

PROTECT



# Communiqué of Past and Future Cities Forum: Reimagining Parramatta

Sky Suites Parramatta  
Thursday 28 July 2022





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# Communiqué of the Past & Future Cities Forum – Reimagining Parramatta: 28 July 2022

Issued by: National Trust of Australia (NSW)

## OVERVIEW

1. A **NATIONAL TRUST FORUM** of 220 experts, professional heritage organisations, community groups, individuals, government representatives and National Trust members was hosted by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) with support from the Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology and the Australian Institute of Architects on 28 July 2022 in **RESPONSE** to the **RAPID** and **EXPONENTIAL GROWTH** of Parramatta.
2. The Forum was aimed at **DEBATING** ways rapidly growing areas can create a unique and identifiable character, **DISCUSSING** the heritage design elements that should be included in city design, and **REIMAGINING** how this can be integrated into the urban design process in Western Sydney.
3. The Forum **CHALLENGED** planners, government agencies, Councils, urban designers and architects to **REIMAGINE** their approaches, **INCORPORATE** different possibilities, and to **EXPERIENCE** other viewpoints.
4. The Forum **REITERATED** that the future of Parramatta's heritage is a **SHARED RESPONSIBILITY**, involving government at all levels, owners, corporations and community groups, and that Government must show **LEADERSHIP**, engage the community and provide effectively targeted **RESOURCES** to facilitate heritage conservation.
5. The Forum **AFFIRMED** the **FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE** of Parramatta's unique heritage places and landscapes. The Forum **RECOGNISED** the significant contribution that cultural heritage places make to our cities and state - contributing to our identity, creating a sense of place and representing the State's story, its people and its shared connections.
6. The Forum **RECOGNISED** the **IMPORTANT** role Parramatta's cultural heritage places have in domestic and international tourism and their **CONTRIBUTION** to a vibrant state and local economy.
7. The Forum **EXPRESSED CONCERN** that major developments, planning proposals and precinct renewals are causing irreparable damage to and erasure of Parramatta's heritage places, character and landscapes.
8. There was **CONSENSUS** that Parramatta's heritage places are a resource for its future and that **NEW APPROACHES** are needed.



9. The Forum **IDENTIFIED** the following issues as **CRITICAL** to the future of Parramatta's past:

- Urban density is important to reduce urban sprawl, but only where this can be accommodated with the overall aim of maintaining and enhancing a varied and interesting urban environment.
- The preservation of heritage assets, including buildings, streetscapes, parklands, and river environments, is a critical component of this process and fundamental to the development of vibrant communities.
- The NSW Government and Parramatta City Council need to take a leadership role to ensure that Parramatta's heritage places, their settings and the overall historic character of Parramatta is protected, giving the people of Western Sydney access to world class heritage precincts.
- Parramatta's development objectives should strive to protect and enhance the individual heritage values of localities within the overall area and aim to create and maintain locally distinctive urban villages in new development zones.
- Zonings, floor space ratios, heights etc must respect listed heritage items (including Conservation Areas), and spot re-zoning must consider the cumulative impact it is having on the cityscape.
- Significant investment in to the protection, restoration and promotion of Parramatta's heritage places and landscape should be a priority for all levels of government. Key sites that need urgent investment, precinct planning and holistic design with heritage at the forefront are:
  - The entirety of North Parramatta, including the Female Factory
  - Roxy Theatre
  - Harris Park heritage precinct
  - Parramatta Park
  - Parramatta River
  - Prince Alfred Square
- Community and public participation needs to happen upfront, involve engagement with Parramatta's diverse communities, and offer true opportunity to comment on identified options.

10. The Forum **EXPRESSED** gratitude to the National Trust of Australia (NSW) for hosting the Forum with supporting organisations the Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology and the Australian Institute of Architecture.

11. The Past and Future Cities Forum **REMINDED** us to be imaginative in our approaches, to think beyond the economics, and to embrace a future for Parramatta that will benefit future generations, and **NOTED** that Parramatta will not simply be **DEFINED** by what is created, but by what is destroyed.