?*

- *What are the strengths and weaknesses of the involvement of non-government organisations in historic heritage conservation?*

- *How do these organisations establish priorities for conservation, and measure and report on their activities and performance?*

- *What are the impediments to the conservation activities of volunteer organisations. For example, are there implications for conservation activities of an ageing volunteer community, and concerns about the health and safety and insurance of volunteer workers?*

As for private individuals, non-government organisations vary in their capacity (eg financial, relevant expertise) and commitment in terms of owning and/or managing historic properties. In the Territory many of these groups rely heavily on volunteers and require government funding, not only to meet their administrative and operational costs but also to undertake conservation works.

The benefits are that government agencies are not involved regarding the daily management of the properties and in many instances, occupation of the

buildings by these groups facilitates public access, and in turn appreciation, of the buildings and their heritage values. The Residency, Old Courthouse, Adelaide House, Hartley Street School in Alice Springs. In Darwin, parts of the Myilly Point Precinct, Qantas Hangar and Navy Victualling Yards are examples.

- *To what extent has the new heritage system reduced unnecessary duplication in heritage laws and processes between governments?*

- *Has the new national system reduced the level of community confusion over heritage laws and processes?*

- *Has it provided the overarching national policy framework which was sought by the Australian Government?*

It is suggested that the new heritage system has not reduced unnecessary duplication and perceived community confusion. It has arguably compounded the situation by creating two new lists (a National List and a Commonwealth List), without discarding the previous list, the Register of the National Estate, which is still used for reference purposes.

It remains to be seen whether the new system will provide the national policy framework sought by the Australian Government.

- *Does legislation in each state/Territory, and its implementation (for example, monitoring and enforcement), provide for efficient heritage conservation outcomes, and if not, why not? Are objectives clear, measurable and consistent with other legislation?*

- *How might the current, or recent, State/Territory reviews improve outcomes?*

- *Will recent changes to Australian Government legislation affect the way State and Territory legislation is implemented and outcomes for heritage conservation?*

The NT Government has recognised the deficiencies of the current *Heritage Conservation Act* and is taking steps to address the situation via a review of the Act and the introduction of a new Heritage Act.

It is not expected that the new Commonwealth heritage legislation will have a significant impact upon the way in which the Territory implements its legislation.

- *To what extent (if at all) are current heritage approaches that separate conservation of historic, indigenous and natural heritage places impeding conservation of historic heritage places?*

- *Are there conflicts between public policy in historic heritage conservation and in other forms of conservation (such as natural or indigenous heritage)? If so, how are these conflicts resolved?*

The Territory's heritage legislation provides protection for all these three categories of heritage and examples of all these types of places are listed on the NT Heritage Register. In some instances the heritage place includes both natural and cultural values, and physical features. For example, Anna's Reservoir Conservation Reserve includes a natural waterhole which played in vital role in Stuart's north-south crossing of the continent, and continues to play an important role in sustaining wildlife. It also contains the remains of historic buildings associated with the Barrow Creek Pastoral Company and Aboriginal stone artefacts associated with Aboriginal usage of the area. In terms of the conservation of these places, the principles and processes outlined in the Burra Charter remain relevant and it is not believed that the current approach towards heritage in the NT has impeded the conservation of historic heritage places.

- *Have the recent legislative changes by the Australian Government improved the administration of national lists and the overall conservation of historic heritage places?*

In terms of the overall conservation of historic heritage places it should be noted that since the demise of the National Estate Grant Program the contribution of the Commonwealth towards the Territory's heritage has substantially declined with the only real contribution in recent years being a grant in the order of $200,000 to Ntaria Council to undertake restoration works at Hermannsburg.

- *Should the potential costs of conservation be included in listing criteria to better target scarce government resources?*

The potential costs of conservation should not be included in listing criteria. This is contrary to the principles of the Australian ICOMOS Burra Charter.

- *How do existing lists link with other heritage conservation policies and programs, including funding?*

In the NT owners of declared heritage places and objects are entitled to benefits under the NT Heritage Incentives Program.

- *What are the listing criteria for State and Territory heritage registers?*

The criteria are specified in Regulation 5 of the NT *Heritage Conservation Act* 1991 which is available via www.nreta.nt.gov.au

- *How does inclusion on a State or Territory register protect historic heritage places?*

In the Territory, it is the declaration of a place/object that results in that place/object becoming protected and subject to the protective mechanisms of the *Heritage Conservation Act*.

- *Is there adequate opportunity for public input in the listing process? Are the review and reporting requirements adequate?*

As described earlier in this submission, the *Heritage Conservation Act* allows for ample opportunity for public input into the listing process under sections 24 and 25 of the Act.

- *Is there greater scope for adaptive reuse for publicly owned heritage places than for those in private ownership?*

The scope for adaptive re-use depends to some extent on the heritage value of the place rather than the nature of ownership. Some buildings may be more suited for adaptive re-use in terms of their heritage values than others. It is also recognised however that in terms of capacity of the private sector vs public sector to adaptively re-use both the financial capacity and commitment vary between organisations and individuals. For example, some individuals are highly committed to conserving heritage and adaptively re-using places, even at great personal time and expense whereas other individuals are not interested at all.

- *Does State ownership result in better conservation outcomes than private ownership? Is State/Territory ownership of these places necessary or could alternative arrangements be envisaged?*

- *Do State and Territory government agencies follow best practice, such as the use of performance indicators, and if not, how can management practises be improved?*

- *Are the agencies currently responsible for historic heritage conservation on State and Territory land the most appropriate?*

Performance indicators and outputs are used in relation to the Territory Government's Heritage Assets Maintenance Program but best practice is also achieved by ensuring that the works undertaken are done so in a manner consistent with the principles and processes of the *Burra Charter*, relevant legislation (including consent under the NT Heritage Conservation Act) and by using appropriately qualified and experienced personnel.

In the Territory historic heritage places are managed and controlled by different government agencies. These agencies are responsible for the day-to-day management of such sites, but advice and assistance are provided by staff from the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts. NRETA is responsible for the implementation of the Repairs and Maintenance Program for Government owned Heritage Assets, and works in close consultation with each controlling agency.

- *Does international experience offer any guidance to policies which might be effective in Australia?*

It appears that the success that is seen in some overseas jurisdictions regarding heritage conservation is the use of a strategic multi-pronged approach. Certainly some lessons can be learnt from this. It also seems to be the case that a 'critical mass' can be achieved through the use of these strategies, whereby ultimately heritage conservation becomes self-sustaining and the need for government involvement decreases. This seems unlikely in the near future in the Territory.

- *Have the criteria and priorities for funding been transparent and consistent, and what improvements could be made?*

In the NT all owners of heritage places and objects are advised of the NT Government's Heritage Incentives Program.

**In Search of 'A Town Like Alice':**
**Heritage, Economics, Sustainability and Tourism**

> *Heritage issues in country towns challenge the whole community. They raise fundamental questions about a town's economic viability, cultural independence, and image. They question accepted notions of progress. They often unearth latent anxieties about a town's future – and its past – and demand that they be addressed openly and urgently. The politics of a small community are intimate, inescapably personal and immediate…Yet, paradoxically, local heritage debates often centre on the desirability of involving outside, impersonal forces. The city – as a model of modernity, a source of power and money, and arbiter of the historic – looms large in the country town's negotiation with its heritage* (Griffiths 1991:142).

Griffith's opening paragraph in his 1991 paper regarding the attitudes of country towns towards their heritage could have been written specifically for Alice Springs. Donovan (1988:309) has stated that if local Alice Springs residents had been ambivalent about the changes associated with the post-war boom in the 1950s, an increasing number were opposed to the changes that occurred in the 1970s and early 1980s, particularly the 'refurbishing of the old Alice'. News media at the time proclaimed that Alice Springs was not going to remain as "a town like Alice" for much longer. This theme and the tensions between the old and new have continued until this day. It was evident when the Old Gaol was under threat from demolition: some people were adamantly opposed to its destruction whereas others thought it was an old eye-sore with unpleasant associations that should be demolished.

Currently a similar situation applies to the Rieff Building. Its detractors cite economic and aesthetic arguments and the perceived need for Alice Springs to be a 'progressive, modern' town. This group does not believe that Alice Springs has any 'real' heritage and that its 'outback character' has already been largely destroyed, particularly through the loss of Turner House and Marron's Newsagency[1], so why not make the town totally modern? Supporters for its retention look beyond superficial issues of appearance and cite the benefits of retaining and adaptively re-using heritage places and keeping what little is left of the "Town like Alice". The former view is part of a wider belief held by many that the Territory does not have any

heritage. Underlying this view appears to be a sense of embarrassment that our built heritage does not 'measure up' against that found interstate and a fundamental denial regarding the reality of the Territory's past: it is a humble heritage that reflects our true pioneering spirit and outback history, of making do with what was available in a harsh and remote environment. Territorians should be encouraged to feel proud of our heritage; it is after all, what visitors come to see. Heritage is an integral part of the Alice Springs landscape. The natural heritage (river and ranges) together with past events have shaped the town to what it is today. Heritage not only contributes to its current character it also underpins it and an understanding of the current urban landscape must consider its heritage.

There are many myths regarding heritage places. For example, claims that they can't be altered, redeveloped, that 'nothing can be done to them' and they cost too much, are common assumptions that underpin arguments against the retention of heritage places. Yet there are an increasing number of studies that clearly indicate that this not the case. There is also the view that conservation activities are a luxury, to be undertaken only when the economy is thriving and cut when faced with difficult budget choices. However studies overseas demonstrate that conservation activities can be a powerful economic engine (eg. Clarion Associates 2002, Clarion Associates of Colorado *et al* 2002:1, Childs, Greenstreet and Witt 1997:1, Gallagher 1999, Lennox and Revels 2003, The Texas Historical Commission *et al* 1999). For example, a study by Rutgers University Centre for Urban Policy Research found that as an economic force, it surpassed investment in new housing or commercial construction in New Jersey (cited in New Jersey Historic Trust 1998).

