



Monday, 20 December 2010

Knuckey's Store de-listed but its Aboriginal significance recognised

The damaged remains of Knuckey's Store in Wellington have been formally removed from the State Heritage Register.

Following a recommendation from the Heritage Council of NSW, Planning Minister Tony Kelly agreed to the de-listing, but at the same time commenced a process to officially recognise the location of the store as an Aboriginal Place.

The NSW Government will also provide funding for work to commence on an oral history of elderly people who have a connection to the site.

Chair of the Heritage Council Gabrielle Kibble said it had recommended de-listing of the item for a number of reasons, including that:

- the place, rather than the building itself, is considered significant to the local Aboriginal community;
- it is not considered feasible to establish an ongoing economic use of the item; and
- the amount of conservation work required would essentially result in a replica of the store rather than a restored version of the original structure.

Ms Kibble said that during discussions on the proposed de-listing representatives of the local Aboriginal community had also raised concerns that the remains of the building itself and the prospect of a drawn-out restoration process were potential impediments to ongoing reconciliation.

"There is no doubt that the Knuckey's Store site has historical importance for Aboriginal people in the area and that importance should be recognised," Ms Kibble said.

"The Government is now putting in place processes to ensure that happens, but after careful consideration and consultation, it was decided that State heritage listing is not the appropriate mechanism."

Ms Kibble will now write to the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water to initiate investigations into the site on the corner of Swift and Arthur Streets being officially recognised as an Aboriginal Place under the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

An Aboriginal Place Management Plan would also be developed as part of this process.

Ms Kibble will also write to the owners of the site, the Wellington Soldiers Memorial Club, seeking an assurance that:

- Knuckey's Store will be archivally recorded before demolition; and

- that the memorial garden works for Knuckey's Corner will be undertaken as well as their long term maintenance.

"I would also like to thank the community for its input during the public exhibition of the de-listing proposal, which contributed significantly to a better understanding of the site and its importance," Ms Kibble said.

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