

## THE NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (NEW SOUTH WALES) POLICY ON HISTORIC ORGANS AND FORTEPIANOS

### PREAMBLE

In 1979 the National Trust collaborated with the Organ Historical Trust of Australia in the production by John Stiller of the *“Detailed Documentation of Pipe Organs”*<sup>i</sup> (70 church pipe organs). In 1988 the National Trust adopted a Policy Paper – *“The Conservation of Historic Church Organs”*<sup>ii</sup> which was formulated in consultation with the Organ Historical Trust of Australia and the Organ Advisory Committee of the NSW Heritage Council. Since 1996, the Trust has listed a number of church organs on its Register and in 2006 the former Regent Theatre, Sydney Wurlitzer Organ was listed.

The Trust has run several tax-deductible restoration appeals for the conservation of historic organs and has lobbied for the due care and conservation of church and cinema/public hall organs. The Trust has in its collections at its various properties eleven historic keyboard instruments including fortepianos<sup>iii</sup> by Longman & Broderip (c1790), Adam Beyer (1775), John Broadwood & Sons (c1840), Muir Wood & Co, Edinburgh (pre 1818), a Clementi (C1824) and a Mortimer Anderson & Co, Edinburgh (C1827).

### POLICY

1. The National Trust recognises that church and cinema/public hall organs can have aesthetic, historic, scientific and social significance and that they may contribute greatly to the significance of the church or cinema/public hall in which they are placed.
2. In assessing the significance of an organ, the Trust will evaluate the following criteria, in descending order of importance:
  - Tonal quality
  - Casework and pipe display
  - Relationship to liturgical worship or cinema/public hall entertainment experience
  - Relationship to the building in which it is placed
  - The organ’s action, console layout, technological aspects.

Other significance criteria such as craftsmanship, example of a particular type, association with a noted builder (or player) will be considered conjointly with the above list. The Trust will support the installation of a new organ action if it contributes to preserving or restoring tonal quality.

3. The Trust will apply the Burra Charter<sup>iv</sup> to issues involving the conservation of, alteration to, or relocation of organs and fortepianos.
4. The Trust will urge that the best and most appropriate conservation of a church or cinema/public hall organ would involve its continuing use in religious worship or cinema/public hall entertainment respectively.
5. The Trust will urge that any new work to an organ should be reversible and that, where a significant part of an organ (especially pipework) is removed, it should be stored to enable later re-construction to take place.
6. Where the conservation and appropriate use of an organ is demonstrably not possible in its original location, the Trust would support its relocation, with the following order of preference:
  - Re-location within the original building.
  - Re-location within an alternative historic building (i.e. church, cinema or hall).
  - Re-location within a modern building (church, cinema or hall).
  - Re-location to a non church, cinema or hall setting.

7. Relocation under 6. above would be subject to commitments that the instrument will receive adequate ongoing maintenance to ensure its long term conservation.
8. The Trust will support in principle the proposal by Christopher Cook of the Organ Historical Trust of Australia for the creation of the Organ Centre of Australia for the rescue, storage, erection, repair and demonstration of organs or notable/rare/important keyboard instruments.
9. The Trust will continue to list significant organs and collections of historic fortepianos on the Trust Register and will place the *Detailed Documentation of Pipe Organs* on the Trust's website for educational and restoration guidance purposes, as agreed by the Organ Historical Trust of Australia.
10. The Trust will continue to support the conservation of historic organs and fortepiano collections through its Tax-deductible restoration appeal system.

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<sup>i</sup> "Detailed Documentation of Pipe Organs", John Stiller, Organ Historical Trust of Australia, 1978/1981

<sup>ii</sup> "The Conservation of Historic Church Organs" Policy Paper, The National Trust of Australia (NSW), 1988

<sup>iii</sup> "fortepiano" – the earliest versions of the piano and their replicas dating from the 1700s to the 1840s

<sup>iv</sup> "The Burra Charter – The Australian ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 1999