This paper explores the issues surrounding heritage, economics, sustainability and tourism. The first section examines the economics of heritage listing and particularly the impact upon property values. The second section builds on this theme and describes the relationship between heritage places, sustainability and adaptive re-use and economics. It argues that as an overall sustainability measure we should be using our heritage places. The third section of this paper examines the contribution of heritage towards tourism not only through individual places but also the collective contribution of historic sites to urban character, which in turns impact upon tourism. The recognition that heritage underpins tourism is one that has only recently been formally accepted by the Northern Territory Government

[1] Ironically it was the loss these two buildings and two houses in what is now the Heritage Precinct that

at the policy level although the practical reality has been recognised for years by those in the heritage industry and tourism operators.

**Economics and Heritage Listing**

McMillan (1997 cited in Hall 2000) enunciated several principles regarding heritage conservation including that the choice for heritage conservation has both a value and a cost, in the longer term viability means commercial rates of return, facilitation is productive while confrontation leads to little real progress in conservation, and reducing uncertainty, reduces time and costs and increases viability. It is therefore appropriate that this section of the study explores the economics of heritage listing and adaptive re-use of heritage places.

The view that heritage listing results in a decline in property value is often expressed but in many cases is not true. A range of factors combine to determine property value and heritage is but one. Interstate there is a trend towards recognising that heritage listing can actually increase the purchase price of a property because heritage listing is seen as conferring many benefits and opportunities such as provision of an authentic experience of the past, provision of a particular ambience for professional offices, and marketing opportunities based on a building's distinctive character that combine to give businesses the potential to stand out from the crowd. Additionally, many historic buildings were designed specifically to cope with the climate prior to electricity and air-conditioners, and thus are very energy efficient. As an added benefit the adaptive re-use of heritage places also contributes to sustainable use of the environment by 're-cycling' entire buildings (Balderstone 2004). These issues are discussed in further detail below following a review of the impact on heritage listing upon property values overseas and interstate. It should be noted that these studies vary in terms of their scope, level of understanding of heritage, property markets and valuation methodologies.

Overseas studies

A long-running study by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and English Heritage, the "Investment Performance of Listed Buildings" (RICS Foundation 2002), examined the performance of office buildings in the UK over the period 1980 – 2001 comparing heritage listed buildings constructed prior to 1945 and unlisted buildings constructed during different eras (pre 1945, 1945-1975, post-

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led to the introduction of the current NT *Heritage Conservation Act 1991.*

1975). The performance measures included both capital growth and rental income. The 1993 analysis revealed that:

- "the total annualised returns on the heritage listed buildings over the period were slightly higher for listed buildings [than for non-listed buildings], and;
- listed buildings…attracted just as much occupier demand as other categories, and…achieved rates of rental value growth which are as good as, or better than, those of other categories of offices".

The 1996 results were consistent with earlier outcomes, reporting that:

> Listed office buildings out-performed the office market generally, both in central London and across the whole of the UK, for the second consecutive year in 1995…[although they achieved] relatively poorer returns at the height of the recession in the early 1990s…Over the full fifteen year period [from 1980-1995] listed office buildings continue to show marginal out-performance.

A further update was undertaken in 2001 which found that listed offices in the UK had achieved higher total returns than unlisted offices for the fifth consecutive year. It also demonstrated that in the UK, listed offices outperformed unlisted offices over the last 21 years owing to faster rates of rental growth. Their only sustained period of under-performance was between 1990 and 1992 during the UK property crash. Listed offices in London achieved higher total returns over the last 21 years whilst outside of London they achieved identical returns (RICS Foundation 2002).

In the early 1990s a study was undertaken in the small city of Knoxville in the United States to examine the effect of heritage listing on property and resale values (Knoxville/Knox Country Metropolitan Planning Commission 1996). The focus of the study was three suburban areas, two of which were listed as heritage precincts whilst the third was not. These suburbs were similar in terms of locational advantages, age of building stock and residential demographics. The study concluded that over the period 1990-1994 property values increased far more quickly in the two heritage listed suburbs (36% and 157%) compared with the non-listed suburb (20%). Furthermore the owners who bought into the heritage-listed areas were positively influenced to do so by the existence of heritage listing, which was perceived as protection for their investment. Finally, heritage listing did not require owners to undertake more expensive repairs to their properties, when compared with non-listed properties.

Gale (1991) reviewed previous research examining the effect of heritage designation (listing) of residential neighbourhoods as historic districts across the US.

It was found that in many historic districts property values were higher or rose more rapidly than in other sections of the community or in the community overall. In contrast to these results, studies undertaken in Boston, New York and Washington DC found that there was no association between historic designation of districts and rising property values *per se* (Gale 1991).

The impact of heritage preservation on the economy of Virginia (USA) including job creation, tourism and property values was the focus of Rypkema's (1995) report, "Virginia's Economy and Historic Preservation". Three suburban areas were examined; Frederickstown, Richmond and Staunton. This study found that in Staunton residential properties in heritage listed areas appreciated by around 52-66% on average, during the period 1987-1995, compared to residential property in the rest of the city (average of 51%). Commercial property in heritage listed areas in Staunton also appreciated on average at a higher rate (28 – 256%, varying between the five heritage listed areas) over this time period than commercial property in non-heritage listed areas (average 25%). A similar pattern was evident in Frederickstown with residential properties in heritage listed areas appreciated in value by an average 674% compared to 410% elsewhere in the city (Rypkema 1995).

A range of studies conducted in South Carolina between 1995 and 1998 have found that local 'historic district' status increases house values. Local 'historic district' areas are subject to legislative control that ensures that any alterations or new construction is sympathetic to the existing buildings. In this way the historic appeal of the neighbourhood is retained, and, as the studies demonstrated, enhanced property values. For example in Beaufort, houses in the historic district sold for 21% more, all other factors being equal, than similar houses not in the historic district. In Greenville it was apparent that houses prices rose, on average, over 50% just a few years after the 'historic district' status came into effect. In six smaller town and cities across the state, local 'historic district' status had a positive impact upon house values: in Georgetown houses in the local historic district sold for 11% more than comparable non-district houses, while in Anderson, historic district houses sold for 36% more. These smaller communities typically have less active real estate markets than the larger towns and cities yet even in these situations, heritage status had a positive impact on residential property prices (State Historic Preservation Office 2000).

An examination of the assessed values of primarily residential property in 18 historic districts and 25 comparable non-historic districts throughout Florida, found

that there was no case where historic designation depressed the property values. Rather, in at least 15 cases, property in historic districts appreciated greater than comparable, targeted non-historic districts (Centre for Governmental Responsibility *et al* 2002:6-7). A study in Colorado also found that historic designation did not decrease property values (Clarion Associates of Colorado *et al* 2002:25) and similar results were obtained from a study on property values in different parts of Michigan (Clarion Associates 2002:8-11).

A study of four communities in Georgia found that all experienced increases in property values in historic areas that outstripped the increases in non-historic areas. For example, in Athens (Georgia) a study of seven suburbs found that during a 20 year period, the average assessed value of properties in historic districts increased by nearly 48% compared to only 34% for properties in non-designated districts (Clarion Associates of Colorado *et al* 2002:25; Morgan, Callahan, Hongisto and Stoddard 1997). Similar patterns were evident in the rural community of Tifton (Georgia) which has a population of 15,000 and serves as a regional centre for the surrounding area. Between 1983 – 1996 locally designated historic areas experienced an average increase of 10.73% compared to an average of 9.39% for non-designated areas. Within the downtown area, which is listed both locally and nationally, property values grew at an even higher rate of 13.04% (Morgan *et al* 1997).

Similarly, an Indiana study on districts varying in size and location demonstrated that property values in historic districts either mirrored or surpassed the appreciation of properties throughout the community generally (Rypkema 1997 cited in Clarion Associates of Colorado *et al* 2002:25). A Texas study across nine different cities and towns found that generally historic designation was associated with average property value increases ranging between 5-20% of the total property value (Leichenko, Coulson and Listokin 2001:1984). In New York for the period 1975 – 2002 properties in historic districts increased in price at a slightly greater rate than properties not in historic districts and for every year during that period the market values of properties in historic districts were higher than those outside of these districts (Treffeisen 2003).

Shipley (2000) studied the sale price history for 208 heritage houses in Ontario, Canada, for the period 1976-1997 compared to the average house price for a comparable area. For 74% of the heritage listed properties, the sale price increase

over this period was at par or better than the average sale price. The rate of sale amongst listed properties were also found to be at par or better than the prevailing market rate. It should be noted that whilst Shipley (2000) did not control for differences in house and location attributes and the results therefore cannot be unequivocally attributed to differences in the heritage status of the houses, the data is nevertheless strongly suggestive that heritage listing has either little impact on housing prices or else is a positive factor in determining price.

On the basis of the studies referred to above and those summarised in Table 1 below it appears that across the US the impact of historic designation is more likely than not to have no influence or a positive influence on property values.

