For reply please quote: TN88134/AR22/IGR

Mr Gary Banks
Chairman
Productivity Commission
PO Box 80
BELCONNEN ACT 2617

Dear Gary

I write with regard to the Productivity Commission's draft report on the Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage Places. The protection of significant historic heritage places is an important factor in preserving Queensland's cultural and historic identity for future generations.

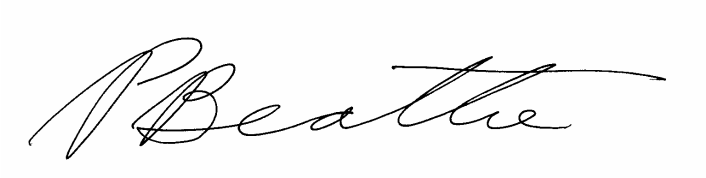
While it is important to regularly examine new and innovative options for the management of Australia's historic heritage places, I am concerned that some of the recommendations outlined in the Productivity Commission's draft report are regressive and contradict established principles of effective heritage management.

The proposal to restrict statutory listings of privately owned places to those with voluntarily negotiated heritage conservation agreements would erode the protection afforded to historic heritage places. This would undermine the proven foundation upon which Queensland's heritage conservation regime is based. While the Queensland Government recognises the limitations of an over-reliance on regulation, it is questionable whether recommendation 8.1 and other related recommendations would improve incentives to conserve heritage places, or deliver improved conservation outcomes.

I consider that a departure away from the current regulatory framework would invariably lead to a loss of heritage places currently protected by their entry in a statutory list or register. This would result in fewer heritage places attracting regulatory protection and if implemented, would reduce, rather than enhance, the levels of effective protection currently provided to Australia's heritage places.

I would welcome the Productivity Commission's further consideration of practical policy tools that would enhance the effectiveness of heritage management. Transparent, predictable and consistent heritage management policy provides the community, private owners and commercial property interests with improved levels of certainty, and enables informed decisions to be made. However, the objective of any new policy instruments should be to supplement, rather than diminish, Australia's capacity to effectively conserve its historic heritage places. A wide range of incentives and other persuasive measures adopted and tested elsewhere by heritage management agencies around the world could provide insight into effective historic places strategies that could be implemented in Australia.

Yours Sincerely



PETER BEATTIE MP
PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND