

Audit of the outcomes of the National Trust's Endangered Places Programme

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Introduction

Endangered Places is the only national advocacy program of the National Trust Movement. It is a collaborative program of the eight State and Territory Trusts, coordinated and managed by the Australian Council of National Trusts (ACNT).

Based loosely on the American program of the same name, the Program commenced in 1998 and continued through to 2004, when it was decided to take a break to 'audit' the fate of all places listed over the seven years of the program, and to refresh the program's focus. It is planned to launch the renewed program, *Our Heritage @ Risk* in 2007.

The objective of the *Endangered Places* program, and of the new program, is to utilise the combined advocacy of the State and Territory Trusts to focus community and media interest on the kinds of threats facing heritage places, in order to achieve policy changes to address the issues raised by those threats, and to marshal community action and government attention to address the identified threats.

The program is holistic in approach, embracing all levels of heritage significance, and is inclusive of cultural, natural and Indigenous values.

The program has two elements – the annual compilation and release of a list of *Endangered Places*, and the associated compilation and release of a Report Card on the fate of the places listed as endangered the previous year.

Places listed as 'endangered' have ranged from local places such as Sandon Point in Wollongong where the natural and Indigenous values were threatened by development, to nationally

significant sites facing threats from industrial development such as the Burrup Peninsula and Recherche Bay.

Places may be nominated by the community and/or by State/Territory Trusts, with the ACNT responsible for the annual Launch of the List of Endangered Places and the associated Report Card.

Audit of the 'fate' of places nominated as endangered 1998-2004

A detailed audit of the fate of all places listed as 'endangered' has been undertaken during 2005/06. The data have been analysed to assess trends in threats to heritage and to monitor the outcomes to places listed as 'endangered'.

The places nominated over the seven years of the program as 'endangered' were not the MOST endangered; rather, they were places selected as demonstrating the kinds of threats impacting adversely on heritage places nationally. That is, the list of 'endangered places' was not developed according to strictly agreed criteria, but rather the list was drawn from places identified as significant and at significant risk, and demonstrative of the kinds of threats facing heritage places more generally. Therefore, the audit, and the data drawn from it, are not exhaustive. Rather, they are indicative of trends, of the kinds of threats, and of the types of places most at risk.

The information from this audit will be used to construct a publicly accessible website of all listed places - *ourheritage@risk*. This website, once fully constructed, will be regularly updated so it can provide information on trends, issues and outcomes concerning threats to heritage places nationwide. It will be available at www.nationaltrust.org.au

Results of the *Endangered Places* audit

Types of places

154 places were nominated to the Endangered Places list between 1998 and 2004: 77% of places (118) were 'built' and 23% (36) were landscapes or parks and gardens.

While only two places were nominated solely for Indigenous values, most natural landscapes contained Indigenous and archaeological values as well as ecological values. The two Indigenous places were Aboriginal Sites in the Oaks Estate, ACT and Burrup Peninsula, Dampier Rock Art Precinct, WA.

Of the 36 landscapes nominated, 24 were natural landscapes and 12 were parks and gardens. Natural landscapes included significant coastal landscapes, forests and wetlands.

In 1998 when the program began, most places nominated were single buildings. More complex places began to be nominated from 2000 as urban consolidation policies, often sustainability driven, began to impact adversely on older suburban areas, damaging their character and damaging heritage values.

Awareness of the threat posed to natural and cultural values in coastal areas also increased during the last five years, and so coastal areas were nominated as the final national nomination of the *Endangered Places* program. Of the complete set of ‘built’ places nominated, 54% were single buildings, and 46% were multiple buildings, either complexes or areas such as a township, urban precinct or rural community. Nine percent of multiple built *Endangered Places* were ex-Defence facilities. Only two non-European built endangered places were nominated. These were the Sue Wah Chin Building, Darwin and China Town in Broome.

The 118 built places were divided as follows:

- 37 places (31%) residential
- 16 places (14%) commercial
- 31 places (26%) institutional (government excluding military, churches etc
- 34 places (29%) industrial (including Defence, mining sites, ports, bridges)

Table 1: Types of built places

Single Building	% of all Built Places	Multiple Buildings	% of all Built Places
Residential	13%	Residential	11%
Commercial	8%	Commercial	3%
Institutional	12%	Institutional	7%
Industrial	8%	Industrial	14%
No of places	64		54

Threats

The vast majority (88%) of places nominated were threatened by development, either demolition, development pressure, inappropriate development or government policy. Places slated for demolition accounted for 15% of threats. The main pressure was increased density or proposed new residential and coastal developments. Between 2000-2004 urban consolidation and in-fill development accounted for six percent of development threats.

Table 2: Types of Threats

Threat	Proportion
Demolition	15%
Development Pressure	40%
Inappropriate development	20%
Government Policy	3%
Neglect and damage	21%
No of places	154

Fate

Of the 154 places listed as endangered between 1998 and 2004:

- 15 (10%) were destroyed or sustained such damage as to no longer retain heritage value,
- heritage value was compromised for a further 27 places (17%), and
- 72 (47%) were 'saved,' meaning that measures were put in place to protect and conserve their heritage values, although there are some concerns such as under resourcing for conservation for nearly half of these.

The 40 remaining places (26%) remain threatened in some measure. Fifteen of these are areas or composite places with various ownership, such as urban areas or rural landscapes, and the rest are evenly divided between redundant government owned or managed places and privately owned places.

Except for these complex composite owned places, ownership of places does not appear to have significantly affected the fate of places nominated to the *Endangered Places* list, with approximately equal proportions of privately and government owned places saved and lost.

Table 3: Fates by ownership

Owner	Government	Private	Composite ownership
Saved	28%	28%	12%
Saved with concerns	25%	18%	22%
Unchanged/ still under threat	17%	26%	47%
Worsened	17%	18%	19%
Lost	14%	10%	0
No of places	72	50	32

Effectiveness of the *Endangered Places* program

The effectiveness of the *Endangered Places* program is reflected in part in the proportion of places ‘saved’. We believe this result would not have been possible without the continued community support and the action taken by the National Trust. In most cases, it has taken many years of continued community pressure to “save” a place, and some places have been repeatedly nominated to the Endangered List before action has taken place.

However, the purpose of the program is not simply to ‘save’ the threatened places, but to focus on the issues impacting adversely on them, and to focus community support concerning them. Therefore, ‘saving’ the places is a welcome result of the program, not its sole objective.

Key issues identified through the audit

Three issues have been identified as impacting most directly on the conservation of heritage values nationwide:

- Disposal of redundant government owned and/or managed properties

- Development pressures, especially in-fill planning in inner suburban areas
- Redundancy of rural heritage buildings

An emerging issue in recent years is the threat to significant landscapes, particularly coastal, by inappropriate residential and tourism development, and windfarms.

Disposal of redundant government owned and/or managed properties

Half of the nominated places were government (all levels) owned and/or managed, many slated for disposal. Each of these 'endangered' places presented not simply as a single disputed site to its government owner, but as a site raising larger financial and policy issues. As each site slated for disposal tended to attract strong community concerns, much negotiation and compromise was required before agreement on the future of any of these sites could be reached. In those circumstances, the publicity and exposure of community concern about the future of the site added considerably to the pressure for the government agency concerned to achieve an outcome acceptable to the community.

Resolution has been reached on some highly significant government owned sites listed as 'endangered', but it would be fair to say that not all of the agreements reached have achieved full community acceptance. Examples of positive outcomes would include Point Nepean and Point Cook, the Abbotsford Convent and Pentridge Gaol sites (Victoria), the Manly Quarantine Station and the historic Maritime Precinct (NSW), Sullivan's Cove (Tasmania) and the Midland Railway Workshops (WA).

Development pressures, especially in-fill planning in inner suburban areas

Another key issue identified through the *Endangered Places* Program has been the 'damage' to the heritage values of inner city urban areas subject to in-fill planning proposals, proposals often driven by 'sustainability' concerns, that is, concern to limit the incursion of the urban conglomerate.

The listing of the nine inner city 'garden' suburbs of Canberra in 2001 resulted in a commitment from the party then in opposition to ensure the survival of these distinctive areas of Canberra. Once in government, they did wind back the planning regulations that they considered to have had the most adverse effect on the heritage values of those suburbs.

While similar listings of inner suburban areas of Melbourne and Adelaide have not had so dramatic an impact, the listings have certainly contributed to reconsideration of the most potentially damaging of the planned in-fill development proposals in each city. While the Urban

Conservation areas in Sydney, in particular Ku-ring-gai, are still threatened, listing on the *Endangered Places* list has raised public awareness of urban heritage issues.

The 'demolition' tours of North Adelaide by the South Australian Trust in support of the nomination of those areas as endangered, were conducted with close media interest, and resulted in strong community pressure for proposed re-development proposals to be considerably wound back.

Redundant rural heritage places

Commencing in 2002, the ACNT has nominated a place (or places) of national significance as 'endangered'.

While it is extremely difficult to assess the impact of these very broad nominations, Rural Homesteads in 2002, the Murray Darling in 2003, and Coastal Heritage in 2004, some progress seems to have occurred.

The 2002 nomination of Rural Homesteads as endangered did certainly stimulate the Queensland Government to commission a survey of rural homesteads in that state. That study in turn resulted in commitment to a strategy to address some of the problems raised.

Much attention has been paid to the environmental issues plaguing the Murray Darling Basin in recent years, and to the many issues associated with developmental pressures along Australian coastal and inland waterways, and a number of national programs have been funded by Commonwealth and the state and territory governments, under the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), to address them.

***Endangered Places* listed on the National Heritage List**

As at the time of writing, four *Endangered Places* had been listed on the National Heritage List, with several others nominated. Those listed were: Recherche Bay, HMAS Cerberus, the Quarantine Station at Manly and the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

A number of *Endangered Places* have also been listed or are under consideration for listing on the Commonwealth Heritage List.

Our Heritage @ Risk

This new program will build upon the former *Endangered Places* program, but will differ from it in substantive ways. The scope of the program will be expanded to cover collections as well as place (hence the name change to *Our Heritage @ Risk*), and it will be run in partnership with

other heritage organisations. The new program will be hierarchical in that it will be searching for heritage **most** at risk, and the program will provide increased opportunities for community involvement and media coverage.

Conclusion

As the leading community advocate for heritage nationwide, the National Trust will continue its program of identifying and publicising heritage at risk through its new program. Through the *Our Heritage @ Risk* program we will be able to make consolidated information about places at risk, the threats they are facing and the outcomes of our campaigns more readily accessible. This will inform public debate, influence community attitudes, and support community action to encourage policy change at all levels of government.

Additional Information

Further information about the Program can be obtained from the Trust websites.

See www.nationaltrust.org.au