Table 1. Summary results of previous empirical studies regarding the impact of historic designation on property values/sale prices in the United States (after Leichenko *et al* 2001:1976).

| Location | Method | Impact on property values | Study |
|---|---|---|---|
| New York City | Difference-on-difference | Neutral | Heudorfer (1975) |
| New York City | Difference-on-difference | Neutral | New York Landmarks Conservancy (1977) |
| Alexandria (Virginia) | Difference-on-difference | Positive | Scribner (1976) |
| Washington DC | Difference-on-difference | Positive | Rackham (1977) |
| Washington DC | Difference-on-difference | Neutral | Samuels (1981) |
| Washington DC | Difference-on-difference | Neutral | Gale (1991) |
| Alexandria (Virginia) Galveston(Texas) Savannah (Georgia) Seattle (Washington) | Difference-on-difference | Positive | US Advisory Panel on Historic Preservation (1979) |
| Abilene (Texas) | Hedonic | Positive | Coulson and Leichenko (2001) |
| Abilene, Dallas, Fort Worth, Lubbock, Grapevine, Laredo, Nacogdoches, San Antonio, San Marcos (Texas) | Hedonic | Neutral or Positive | Leichenko et al (2001) |
| Baltimore (MD) | Hedonic | Positive | Ford (1989) |
| Chicago (Illinois) | Hedonic | Mixed | Schaeffer and Millerick (1991) |
| Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) | Hedonic | Positive | Asabere and Huffman (1994a) |
| Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) | Hedonic | Negative | Asabere and Huffman (1994b) |
| Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) | Hedonic | Negative | Asabere et al (1994) |
| Sacramento (California) | Hedonic | Positive | Clark and Herrin (1997) |

Interstate

A number of studies have been undertaken interstate over the last two decades and these are briefly outlined below. Most of these studies have been undertaken in Victoria.

One such study explored the effects of heritage listing on property value by examining sales evidence for 300 properties in Melbourne and non-metropolitan Victoria during the period 1986-1989. Both short term and long term effects of listing were examined. As evident in the overseas studies described above, the results of this investigation clearly demonstrated that the effect of heritage listing properties is not always negative and that generally there is not any diminution in value. The evidence suggested that in many cases there was a benefit and more specifically, listed residential properties appreciated by an average of 81% compared to 34% for non-listed buildings (Darcy 1991).

The Victorian town of Maldon is renowned for its heritage and was the subject of a study that examined the effect of heritage-related planning controls on property values, and on local government rate revenue over the period 1970-1990[2] (Countrywide Valuers with Budge 1992). The key findings of this study were:

- The strict heritage and planning controls had no adverse effects on Maldon property values. Rather these controls had protected the town and attracted both visitors and property buyers to the town,
- The value of heritage listed residential buildings appreciated 1844% over the 20 year period, compared to 1432% for other residential buildings,
- Demand for heritage houses was greater than for other residential property with shorter sale periods and greater buyer interest, and
- Maldon property values were stronger than most towns in the region. In 1990 Maldon had the second highest average sale price, after Yanckandanda. The townships that have significant stocks of heritage buildings and strict heritage controls (Maldon, Yanckandanda, Clunes and Beechworth) have higher property values that the four townships in the region with minimal heritage controls (Avoca, Dunolly, Heathcote and Newstead).

The impact of heritage controls on property prices in four conservation areas in Sydney was the subject of a study by Penfold (1994 cited in Deodhar 2004).

[2] Note this period spans the introduction of heritage controls.

Between 1982 and 1989 heritage controls came into effect in areas of Ashfield, North Sydney, Waverly and Burwood councils. For each conservation area a control area, which was not heritage listed but contained similar subdivision layouts, architecture, density, topography and views, was identified. The average sale price for between 11-38 houses for each area was compared for the three year period prior to listing and three year period after listing. The results indicated that in two of the conservation areas, Burwood and Ashfield, heritage listing appeared to have had a favourable impact on prices and little impact in the North Sydney and Waverly areas.

The Geelong property market was the focus of a study titled "The Implications of heritage listing on property valuations: a case study of residential development in Geelong" (Krastins 1997), that examined sales evidence for 100 properties over a 12 year period. In addition to examining the Geelong property market in general the study also surveyed real estate agents. The three main conclusions were:

- The value of buildings with heritage controls appreciated by 19.5% over the 12 year period, compared to 6.5% in the control group of non-heritage listed buildings,
- Other factors that influence property value such as street width, location and off street parking have a major impact on property value, and
- Real estate agents interviewed did not view heritage controls as a negative factor when buyers considered purchasing.

State and Commonwealth heritage agencies commissioned a study into the economic effects of heritage listing in the mid 1990s (Urban Consulting Group 1995). The results of this study suggested that listing had little impact on residential property values and that other factors such as location, amenity, level of ethnicity and crime had a greater influence upon property values. It also found that the level of impact depended on a number of other factors such as the nature of the building and its uses, feasibility of alternative uses etc and as such, varied from building to building (Urban Consulting Group 1995:131). Overall the heritage character and unique qualities of historic properties were generally seen as a positive attribute for use in marketing campaigns by developers and estate agents (Urban Consulting Group 1995:1).

A further study on the above subject was completed in 2001, which focussed primarily on large-scale commercial properties in Sydney (Abelson and Dominy

2001:175). One of the study's findings was that the combination of financial incentives and commercially-orientated nature of the adaptive re-uses outweighed any extra heritage-related costs and project risks, resulting in positive economic outcomes. They also found that favourable market conditions for development were essential pre-requisites for economic success, regardless of whether a property was heritage-listed or not. Heritage considerations came into play only after these pre-requisites had been satisfied (Abelson and Dominy 2001:175, NSW Heritage Office 2002:7).

Elsewhere in Sydney, it is clear that sectors of the housing market do value heritage and are willing to pay a higher premium. For example, a recent study by Deodhar (2004) examined the market price differential between heritage listed and unlisted houses in Kur-ring-gai and also the relationship between market price and level of heritage significance of the property. After controlling for differences in relation to structural, location and environmental attributes, the results showed that heritage listed properties enjoyed a premium of 12% on average, reflecting the combined value that the market places on their heritage character, architectural style elements and heritage listed status (Deodhar 2004:28). The study also found that the market distinguished between levels of significance with higher premiums for houses considered to have a high level of heritage value. Deodhar (2004:29) has speculated that Ku-ring-gai Council's planning policies, which generally favour low density housing, may have contributed to the observed positive price differential by creating favourable conditions for the conservation of heritage properties.

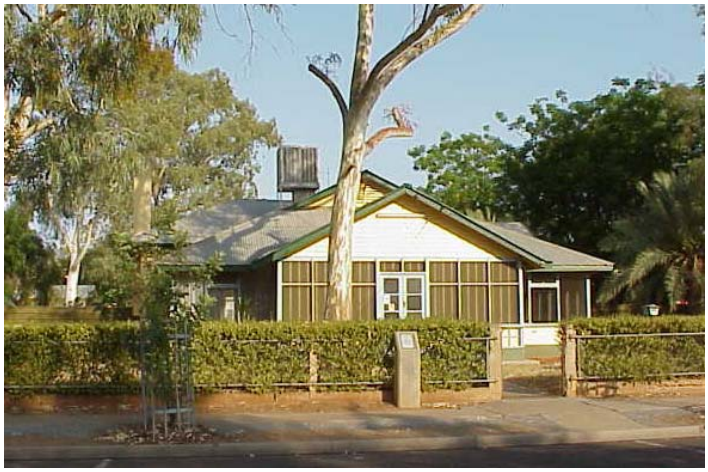
In contrast to the above research the Herron Todd White report (1999) has been cited by some individual property owners in WA, who, unaware of its flaws, have used it to outline the perceived negative impacts of heritage listing (M. Betham, personal communication 2001). The primary flaw in this report is that it presents the author's own personal views without supporting quantitative evidence, a point conceded by the author himself in the report. The report is also out of step with other studies on this subject conducted in Australia and overseas, some of which have been described above.

With the exception of the Herron Todd White report, the collective results of these studies all indicate that in the medium – long term heritage listed property is a better investment than the non-heritage equivalents. They also indicate that

generally, while factors other than heritage play a key role in the investment success or failure, the additional heritage status of a property can be a critical, positive factor.

Northern Territory

It could be argued that the unique circumstances of the NT in relation to our small population, remoteness of urban centres and other factors are such that studies regarding the economic impact of heritage listing elsewhere are irrelevant. Although a systematic study of the NT situation has not been undertaken, anecdotal evidence suggests that heritage properties in the Territory can also provide a significant investment return. For example, two of the Railway Cottages in Alice Springs were sold in 2000 with purchase prices representing a 60-85% increase on the initial purchase price in 1997. More recently in late 2003 a property in the Alice Springs Heritage Precinct, 84 Hartley Street (Plate 1), was sold at auction for $400,000. This represents an increase of 308% on its purchase price in 1992.



84 Hartley Street, Alice Springs Heritage Precinct.

Figure 1 below shows the sale prices of those properties in the Alice Springs Heritage Precinct that were bought and sold both before and after declaration of the Precinct as a heritage place in June 1993[2]. If heritage declaration (listing) has a negative influence on sale price it is reasonable to expect that sale prices would drop after declaration. This is not the case and on the strength of this data it would appear that heritage declaration of all these properties as part of the Heritage Precinct has no impact, or alternatively a positive impact upon the sale price.

[2] Note that there are no similar properties in Alice Springs in terms of size, design, age or proximity to the CBD that are not heritage listed with which sale prices or property values can be compared.

The Railway Cottages (Plate 2) were declared as a heritage place in 1993. Figure 2 shows the sale prices of individual Railway Cottages sold since 1997, when they first came into private ownership from the Commonwealth. Clearly, the heritage declaration has not hindered the sale of these properties.

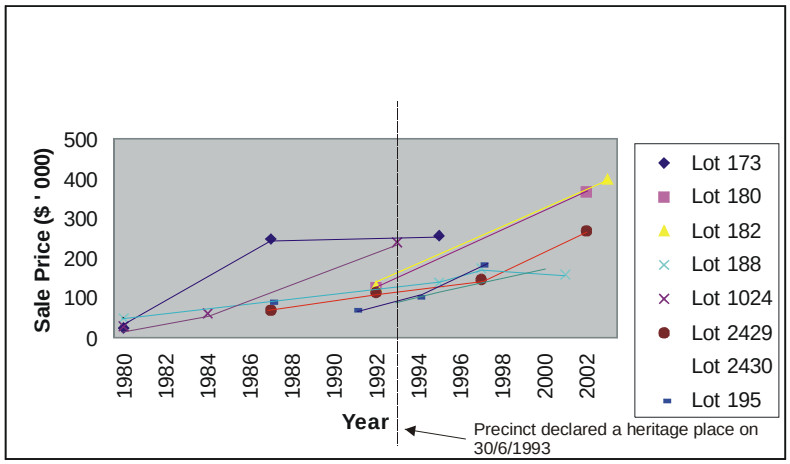



Figure 1. Line diagram illustrating sale prices for selected properties in the Alice Springs Heritage Precinct for the period 1980 – 2003 (ie before and after declaration of the Heritage Precinct in 1993).

The Railway Cottages (Lots 7733-7736) along Railway Terrace, Alice Springs.

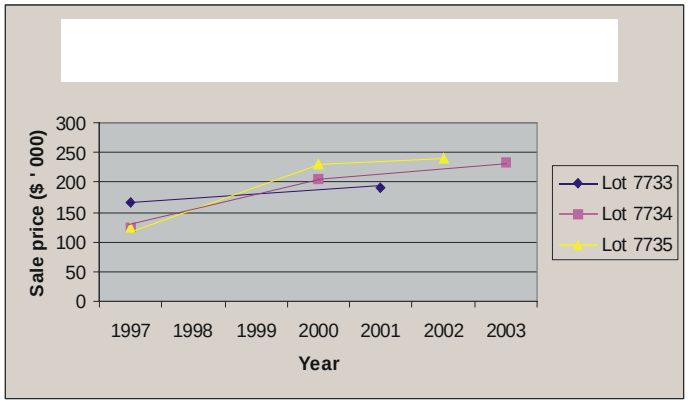



Figure 2. Line diagram illustrating sale prices of individual Railway Cottages sold since 1997.

It was noted in the introduction to this section that the methodologies employed in these studies varied. Whilst some studies controlled for differences such as house size, location and other factors, others did not. Critics may point to these methodological differences and claim that these studies are therefore invalid or have little meaning. It must be reiterated that some of these studies both overseas and interstate *did* control for these other factors and the results of these studies (eg Deodhar 2004, Krastins 1997, Knoxville/Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission 1996, Penfold 1994, Treffeisen 2003) also show that heritage declaration has little or else a positive impact upon property values.

The economic impact of retaining our heritage places is not solely limited to the impact upon property values and individual owners or developers. A cost-benefit consideration of the retention our heritage places must also consider adaptive re-use potential and sustainability issues together with the flow-on effects to the wider community that also results from heritage conservation activities.

**Heritage, sustainability and adaptive re-use**

> In 1963 John Summerson wrote:
>
> *Like divorced wives [old buildings] cost money to maintain. They are often dreadfully in the way. And the protection of one may exact as much sacrifice from the community as the preservation of a thousand pictures, books or musical scores. In their case only, we are brought face to face with decisions on values. And these values are complicated* (Summerson 1963:221, cited in Drolet, Gersovitz and Fortin 1997:5).

Whilst this comment is in some respects dated, the underlying point of the statement remains relevant – that the key to making decisions regarding the conservation of heritage places lies in understanding their values. Today, with the growing emphasis on cultural heritage tourism, the perceived sacrifice that may be exacted from the community [or developer] through loss of development can be 'recovered' through the marketing and promotion of the adaptive re-use of heritage places and incorporation into a tourism strategy based on selling the town's character, which will ultimately benefit a much greater sector of the community (Drolet *et al* 1997). Overseas studies such as that undertaken in Colorado and Virginia are finding that conservation or 'historic preservation' activities can be an effective contribution towards driving economic development in rural areas that also preserves the small

town quality of life (Clarion Associates of Colorado *et al* 2002:32). In the case of the Mosby Heritage Area which covers part of rural Virginia, preservation and associated activities such as heritage tourism, main street programs and the like, are regarded as a key component of the region's economic growth: "We believe the preservation of our past is critical not only to our sense of place and high quality of life, but also to our region's economic health" (Gallagher 1999:13). As Rypkema (2000:2) has stated:

> …historic preservation does much more than just enhance our quality of life. It also contributes hundreds of millions of dollars annually to New York's economy. Tourism, construction, housing, transportation, films, arts and culture, education, community development – they all create jobs, generate taxes, enhance property values, and add to household incomes. In New York, historic preservation is central to each of these industries.

Effective adaptive re-use of heritage places can provide a number of benefits and opportunities, for example the re-use or re-cycling of buildings or the use of unique buildings which can be used as a marketing and promotional tool, there may be lower operating costs after initial 'catch-up' works with lower maintenance costs and energy consumption, as indicated by the studies described below. Often heritage places can provide an attractive working environment beneficial to employees and clients alike. They can also provide a link between the business and the local community in that heritage places attract attention and conservation activity often attracts community support (Fisher 1998). The benefits of individual conservation projects often spread to the surrounding area; downtown historic preservation is an efficient use of existing resources and is good for property values (Clarion Associates 2002, Clarion Associations of Colorado *et al* 2002:21-22). There may be employment and business opportunities as direct and indirect employment may result, eg through tourism related business. Another benefit is the status and recognition that accrues as the place is 'rediscovered' and becomes known and valued in the community (Fisher 1998). Specific examples of these benefits are described in more detail below.

Within Australia the adaptive/compatible re-use of heritage places has been recognised at a national level as an integral part of ensuring the sustainability not only of our cities and urban areas but regional centres as well (Department of Environment and Heritage 2004a:2). The re-use of existing buildings contributes to sustainability by reducing the amount of waste, energy and material costs associated

with new buildings. Long-term community benefits associated with retaining and re-using heritage buildings include adding to the character and quality of living in our cities and towns. In recent years heritage has merged with more general environmental and quality of life concerns (Department of Environment and Heritage 2004a:3, Alexander 1999, Clarion Associates of Colorado *et al* 2002, Samuels 2000). As Rypekema (1996) has stated:

> Historic buildings are an important element in most communities "quality of life" criteria because it is those "buildings" that provide a sense of belonging, a sense of ownership, a sense of evolution – that sense of community that sustainable economic growth requires.

In the Territory this is broadly reflected at government policy level evidenced by the inclusion of heritage with environment into platforms/policies regarding maintenance of a quality lifestyle for Territorians and more recently has been recognised as a keystone for the development of tourism in the NT. However it is arguable whether such connections are truly understood within certain levels and areas of government and within the broader community generally, therefore these connections are described below.

The argument that there are environmental gains to be achieved through the maintenance and conservation of heritage buildings has been recently examined by Balderstone (2004). She cites a number of studies that have suggested that upgrading or recycling heritage buildings is an energy efficient option. Claims that the costs of maintaining and occupying older buildings results in overall energy inefficiency have not been supported by research conducted on behalf on English Heritage in 2003. Using a life-cycle costing approach the study compared three similarly sized properties of differing ages in the Manchester district, projecting maintenance costs over a 100-year period. The results showed that the Victorian house was the most economical and that overall maintenance costs, when compared with the Victorian house, increased by 17.5% for the inter-war house and by 18.4%for the 1980s house (Balderstone 2004).

Encouraging adaptive/compatible re-use can result in substantial economic benefits, not only for owners of heritage places but the wider community. For example, one case study that has examined the comparative returns for owners of heritage buildings versus modern buildings from an investment perspective is the 1994 *Fitout of a modern building vs conservation of a heritage building: comparative*

*cost evaluation* (Thomas 1994). This report, written by a valuer, arrives at the following conclusion:

> Market evidence and cost analysis suggest that there is a marginal advantage in building a modern office block compared to recycling a heritage building in the short term, but…as a long term investment, recycling heritage buildings can be advantageous. Heritage buildings tend not to age as quickly and require ongoing general maintenance compared to their modern counterpart, that requires expensive upfront refurbishment every fifteen years or so to compete in a competitive modern accommodation market. Cosmetic refurbishment of buildings…compounds problems in the future in regard to structural fabric and diminishing returns…[Conversely] most quality refurbishment in heritage buildings will not date as quickly as their modern counterpart, which is susceptible to market fads.

In a similar vein, an economic evaluation of the $16 million Victorian Government Heritage Restoration Program that took place between 1994 - 1998 identified several benefits of heritage restoration of government-owned buildings. Restoration works were the catalyst for economic development, extension of economic use and the attraction of increased visitation and patronage. Additional benefits included savings in providing alternative accommodation, improved working environment, reduced transportation costs and benefits to the regional economy. Furthermore the program encouraged pride from Department staff housed in each restored building and demonstrated to the wider community what could be achieved which in turn led to a higher priority for heritage conservation. It also resulted in the adaptive re-uses of many buildings and encouraged Department staff to consider alterative uses for redundant buildings which could then be 'shown off' to the public, rather than demolished or relocated (Cotterill and Nohel 2000:119-129). Such benefits are not limited to publicly-owned heritage places.

Overseas studies strongly suggest that investment into heritage assets makes good economic sense. In a survey of economic development tools in more than 300 cities in the US, historic preservation was cited as the seventh (of 45) most often used revitalisation strategy (Douthat 1994 cited in Listokin, Listokin and Lahr 1998:1). A wide-ranging investigation into the direct and multiplier effects from investment in historic preservation throughout Florida including from activities such as restoration of all types of properties, heritage tourism, Main Street investment, grants programs, tax credits and museum operations was undertaken in 2000 and

found that the total impact was an annual $4.2 billion (refer Table 2) (Centre for Governmental Responsibility *et al* 2002). Not surprisingly the Florida Secretary of State has acknowledged the importance of investing in Florida's heritage which has paid huge dividends (Centre for Governmental Responsibility *et al* 2002).

