

ICOMOS NEW ZEALAND

TE MANA O NGA POUWHENUA O TE AO

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
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Submission to the Productivity Commission: Better Urban Planning discussion paper

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Introduction

ICOMOS is an international non-governmental organisation of heritage professionals dedicated to the conservation of the world's historic monuments and sites. The organisation was founded in 1965 as a result of the international adoption of the Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites in Venice in the previous year. ICOMOS is UNESCO's principal advisor in matters concerning the conservation and protection of historic monuments and sites. The New Zealand National Committee was established in 1989 and incorporated in 1990.

ICOMOS New Zealand has 99 members made up of professionals with a particular interest and expertise in heritage issues, including architects, engineers, heritage advisers, archaeologists, lawyers, and planners.

In 1993 ICOMOS New Zealand published the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value. A revised ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value was approved in September 2010 and is available on the ICOMOS New Zealand website.

The heritage conservation principles outlined in the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter are based on a fundamental respect for significant heritage fabric and the associative or spiritual values of the place, conserved where necessary to ensure long term survival and the continuation of cultural heritage value, with the use of modern technology and materials where justified to ensure sustainable management and lasting stability.

Scope of this submission

ICOMOS NZ supports the general concept of a 'first principles' inquiry into the New Zealand urban planning system, and thanks the Commission for the opportunity to respond to the corresponding paper that has been prepared to stimulate discussion on this important topic.

We note that the discussion paper traverses a range of issues regarding the perceived state of urban planning currently being practiced in New Zealand, with this culminating in a series of 39

key questions. Whilst none of these questions specifically touch on historic heritage, in the broader sense they collectively encompass aspects or issues that intersect with historic heritage.

In light of this ICOMOS NZ would like to offer the following suggestions to help inform the Commission's review of the urban planning system. As an alternative to providing a specific response to the questions posed in the discussion document we have instead identified a series of high level principles, associated methods and corresponding issues we consider to be fundamental to this review; these, in turn, are based on the foundational document that underpins the conservation and management of historic heritage in New Zealand, the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Protection of Places of Cultural Heritage Value (a copy of which we've attached to this submission for your information and convenience).

General historic heritage principles:

- Heritage is a necessary and vital component of a dynamic local and national community
- Heritage places are a scarce and non-renewable resource
- Heritage represents a repository of the collective values of our society, and underpins our sense of national identity and 'sense of place'
- Heritage needs to be effectively identified, protected and managed
- Heritage is an important element of the resource management system, and as such needs to be appropriately recognised as part of this review and any future reform of the current system
- Heritage is currently recognised as a matter of national importance in the RMA (section 6(f)), the status of which should not be relinquished or diminished as a result of this review
- Heritage should be managed in accordance with international 'best practice' , including active engagement with local communities

Methods to manage historic heritage:

- Methods need to be based on robust comprehensive research
- Methods to identify historic heritage need to include all communities
- Heritage recognition needs to include a broad and comprehensive range of heritage types, not just built heritage
- Methods to protect and manage historic heritage should include local authority listing/scheduling supported by a corresponding framework of relevant objectives, policies and rules
- Methods should recognise the role that private owners assume in protecting and maintaining historic heritage for the wider local/national 'public good' and include adequate provision for publicly funded incentives or other forms of assistance (i.e. heritage ownership should not be viewed in the context of being a disincentive or a disadvantage)
- Methods should be linked to the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act, which recognises the contribution heritage makes to the nation

Recognition of the ICOMOS Charter:

- Methods should recognise and take into account the importance of the Charter and its universal application
- The charter principles should be incorporated into the philosophy and practice of heritage protection and management exercised by local authorities

Issues for consideration

- The increasing incidence of ‘demolition by neglect’, a situation that is likely to be accentuated by the proposed changes to heritage buildings in the Building (Earthquake Prone Buildings) Amendment Bill
- The major impact that sea level rise will have on historic heritage, particularly on built and archaeological sites within a coastal setting
- The important contribution that historic heritage makes in promoting social and cultural wellbeing
- Ensuring that any anticipated changes incorporate sufficient opportunities for ‘third party’ rights to be exercised
- The development of a specific National Policy Statement for heritage
- The ability for communities to craft bespoke management systems at a local level

We hope that these suggestions constructively assist the review process. Should the Commission require further elaboration on the Charter or the matters raised above ICOMOS NZ would welcome the opportunity to meet with Commission representatives.

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