



Australian Government

Australian Heritage Council

Lyn Beverley
Secretary
Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration
PO Box 6100 Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Email: fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Beverley

I am writing in regards to your letter of 30 June 2014, inviting the Australian Heritage Council (Council) to make a submission to the Inquiry into the performance of the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS).

The Council is the expert heritage advisory body for the Australian Government and plays a key role in assessment, advice and support of major heritage programs. Our main responsibilities are to assess places for the National and Commonwealth heritage lists, promote the identification, assessment, conservation and monitoring of heritage and advise the Minister on various heritage matters including the preparation and amendment of heritage strategies and management plans for Commonwealth areas and agencies.

In this regard, I note that the Council completed its National Heritage and Commonwealth Heritage assessments of Parliament House and Surrounds in 2005. Parliament House's outstanding design is an exceptional creative and technical achievement that integrates with the surrounding landscape and reflects the elements and functioning of democracy in Australia. The building with its integrated works of commissioned art, craft and specially designed furnishings, reflects the history, cultural diversity, development and aspirations of the nation.

It is understood that the Department of Parliamentary Services does have a suite of management documents regarding the conservation of the important fabric of the building, however, it is essential that the Department satisfy all of the statutory requirements under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) related to heritage protection. As a Commonwealth Agency DPS needs to have a Heritage Strategy, which would identify a process for assessing heritage values of the property it owns and/or controls and, if heritage values are identified, the process for development of a heritage management plan. These are important documents that have not been completed by DPS to date.

The Council is aware that DPS previously had engagement with the Department of the Environment, as a means of resolving their concerns relating to heritage listing and management of Parliament House. I would encourage DPS to facilitate the identification, recognition and celebration of the heritage values of the property it owns/controls in order to actively manage the heritage significance of Parliament House and Surrounds and thus satisfy its obligations under the EPBC Act.

Yours Sincerely

The Hon Professor Carmen Lawrence
Chair
17 September 2014