Table 2. Florida Benefits of the $4.2 billion direct annual investment into heritage related activities, based on multipliers (data from Centre for Governmental Responsibility *et al* 2002:7)

| | |
|---|---|
| Jobs | 123, 242 |
| Income | $2.766 billion |
| Gross state product | $5.266 billion |
| Total Taxes | $1.254 billion |
| State and local taxes | $657 million |
| In-state wealth | $4.672 billion |

Additional findings of this investigation are summarised below:

- More than 123,000 jobs were generated from historic preservation activities in 2000, the key areas of job creation being the manufacturing, retail trade, services and construction sectors;
- More than $657 million in state and local taxes were generated from spending on historic preservation activities in 2000;
- Tourists who visited historic sites in Florida spent more than $3.7 billion;
- A state investment of $212.1 million into 2751 preservation grant projects since 1983 is more than doubled by leveraged public and private funds;
- A dollar directed towards the Main Street program shows a tenfold return;
- Historic preservation helps maintain property values.

In 2000 the 'rehabilitation' (restoration and adaptive re-use) of historic properties (residential and non-residential) in Florida accounted for an estimated $350 million in spending which in turn created 10,443 jobs; generated $317 million in income, $496 million in gross state product, $111 million in taxes and $446 million in in-state wealth (Centre for Governmental Responsibility *et al* 2002:9).

A similar situation was found to be the case in Colorado as a result of a study which focussed on preservation activities as an economic driver, and particularly the impact of rehabilitation of historic structures, heritage tourism, historic designation (listing), and relationship between listing and property values. Since 1981 the $676.2 million in direct rehabilitation expenditures has generated an additional $865.5 million in indirect rehabilitation expenditures within Colorado, for a total of $1.5 billion in overall economic impacts (Clarion Associates of Colorado *et al* 2002:12).

Furthermore in terms of job creation, rehabilitation of historic buildings created nearly three times as many jobs as mining for petroleum and natural gas, and substantially more jobs than the banking, IT and trucking sectors[3] (Clarion Associates of Colorado *et al* 2002:13). Similarly, in Michigan the conservation of historic buildings created more new jobs that the IT, trucking and most manufacturing areas (Table 3, Clarion Associates 2002:7). In Philadelphia, every million dollars spent on rehabilitating an older building created two extra jobs than with the same amount spent on new construction (Rypkema and Wiehagen 1998), whilst in New York the same investment in preservation works created five more construction jobs and three more permanent jobs than the same amount invested in new construction (Rypkema 2000:10).

Table 3. Number of new jobs created for different sectors compared to conservation activities (per $ 1 million of direct impact) (from Clarion Associates 2002:7).

| Sector | No. of new jobs created |
|---|---|
| Hospitals | 26 |
| Rehabilitating buildings | 25 |
| Computer and data processing | 23 |
| Trucking | 22 |
| Manufacturing motor vehicle parts and accessories | 17 |
| Manufacturing farm machinery and equipment | 16 |
| Manufacturing chemicals | 14 |

In 1994 the state of New Jersey spent $123 million on historic rehabilitation (conservation) throughout the state. The economic impacts from this expenditure included 4,607 new jobs; $156 million in income; $207 million in GDP and $65 million in taxes. The state retained about half of these benefits, capturing $93 million in in-state wealth (New Jersey Historic Trust *et al* 1997:9). In Michigan historic conservation activities since 1971 have created 20,252 jobs and generated a total of $1.7 billion in direct and indirect economic impacts (Clarion Associates 2002: 6-7). Historic building rehabilitation in Missouri generates $249 million in income for residents of that state, around 8,000 jobs and produces $292 million in in-state wealth. Total tax revenues of $70 million are generated by the annual historic rehabilitation activity, including $30 million in state and local tax revenues (Centre for Urban Policy Research 2001:10). Between 1992 and 1996 rehabilitation of historic properties[4] in Georgia created 7,550 jobs, $201 million in earnings and $559 million in total economic impact (Leithe and Tigue 1999). Preservation activities in Texas generate more than $1.4 billion of economic activity each year and support nearly

[3] Conservation work on historic buildings is usually more labour intensive than other construction activity.
[4] These figures only refer to projects participating in federal and state programs

41,000 jobs (The Texas Historical Commission *et al*. 1999:1). Consistent with these studies, historic preservation activities are also recognised as an important economic force in South Carolina (Lennox and Revels 2003:2).

In addition to the provision of direct funds other incentives can also leverage significant private investment. An analysis of the £36 million invested by English Heritage in the Conservation Area Partnership Schemes (CAPS) established between 1994 and 1999, indicated that £10,000 invested by English Heritage levered £48,000 funding from the private sector and other public sources (Pickard and Pickerill 2002:57). In Germany, a total of DM3.27 billion in public funding was made available between 1991 and 1997 and by the end of this period about 4750 buildings had been conserved in 123 historic towns, 7000 residential, commercial, public and church buildings had been renovated and 835 roads and open spaces had been repaired and restored. The overall ratio of public funding to private investment was in the order of 1:9 (Pickard and Pickerill 2002:57).

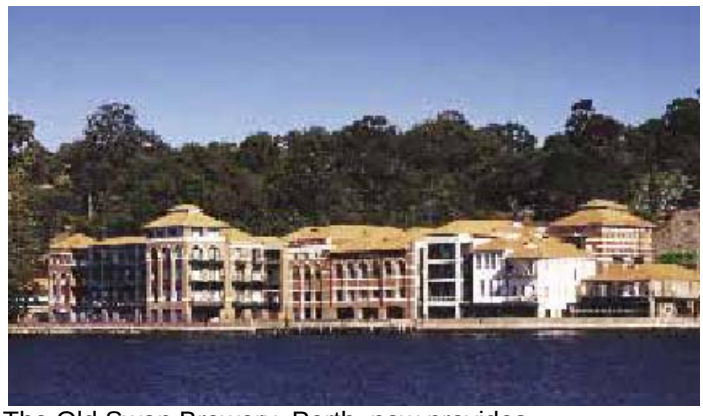
The United States introduced federal tax incentives as early as 1976 in order to promote the preservation through "rehabilitation" of income-producing properties. Income-producing buildings on the National Register and local historic districts were eligible for tax credits. Since the scheme was introduced more than 26,000 buildings have been rehabilitated, representing more than 13% of the total number of current eligible incoming-producing properties in the US. The economic benefits of the scheme have generated a private investment of more than US$20 billion. The tax credits have been used to develop over 30,000 affordable housing units for residents in older communities and in 1997 alone, 6,239 housing units were created (Fisher 1998:8). The application of the federal historic rehabilitation tax credit in Philadelphia alone between 1978-1998 resulted in about $1.5 billion of private sector investment in the rehabilitation of 874 historic properties and directly created 25,090 jobs (Pickard and Pickerill 2002:51).

A number of European Union members such as Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany and the Netherlands operate similar regimes to encourage historic conservation combining grant aid, tax incentives and income/corporation tax relief. The UK and Ireland are also moving towards US styled tax incentives (Pickard and Pickerill 2002:52-53). As these studies and others referred to elsewhere in this paper clearly demonstrate, there is no doubt that overseas, public investment in built heritage can have a significant economic and social impact. These studies and other

examples, including those incentives operating elsewhere in Australia have been summarised by the National Incentives Taskforce for the Environment Protection and Heritage Council (2004). Despite such incentives, one of the main challenges that remains today in the US (and elsewhere) is the bias held by many that wholesale replacement of old with new, including demolition of older buildings in order to construct new, is preferable (Fisher 1998).

A similar situation is found in the NT including Alice Springs. Although incentives are available, although not on as lavish a scale as in the US, there is still the view that 'newer is better and easier'. As concern with the natural environment, recycling and sustainability grows however, people should extend their thinking to include the recycling of buildings (Fisher 1998). Heritage property should be seen as an asset, not merely a source of maintenance liabilities. There are many cases both interstate and in the Territory where declared heritage places have been successfully adapted to new uses.

Examples of adaptive re-use elsewhere in Australia include the Spotswood Pumping Station as part of the science and technology section of the Museum of Victoria, Ultimo Power Station, old Treasury Building in Sydney (now the Hotel Intercontinental), and the Jam Factory in Melbourne's Chapel Street (converted to retailing). In Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Fremantle a large number of industrial structures such as warehouses have been turned into up-market luxury apartments.



The Old Swan Brewery, Perth, now provides luxury apartment accommodation and a restaurant.

In the last five years or so a host of former office and commercial buildings, warehouses and factories in the Melbourne CBD have been converted and adaptively re-used to provide inner city accommodation ranging from luxurious apartments to medium-priced multi-storey apartments, studio and warehouse lofts, student accommodation and service apartments (Hansen 2000:165). Other interstate examples are found in the 2004 publication regarding adaptive re-uses of heritage places prepared by the Commonwealth in conjunction with State and Territory jurisdictions (Department of Environment and Heritage 2004b).

Within the Territory there are many examples of heritage places being adaptively re-used such as Pee Wee's camp at East Point, Brown's Mart in Darwin city and Springvale Homestead. Even ruins such as the Town Hall Ruins and cemeteries like Elsey Memorial Cemetery continue to be used, visited and appreciated by the wider community. Table 4 lists those places in Alice Springs that have been adaptively re-used.

