



27 July 2011

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SENATE INQUIRY

DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES (DPS)

We are pleased to provide a submission to the inquiry particularly related to the terms of reference which states:

“The performance of the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS), with particular reference to:

(b) Policies and practices followed by DPS for the management of the heritage values of Parliament House and its contents”

The National Trust is interested in Parliament House and are aware that the Australian Institute of Architects have nominated it to Australia's National Heritage Register. We are also aware that a Heritage Strategy (Draft 15 dated 27 May 2009) and Heritage Management Framework (dated May 2011) exist but are extremely concerned that appropriate conservation practice is not being followed.

The following comments are made:

- A detailed Conservation and Management Plan is required. This document needs to consider all components such as the building, landscape, furniture, art collection and other objects associated with the building and there needs to be full public consultation in the preparation of such a document.

A Heritage Strategy is a different document and a Heritage Management Framework is only part of the process.

- There has been no consultation with the community heritage organisations such as the National Trust which is required under the EPBC Act when preparing Heritage Strategies.
- The Heritage Strategy should have been finalised as required by the EPBC Act and why there have been 15 drafts is unknown. This number is extremely unusual.
- The nomination of Parliament House to the National Heritage Register should have been completed by now and this process should have been assisted by DPS.

The above actions are essential if this outstanding building is to be appropriately recognised as part of Australia's National Heritage and then processes and practices put in place to ensure heritage values are protected as it meets the ongoing demands of Parliament.

Yours faithfully,

Eric J Martin
President