

THE NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (NEW SOUTH WALES) POLICY ON THE SYDNEY HARBOUR FORESHORE, PARRAMATTA RIVER AND ASSOCIATED WATERWAYS

PREAMBLE

In 1976 following deep concern at deterioration of the river environment and the scarring impact of unco-ordinated urban sprawl, the National Trust published "Parameters for the River"¹, a prospectus for rehabilitation of Parramatta River.

The National Trust has long recognized the importance of the foreshores of Sydney Harbour, its associated waterways and Parramatta River. The Sydney Harbour Landscape Conservation Area was listed on the National Trust Register in September, 1982 and the Middle Harbour and Parramatta and Lane Cove Rivers Landscape Conservation Areas were listed on the National Trust Register in January, 1983. All these listings urged the maintenance of strict controls to protect the scenic and cultural values and natural beauty of the foreshores. The Trust is aware of various statutory planning instruments that have applied and those which may still remain in force such as the Deemed State Environmental Planning Policy -SREP – Sydney Harbour Catchment – 2005. Notwithstanding such instruments, consistency in application and enforceability are an issue in relation to the "creep development" factor of our Harbours and waterways foreshores.

As early as 1828 steps were taken to protect waterway foreshores. In Governor Darling's tenure, on August 21, 1828 Government Notice from the Colonial Secretary's Office stated that "*The Government will further reserve to itself all land within one hundred feet of high water mark, on the sea coast, creeks, harbours and inlets.*"²

Sydney Harbour is world renowned for its bushland headlands and foreshore parks and its international reputation is intimately associated with its scenic harbour vistas. However, massive tower development originally confined to the centre of the Central Business District is now being sited on the foreshores. Such development is impacting negatively on one of the world's greatest harbours and inexorably limiting and degrading the public's right of access to waterways and their foreshores so clearly intended in Government edicts from the earliest days of settlement.

POLICY

1. The National Trust strongly reiterates the Trust's policy of some 34 years regarding the implementation and enforcement by the Government and its agencies of strict regulatory controls including set-backs from high water mark and building heights, to protect the scenic, cultural and conservation values of the foreshores of Sydney Harbour, its waterways and tributaries and the Parramatta River.
2. High rise development is not to be sited on the foreshores and, where development is proposed, it is to be of lower scale nearer the water's edge and taking into account the local topography, stepping up from the waterways.
3. Generous and easily public accessed foreshore reserves and parks are to be established, not just limited public access and narrow walkways.
4. There is to be no major overshadowing of foreshore parks and waterways from new development proposed on or near the foreshore.

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¹ Parameters for the River, Leonard M. A. Lynch, Mark M. Spence, William C. Pearson, The National Trust of Australia (NSW) 1976

² Government Notice, Colonial Secretary's Office, August 21, 1828 (No.26), Sydney Monitor, 23 August, 1828, Trove