Table 4. List of heritage places in Alice Springs that have been adaptively re-used.

| Place and previous use | Current Use |
|---|---|
| Director's Residence, Royal Flying Doctor Service | Café and shop |
| Adelaide House (initially a hospital and hostel) | Museum and offices |
| Connellan Hangar | Museum |
| 9AAOD Camp (WWII Hut, residence and welding workshop) | Studio/gallery as part of cafe |
| Railway Cottages (residences) | Office suites and residences |
| Heavitree Gap Police Station | Residence |
| Hartley Street School | Office suites |
| CWA Rooms | Café/restaurant |
| Old Courthouse | Museum and offices |
| Old Lutheran Church | Meeting and storage space |
| The Residency | Museum and offices |
| Old Catholic Church | Offices |
| Heenan Building | Offices and gallery |
| Former Tuncks Store (Hertz Renta- car) | Offices |
| Lot 179 (part of Alice Springs Heritage Precinct) | Restaurant |
| Lots 173, 174, 182, 183, 185, 186 (part of Alice Springs Heritage Precinct) | Offices |

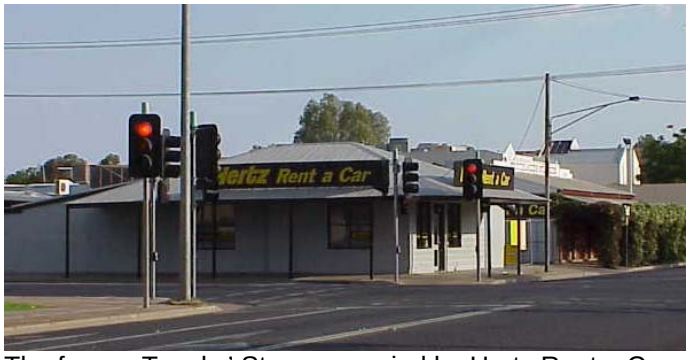
Director's Residence, Royal Flying Doctor Service, Alice Springs.

In Alice Springs the Royal Flying Doctor Service is an example where a service, tourism and business have combined making the most of their location in a historic building in the Heritage Precinct. The Railway Cottages are a prime example of part of the town's heritage that had been largely forgotten and ignored until they were restored and re-used. Adaptive re-use is proof that heritage and development are not mutually exclusive; it takes the most practical and economic position of working with the existing equity and as Moore (1998:xi) has argued, "it is a point of view that sees the new as a potential beneficial addition to the patrimony of the old".

Other heritage buildings in Alice Springs that continue to be used include the Heenan Building and Hertz Rent-a-car office in Hartley Street (former Tuncks Store); these commercial buildings continue to be used for commercial purposes. The Higgins Theatre or main hall at the Alice Springs Youth Centre continues to be used as a venue for social, recreational and sporting activities.


The Heenan Building continues to be used for commercial purposes.

Clearly there is significant potential for the adaptive re-use of other historic places in Alice Springs that have yet to be appreciated and recognised. The existing examples of commercial use and adaptive re-use identified above should be promoted to owners of other heritage places and historic sites, not only in Alice Springs but across the Territory. The continuing use of heritage places ensures their maintenance and consideration as assets.



The former Tuncks' Store, occupied by Hertz Rent a Car.

This section has focussed on the potential for adaptive re-use of heritage places and associated benefits for individual property owners. It was also demonstrated that additional benefits of heritage conservation accrue to the wider community including increased liveability and amenity of urban environments, sustainable use of increasingly scarce resources and job creation and tourism. Investment into heritage conservation activities has substantial economic and social impacts. The wider community benefits are explored in further detail in the following section.

**Heritage places, tourism, urban character and the community**

This section reviews the role of heritage places in tourism and associated community benefits. As noted in the introduction to this paper, heritage can have important and tangible benefits for the community today, by providing the character of an area that helped establish it in the commercial or tourist marketplace (Johnston 1991). Elsewhere such tangible benefits have been realised through tourism and marketing of this particular feature, for example Burra in South Australia, Maldon in Victoria, Charters Towers in Queensland, Napier in New Zealand, Galveston in Texas, Newport on Rhode Island; Annapolis in Maryland (Mules 2000, Brink 1998). As demonstrated by these examples and others (see below), the urban character of a town greatly contributes to its tourism potential.

Heritage and tourism

Tourism is a growing industry that may have a significant impact on the environment and heritage places. Natural and cultural heritage together with 'living cultures' are major tourism attractions. Cultural tourism is that form of tourism that focuses on the discovery of an area's cultural heritage and living cultures including monuments and sites. Domestic and international tourism facilitates cultural exchange and is increasingly appreciated as a positive force that encourages and provides for natural and cultural conservation (Brink 1998, Oakes 1997, Jamieson 1998). Tourism provides the means to capture the economic characteristics of a community's heritage and harness those for conservation by generating funding, educating the community and influencing policy. It has become an essential part of many national and regional economies and when managed successfully, can be an important factor in development (Biles, Lloyd and Logan 1999, Brink 1998, Centre for Governmental Responsibility *et al*. 2002, Childs *et al.* 1997, Clarion Associates 2002, Clarion Associates *et al*. 2002, Craik 1991, Opperman and Chon 1997, Oakes 1997, Jamieson 1998). It should benefit the host community and provide the means and motivation to maintain its heritage.

Whilst there are many benefits from tourism, uncontrolled use of heritage places can have major negative impacts, not only on the site, but also on future visitors' enjoyment and appreciation of the site. Excessive or poorly managed tourism and associated development, can threaten the physical nature, integrity and significance of places. The surrounding natural environment, culture and lifestyles of the host community may also be degraded, along with the visitor's experience of the place. Tourism, which is a legitimate means to economic revitalisation, can also have a negative impact on the appearance and structure of a place (eg Brink 1998, Gale 1995, Galla 1998, 1999; Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge 2000:4, Hall 1991, Hall and McArthur 1996, Jacobs and Gale 1994, Jamieson 1998, Wells 1996). Jamieson (1998:66) has succinctly summarised the complexity at the core of cultural heritage tourism and it is worth quoting him in full:

> The challenge for the industry, communities, and operators of heritage sites is to provide a singular participatory tourist experience, which will generate jobs and economic development. The challenge is further complicated by the need to preserve the character of the community and its cultural resources, offer an authentic experience, and respect the society and culture of the host community while ensuring the sustainability and authenticity of the tourist product.

To overcome these difficulties ICOMOS (1999) has prepared a set of principles and processes to guide the development of sustainable cultural tourism. The aim is to protect and manage the resource for future generations, be it the natural or cultural environment or both, whilst providing for tourism and associated infrastructure development and ensuring involvement and consultation with all stakeholders (eg Australian Heritage Commission & Tourism Council of Australia 1999; Brooks 2000; Hall 1991:254, 256; O'Brien 2000; Spenneman, Look and Graham 2001:30; World Tourism Organisation 1997:184-185). A long-term approach is essential (Jamieson 1998:67).

Benefits to the community arising from heritage tourism

There are many examples where heritage and tourism have successfully meshed together and produced tangible benefits for the community. Newport on Rhode Island (USA) is one such example. In 1994 an economic impact study documented that visitors to historic sites in Newport spent nearly US$70 million annually (Brink 1998:59-60). Annapolis's historic district drew over one million overnight visitors in 1995 (Brink 1998:60). Several other studies in the US indicated that tourists who visited cultural heritage places spent significantly more money at tourist destinations than other tourists (Brink 1998:61). The use of heritage to revitalise down-town areas is an emerging trend across the US, as is the use of major historic events in geographical areas as the organising theme for a broad-based approach to preservation and revitalisation that also provides for recreation and land-conservation (Brink 1998:62).

St Augustine in Florida in a small community of 13,000 residents covering 14.4 square miles. They host 3.5 million tourists annually and in 2000 it is estimated that tourism brought in $490 million. Planning officials for St Augustine recognise that the whole city is funded on tourism and that the tourism base rests on historic preservation (Centre for Governmental Responsibility *et al* 2002:14). A smaller community (9,800 residents) in central Florida, Mount Dora, hosts about 1 million visitors per annum largely through a program centred on festivals built around the down-town historic shopping district and surrounding topography. The Mount Dora Area Chamber of Commerce recognises the importance of the down-town area and keeping its historic character as the main drawcard for continued visitation: "you've got to keep your character. If we lose it, it's over" (Mount Dora Area Chamber of

Commerce Chief Executive Craig Willis, cited in Centre for Governmental Responsibility *et al* 2002:14).

Similarly to studies conducted in North Carolina, Texas (Rypkema 1997, 1999 cited in Clarion Associates of Colorado *et al* 2002:38), and Georgia (Leithe and Tigue 1999) heritage tourists in Colorado tended to spend more money and stay longer than other travellers. In 1999 the $1.4 billion in direct expenditures by heritage tourists generated an additional $1.7 billion in indirect economic impacts, for a total impact of $3.1 billion. The spending by heritage travellers also generated $1.0 billion in total earnings by Colorado workers and 55,300 jobs (Clarion Associates of Colorado *et al* 2002:16-17). During the mid-late 1990s, Missouri received an average annual $325 million in income, 20,077 jobs and $574 million in gross state product from heritage tourism (Center for Urban Policy Research 2001:11). Heritage tourism in South Carolina results in $325.6 million annually in direct spending which in turn created 9,097 jobs and indirectly created another 2,300 jobs (Lennox and Revels 2003:2).

Aly's Fireside Café, Walsenburg, Colorado
(Clarion Associates of Colorado *et al* 2002:3).

For 1996 in West Virginia it has been estimated that heritage tourist expenditures created 390 jobs in business directly servicing tourists and another 130 jobs indirectly for a total of 520 jobs. These 520 employees earned $8.2 million in compensation and produced $24.6 million worth of output. Business did $15.4 million worth of sales with tourists and if indirected and induced impacts are included, heritage tourism created an additional $46.7 million in business volume (Childs *et al.* 199712-13).

