

UPDATE: Campaign for Heritage and Planning Inquiry

Dear Friends,

Monday marked the beginning of voting in the state election, so it's time for an update on the RHSV campaign to get candidates for the Legislative Council to commit to resuming the Inquiry begun under this legislature.

On 5 October, we emailed all candidates and parties for the Legislative Council as well as other heritage organisations (copy below). We got responses from all parties except Labor and all the responses we got were very positive.

We got support from most of the cross bench. Our old friends Clifford Hayes MLC (Sustainable Australia) and Samantha Ratnam MLC (Greens), who initiated the Inquiry begun last year both gave their strong personal support and committed their parties.

Derryn Hinch wrote a personal pledge of support on behalf of his Justice Party as did Bronwyn Currie for the Animal Justice Party, of which she is Victorian Convenor and Lead Candidate. And the Victorian Socialists made a firm and extensive statement of support.

David Davis, MLC, Upper House Leader of the Liberal Party wrote a personal response of some substance, committing not only the Liberal Party but the coalition to supporting the Inquiry. He highlighted their support for extending the terms of reference. Of particular note there was his commitment to 'the protection of precincts where individual properties may not reach a relevant threshold for protection, but in fact the precinct in aggregate is of great significance and worthy of protection'.

Despite several requests, we have not been able to obtain a response from the Labor Party. This surprised us because the former Planning Minister, Richard Wynnne, supported the original Inquiry and the current Planning Minister, the Hon. Lizzie Blandthorn MP, has made some excellent decisions, most notably in extending the boundaries of the World Heritage Environs Area protecting the Royal Exhibition Building/Carlton Gardens World Heritage site. We hope that it is owing to confusion that the Labor Party has failed to respond and that we will soon hear positively from them. In that case we would update you. If any of you get a written response from a Labor candidate, please let us know.

When the next legislature convenes, we will be seeking to hold all parties to account and restart the Inquiry. Thanks to all of you who have supported our campaign and put questions to candidates.

Please respond to admin.officer@historyvictoria.org.au.

Yours sincerely,

Charles Sowerwine, Chair,
Heritage Committee, RHSV.

Email to all parties and candidates for the Legislative Council, sent 5 October 2022

On behalf Royal Historical Society of Victoria, I write to you in your capacity as a candidate for the Victorian Legislative Council seeking your commitment to support a renewal of the Legislative Council Inquiry into the protections within the Victorian Planning Framework.

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria represents 340 local historical societies across Victoria. Founded in 1909, the RHSV has actively supported the commemoration and protection of history and heritage both in Melbourne and across Victoria. In 2016, responding to concerns of our members that significant heritage was being lost, the RHSV created the Heritage Committee, which I chair, to speak on its behalf in these matters.

I write to you because the Victorian planning system is failing to protect valued heritage. Everyone knows of the destruction of the 1857 Carlton Inn (Corkman Hotel) in 2016, and of the impending demolition of the 1914 Jack Dyer Stand, Melbourne's most important witness to the heroic period of Aussie Rules and the only surviving symbol of the Richmond Football Club's presence at the Punt Road Oval. But much more serious is the loss of local historic buildings which underpinned and gave meaning to communities throughout Victoria.

We need fundamental changes to the planning system. The first step was begun with the Legislative Council Inquiry into the protections within the Victorian Planning Framework concluded last month. That Inquiry received 285 submissions (see (<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/epc-lc/inquiries/article/4652>), but was aborted without hearings and without a full report. Its only recommendation was that a full inquiry be initiated at the beginning of the next Parliament, based on and continuing this Inquiry (see the Interim Report [here](#)).

We are asking you as a candidate to commit to a full Inquiry in the next Parliament if you are elected. Will you make that commitment?

I would be grateful to hear back from you, if possible by 2nd November, so that we can include your response in the next issue of our newsletter.

Please respond to admin.officer@historyvictoria.org.au.

Yours sincerely,

Charles Sowerwine, Chair,
Heritage Committee, RHSV.