Within Australia Mules (2000) has recently investigated the regional economic impacts of tourism in three former mining towns, Maldon (Victoria), Burra (South Australia) and Charters Towers (Queensland). Several key findings are of relevance in the context of this study including:

- The opportunity to learn more about Australia's past, see aspects of Australia's heritage and view preserved buildings were the attributes of each place ranked the highest by visitors to these towns,
- The majority of visitors to each place ranked a friendly welcome, good information, good visitor amenities and an authentic experience as they attributes they sought from a heritage place, ahead of shopping, 'nice cafes' and well developed attractions,
- The majority of visitors to Maldon and Burra (61% and 47% respectively) ranked 'overly commercial' as the attribute they disliked the most at these places, and
- Brief summaries of each location's heritage offerings were overwhelmingly selected as the most useful information type at all three towns, as opposed to a heritage ratings system or list of Australian national heritage places.

Street parade, Maldon
(http://home.vicnet.net.au/~vicavans/2003photos.html)

In terms of economic impact the aggregate economic impact of tourism in each of the three towns was estimated on an annual basis using the most recent visitation figures. The impact depends upon the mean expenditure per visitor, the total number of visitors in a year and the economic structure of each region. The latter was accounted for in each case by using regional input output models and their associated multipliers for gross regional product (GRP) and employment, GRP being the regional equivalent of gross domestic product (GDP) (Mules 2000:74). The results are reproduced in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Economic impact of tourism (from Mules 2000:74).

| | Maldon | Burra | Charters Towers |
|---|---|---|---|
| Annual visitor numbers | 41,868 | 34,040 | 17,065 |
| Aggregate expenditure ($) | 4,272,981 | 4,269,814 | 2,814391 |
| GRP impact ($) | 3,820,880 | 4,587,880 | 2,009,782 |
| Employment impact (jobs) | 310 | 316 | 40 |

Note: the impact refers to each region, not town alone.

The above results were used to identify strategies for increasing the economic impact. For Maldon the strategy was to convert daytrippers into overnighters, for Burra it was to increase the daily expenditure by visitors and in Charters Towers to increase the number of visitors (Mules 2000:75).

The town of Burra, South Australia.

In the examples cited above it is clear that tourism provided flow-on benefits in terms of local and regional economies and employment. It is also clear that the potential success of tourism was linked to the presence of heritage places that not only provided individual destinations but which collectively created a strong and distinctive town character which provided the stimulus for tourism. Retention of heritage places and their contribution to urban character therefore not only contributes to residents' quality of life but also towards the tourist potential and associated economic benefits. The importance of urban character and relationship to heritage places is discussed below.

Urban character and heritage places

A study on cultural and heritage tourism in Delaware (US) recognised that this industry could not be sustained if the unique fabric of communities and urban areas were destroyed. It acknowledged that high-value tourists do not pay money to visit communities dominated by Wal-Mart, Pizza Hut, McDonalds and the like and noted that cities such as Charleston, Santa Fe and Galveston all had booming communities

which could be linked to the retention of their architecture and urban assets. Similar results were evident from a study in South Carolina. Those communities that had preserved their historic downtown areas and neighbourhoods and maintained their unique qualities and characteristics had stronger, healthier economies; they had kept their town from "becoming Anytown, USA" (Lennox and Revels 2003:15).

There has been substantial debate elsewhere in Australia within the heritage industry and wider community regarding heritage and urban character. The Heritage Council of Victoria (1999) considered this issue at length and the key outcomes of their discussion paper provides a useful baseline. They noted that although there is no widely accepted definition of 'urban character' they suggested that it could be defined as being 'the combination of the cultural development and natural attributes of a place'. They distinguished between descriptors (the way a place is described) vs evaluators (the way a place is valued) and noted that there are a number of ways communities value urban character including cultural heritage, amenity and financial yield. By contrast, urban character can be described through physical descriptors such as built form, infrastructure, age, topography, landscape, open space, streetscape and activity (Heritage Council of Victoria 1999:10).

The 1987 ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Historic Town and Urban Areas consists of a number of principles and objectives that directly relate to conserving urban character. The primary principle is that in order to be most effective, the conservation of historic towns and other historic urban areas should be an integral part of coherent policies of economic and social development and of urban and regional planning at every level. The Charter also identifies specific qualities that should be preserved including the 'historic character' of the town or area, expressed through material and spiritual elements and more specifically including:

- Urban patterns as defined by lots and streets;
- Relationships between buildings and green and open spaces;
- The formal appearance, interior and exterior, of buildings as defined by scale, size, style, construction, materials, colour and decoration;
- The relationship between the town or urban area and its surrounding setting, both natural and man-made; and
- The various functions that the town or urban area has acquired over time.

Any threat to these qualities would compromise the authenticity of the historic town or urban area. The Charter recognises that adaptive re-use and new developments are possible whilst retaining the character of a town. For example, the Charter states that when it is necessary to construct new buildings or adapt existing ones, the existing spatial layout should be respected, especially in terms of scale and lot size; and that the introduction of contemporary elements in harmony with the surroundings should not be discouraged since such features can contribute to the enrichment of an area.

A number of overseas communities, faced with similar problems have prepared 'town charters' based on the above principles. For example, the Chatham community, situated in the Cape Cod region of the US, developed what it calls a 'Comprehensive Plan'. Extensive consultation, public comments and reviews were undertaken and shaped the document. The driving force of the plan was that local residents strongly desired a quality of life based upon the continuing historical presence and character of a small town with its overriding feeling of Cape Cod, human scale, a seaside atmosphere and physical beauty. In addition to retaining a historical presence and character, a range of other aspects were recognised as critical to the lives of local residents including purity of air and water, preservation of natural systems, safety of streets and homes from crime and violence, retaining a sense of community, affordable housing, quality public services and facilities such as schools and libraries, and jobs and economic opportunity on a year-round basis.

The Plan then examined the issues associated with each aspect and identified goals and policies to ensure that the goals were met. Historic preservation and community character was achieved through maintaining traditional development patterns, setting specific design guidelines, maintaining and restoring vistas, landscaping, conservation of historic places and organising specific events that focus on local heritage, amongst others. Detailed goals and policies are also developed for historical and archaeological resources, open space and vegetation, utilities and lighting, noise control, traditional industries, community facilities, town lands and buildings, conservation natural resources and passive recreation, water

Chatham Fish Pier, late winter (www.mattsuess.com)

access, cemeteries, transportation, waste management, affordable housing, economic health and additional land use issues.

Plans such as these demonstrate that it is possible to ensure that heritage conservation and associated activities are strongly integrated into legislative and government policy and planning mechanisms. In turn this helps to ensure the retention of urban character in addition to individual heritage values, which in turn provides potential for tourism and contributes to residents' quality of life etc. The links between tourism and urban character overseas were demonstrated above; the section below examines the situation as it applies to Alice Springs.

Tourism and urban character in Alice Springs

A number of declared and proposed heritage places in Alice Springs are involved in tourism including Adelaide House, Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historic Reserve, Anzac Hill Memorial, Connellan Hangar, Flynn Memorial Church, John Flynn's Grave, Former CWA Rooms (Bluegrass Café), Old Hartley Street School, Old Courthouse, Pioneer Youth Hostel (former Pioneer Theatre and Kenna Residence), The Residency, Stuart Memorial Cemetery, Stuart Town Gaol, Todd Tavern and places in the Alice Springs Heritage Precinct such as the Royal Flying Doctor Service. The roles of these places varies: for some it lies in providing food, accommodation, or vehicle hire, whilst for others tourism and recreation is their main business.

Former CWA Rooms, now the Bluegrass Restaurant, Alice Springs.

The places referred to above also feature in a number of interpretive brochures provided by various organisations including "Heritage Walks in Alice Springs" (National Trust of Australia (NT)), the "Welcome to Central Australia" tourist booklet and "Discovering Alice Springs" series, part of the heritage trails and urban enhancement and tourism drive strategies. The common theme to all these publications is that they focus on individual places located within the town. Although

the Discovering series has attempted to provide a more holistic approach, identifying places according to particular themes such as the river, heritage and culture, transport etc, it still focuses primarily on individual places rather than the town as a whole. To date there does not appear to be any interpretive materials developed for the tourist market that focuses on the town as a whole which is surprising in light of visitor interest in terms of experiencing the outback and the town. Elsewhere the link between heritage conservation and tourism has been well established. A number of studies referred to above such as that by Mules (2000), Centre for Governmental Responsibility *et al*. (2002), and Clarion Associates (2002) have demonstrated that conserving a town's historic character helps support tourism by providing interesting and unique opportunities for visitors and tourism can support conservation by providing resources for ongoing restoration and adaptive re-use activities.

Todd Tavern, Alice Springs.

*The search for a 'town like Alice'*

During the 1920s – 1950s there was a surge of interest in the Australian outback, fuelled by the stories and writings that appeared in magazines such as *Walkabout* and individuals such as Frank Clune, Cecil Madigan, and Barrett Cross, which popularised the region together with improved transportation such as the railway to Alice Springs (Griffiths 1996:176). Such writings evoked images of vast red open spaces, ancient landscapes and a parched inland and people travelling to the Centre at that time felt like they were making history simply by going there (Griffiths 1996:178).

Today, the importance of Nevil Shute's book, *A Town Like Alice,* and later film of the same name, should not be underestimated. Both have created a certain expectation among visitors regarding the town's appearance and urban character. Over the years the author had the opportunity to speak with a number of tourists who

all, with one exception, indicated that they were disappointed by Alice Springs. They had come seeking the 'Town Like Alice' and were dismayed that it did not meet their expectations in terms of its overall appearance and urban character. They found it 'too modern' or 'ordinary, just like any country town'. What they sought was low buildings, wide shady verandahs, bush timber, corrugated iron roofs, gum trees, dust, wide streets, distant horizons and a slow pace of life. There is clearly a need to take a whole-of-town approach and develop interpretive materials accordingly. In doing so, there is an opportunity to market and present the town's heritage places to a greater extent, specifically focusing on places from the 'Town Like Alice' era, the late 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Wartime heritage, the Alice Springs Heritage Precinct and commercial buildings from this period such as the Todd Tavern, Heenan building, Rieff building and Cockatoo Secondhand Shop could play a significant role in meeting tourists' expectations. Greater appreciation of this part of the NT's heritage is required in order to achieve this. However identification and interpretation of these places alone will not necessarily ensure that these expectations are met. As indicated in the above section care must be taken to ensure that new developments do not destroy the character of the town.

Certain parts of Alice Springs are considered to possess a certain urban character. For example, the Old East Side is recognised as a distinctive part of town, one that is routinely marketed by real estate agents as possessing a particular charm. Much of this charm results from the overall nature of this part of Alice Springs, a combination of factors that reflect previous planning decisions of the late 1940s and 1950s. For the most part the buildings are not architecturally outstanding, many are not associated with important people, but together with the large blocks, back lanes, street layout, landscaping, and mix of old government and private housing, they retain the ambience of Alice in the late 1940s and 1950s, the era that corresponds with Shutes' book and the film. There is no need to reconstruct buildings from this era and create an artificial 'heritage suburb' when the 'real thing' is available and provides an authenticity that no amount of careful crafting can recreate. Similarly, the Alice Springs Heritage Precinct also has a distinctive urban character, similar to the Old Eastside but which is more cohesive/pronounced owing to the retention of a uniformity of style of housing design, emphasised through use of paint colours from the period. Not surprisingly the Precinct is recognised at a national level as a rare example of an arid zone townscape through its listing on the Commonwealth's Register of the National Estate.

However these examples are isolated exceptions. As Griffiths (1996:248) has noted, a town's most historic features may be "visually unexceptional", many of its usual characteristics may be

> …recent in origin and therefore seen to be less exotic. In places where few fine buildings were built, or have been allowed to survive, saving the remaining historic features is paradoxically harder.

Much of Alice Springs 'outback' character and ambience may be derived from earlier structures from the late 1930s – 1950s that were immortalised in Shute's book and film. As noted above these structures are not particularly old, many are not architecturally overwhelming, yet it is these types of buildings from this era, which is what visitors to the town seek. There are a number of notably different buildings which do stand out such as Adelaide House, the Flynn Memorial Church and former Pioneer Theatre but for the most part, few see any historic merit in the ordinary residences or shops from the 1940s and 1950s. In a similar vein Spearritt (1991:44) has noted that the conservation of industrial structures has been hindered by narrow views of what comprises 'good' architecture, i.e. the building should be aesthetically pleasing, the materials should be notable and its former use should be intriguing and that frequently industrial and even commercial structures have been regarded of little value as they are not tasteful or historically significant.

Strong (1999) has elaborated on this point in a newspaper article reflecting on the nature of Alice Springs' historic buildings. He observes that every time another old building is lost, there are some complaints that Alice Springs "is losing its character, its uniqueness, or whatever one chooses to call it". As Strong (1999) states, there are those who find it difficult to understand why some older buildings in Alice Springs should be retained, after all, there are no federation buildings, no grand banking chambers or town halls, no stately homes, no great architectural wonders. The reason for this is simple: there was never the wealth, the resources or people to leave us grand and imposing structures. Instead, buildings were simple, unpretenious, modest, often made of locally available materials. As the title of Strong's (1999) article states, Alice Springs' "heritage buildings tell story of harsh and humble past".

Despite their humble nature, the historic buildings of Alice Springs are no less important in terms of their heritage value than the grand structures found in Sydney, Melbourne or Adelaide. One of the major issues in heritage conservation in the NT lies in public acceptance of this kind of heritage and convincing the public to be proud

of it rather than embarrassed. Such a task is made more difficult by those who seek to make comparisons with the grandiose structures found interstate or overseas. Yet it is these so-called 'unremarkable' buildings that make a significant contribution to the urban character of Alice Springs. Alice Springs has more heritage places than Darwin and there is a need to make them stand out more so. This could be achieved by restoring such buildings to the colour schemes of the 1940s/50s. The heritage precinct has restrictions regarding colour schemes and this has resulted in a unity and cohesive Precinct that is evident.

**Strategies for the future**

It was noted above that for some tourists at least, Alice Springs does not meet their expectations in terms of the town's overall character and appearance. It is therefore important in terms of future planning and development that the role of the town's character and its ambience, not only for tourism but also for residents' lifestyle, is acknowledged and steps taken to ensure that it is conserved. Recognition and respect for the authenticity of these places is a key point and an essential element of cultural significance; *replicas are not the same*. Ironically in places where only pockets of the past remain, tourist-related arguments have a tendency to align themselves with the creation of an artificial past concentrated in one area, at the expense of the real historical environment (Griffiths 1996:250). Care must be taken to avoid such a situation in Alice Springs. Visitors' are increasingly sophisticated and are seeking the 'real thing', an authentic experience. This desire has been capitalised on by Western Australia, recently commencing a tourism campaign that markets that state as 'The Real Thing'.

McConnville (1991:100-101) has suggested that urban conservation guidelines, while protecting limited historic precincts and a few evocative buildings, are less effective in "preserving a more generalised urban ambience, especially that character assembled through town planning, by-law and natural designs…". In Alice Springs urban character and ambience is achieved and maintained by more than just conserving the places deemed to have heritage value or be of some cultural interest. Future developments should not jeopardise or change the urban character, rather they should enhance the overall appearance of a town. More specifically development and infrastructure projects should consider the setting in which they are located and preference should be given to using local materials and using local architectural styles or vernacular traditions. For example, in Alice Springs new tourist resorts could be of single or two stories and use materials evocative of the outback

such as local stone and timber with wide verandahs and/or enclosed flywired verandahs and pitched corrugated iron or plain colourbond roofs. High density units on blocks should appear from the street to contain only one unit; many of the older 1940s and 50s structures should be retained, exteriors restored to the period and adaptively re-used through internal alterations and/or sympathetic development at the rear. Depleting the stock of such buildings impacts on the ability of the town to market itself as the 'Town Like Alice'. Development that results in a modern 'anytown' should be avoided.

In the USA there is a growing movement towards preserving the historic character of commercial buildings, particularly shopfronts (eg Ward Jandl 2000), as part of maintaining urban character, tourism potential and a sustainable development approach. For example, Florida's Main Street Program has revitalised many downtown areas: Deland's Main Street Program has generated $55 million in public construction since 1985 and is credited with increasing occupancy rates for 40% to 98%. Statewide, Florida's Main Street Program represents a net investment of $64 million for the financial year 2000-2001, creating an estimated 850 new full-time jobs, largely in the retail sector (Centre for Governmental Responsibility *et al* 2002: 17). Between 1995-1998 the Main Street Program in Berryville, rural Virginia, saw 96 restoration projects completed valued at $3.2 million which generated 51 construction jobs, 46 jobs in other sectors, $2.5 million in household income, 27 new businesses downtown and 66 net new jobs (Gallagher 1999).


The Sunrise Theatre, restored as the Fort Pierce Main Street Program, Florida.

Durant pool hall after restoration as part of the Main Street Program for Durant, Oklahoma. This project was the winner in its category (façade restoration under $10,000) at the Main Street Oklahoma Awards (http://www.durantmainstreet.org/index.html).

In Australia there are also examples of commercial buildings that have been sensitively adapted to ensure that overall character and streetscape is retained. Some of the buildings subject to conservation work under the NSW Main Street Program are occupied by some of the world's largest franchises such as McDonalds, Pizza Hut and Ampol (NSW Heritage Office 1998).


Occupation of a heritage building in Melbourne by McDonalds (NSW Heritage Office 1998)

There is an opportunity to undertake a similar program in the NT in Alice Springs. Not only would such a program represent a sustainable approach to development, but by conserving urban character, the future tourism potential of Alice

Springs could be ensured. As Sir Frank Moore stated in 1999 with respect to Alice Springs and tourism:

> Tourism is about history and heritage…History and heritage is not a collection of fading pictures on a wall and cheap t-shirts. The business of history and heritage is about interpretation, about delivering a product which is fascinating and interesting…and the more we cultivate and share our heritage, the more we will preserve and enhance it for ourselves and generations to come (Grimm 1999:3).

**Summary and conclusions**

It was noted at the beginning of this paper that in the longer term, 'viability' means achieving commercial rates of return. The studies cited in this paper clearly indicate that investment in heritage properties whether through main street programs, restoration and adaptive re-use or simply as real estate, represents a good medium - long term investment not only for individuals but also for the wider community.

The overseas success in heritage investment has been achieved by a multi-pronged approach: a combination of tax relief and credits, main street programs and direct investment. It appears that a 'critical mass' of strategies is required, rather than relying solely on one 1 or 2 strategies, as is the case in the NT.

This paper has demonstrated that it is possible to conserve heritage places and urban character and have a strong economy; indeed many of the studies cited found that heritage conservation was a significant driving force behind regional prosperity and growth. The links between heritage, tourism, sustainability and quality of life are inescapable. The only thing preventing the Territory from realising the same benefits as seen overseas and interstate from investing in our heritage, is ourselves. Until such time that we have the confidence and commitment to undertake the kinds of activities, albeit on a relative scale, as those overseas, the Territory's heritage will continue to be unappreciated and our living environment, quality of life and economic circumstances will be that much poorer.

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