

BEFORE THE CHRISTCHURCH REPLACEMENT  
DISTRICT PLAN INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANEL

UNDER: the Canterbury Earthquake (Christchurch  
Replacement District Plan) order 2014

and

IN THE MATTER OF: Chapter 9.3 - the Natural and Cultural  
Heritage Proposal

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Memorandum of Counsel for Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga

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May it please the Panel

1. The following advice is provided at the recent request of the Christchurch Replacement Plan hearings panel, where Judge Hansen requested *"...is it possible to have some clarity on any role that Heritage New Zealand can play given the particular circumstances in Christchurch.....on the topic of assisting in training or guidance to potential heritage professional involved in certification"*.
2. Certification raises questions about who would be accountable for the certification process and what statutory authority would they have to select certifiers, what would be the eligible qualifications and experience, and could certifiers authorise consent outside the RMA?

### **The current heritage education and training situation**

3. Currently, there are very few opportunities to undertake a comprehensive study of cultural heritage conservation in New Zealand leading to a formal qualification. However, there are a substantial number of education and training programmes, including 1-2 year academic courses available outside of New Zealand which lead to formal heritage qualifications. There is also the opportunity for occasional study programmes or short courses in New Zealand but these are often unrelated and do not culminate in a formal qualification. It is clear that there is a need for both a greater number of qualified heritage practitioners and further training for those already involved in cultural heritage conservation in New Zealand.
4. Heritage New Zealand has on occasion been a participant or partner in providing workshops or learning opportunities for heritage practitioners. This approach to date has been occasional and has been an adjunct to staffs' day to day work advising and guiding owners and heritage consent applicants. Heritage New Zealand staff also provide limited input into tertiary education courses by contributing time and knowledge on specific topics.

### **Certification**

5. Rather than use the terms conservation architect or heritage expert, the term 'heritage specialist' would be more appropriate in our view to encompass the sorts of necessary expertise that informs heritage work. 'Heritage specialist' should include at least architectural historians, architects, archaeologists, engineers and landscape architects that have training and experience in heritage work.
6. Any certification process would have to be based on a high level of training and experience where heritage specialists, once selected would form a small group of certified heritage specialists. The number of certified heritage specialists would in part be determined by how high the bar is set in terms of eligibility for certification. The Crown's submission is that an overseas master's degree in conservation would be a pre-requisite. Currently, most heritage specialists do not possess this particular qualification and adopting this approach would mean that there would be very few who could reach the status of being 'certified'.
7. It is proposed in the submissions before the Panel that for the Christchurch situation a certified heritage specialist would be able to work with heritage owners and applicants to determine consenting requirements and assist local authorities with the processing of heritage related applications. This approach appears to be

an outcome following the Christchurch earthquakes and the Government's wish to see less consenting and a reduction in the associated costs and complexity for owners going through a resource management process.

8. This approach could also be employed for plans outside the Christchurch area if it is successfully implemented in the Christchurch Replacement Plan.
9. Heritage New Zealand acknowledges that there are very few heritage specialists in this region and this has been causing delays in, for example, getting conservation plans written, and delaying owner consent applications. In Canterbury there is one resident conservation architect, a number of architectural historians and other heritage specialists. Conservation architects from outside the region however do work in Canterbury and many have a New Zealand-wide practice.
10. There could be the problem of having an even smaller group of certified heritage specialists available to certify heritage compliance which could lead to delays in processing times.

#### **Standards**

11. Part of the role of education is ensuring standards are maintained. Currently there can be variation between heritage practitioners' approach to resolving good heritage outcomes, when the ideal should be a more consistent approach to the theory and management of proposed change to a heritage place. The interpretation of the high level ICOMOS NZ principles can be diverse. This is also a common factor with other professions where, for example, engineers provide widely divergent assessment outcomes for the same building.

#### **Role of Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga**

12. As the largest heritage organisation nationally with a range of skills in planning, architecture, archaeology and history, we have a relevant basket of knowledge to impart to other heritage practitioners, and those parties involved in the repair and upgrade of earthquake damaged buildings for example. The way to devolve this knowledge is to have guidance in an accessible form and assist practitioners in their professional development..While Heritage New Zealand may be able to offer guidance and learning opportunities, this does not equate to any ability to provide qualifications.
13. To provide a certification regime there would have to be proper resources which are not currently available to Heritage New Zealand.
14. Heritage New Zealand could assist the cultural heritage sector working with heritage places (pre and post disaster) by:
  - Setting standards and publishing guidelines that are easily accessible on our website. For example our Conservation Plan Guidance document which is currently in draft form; ensuring our Sustainable Management of Historic Heritage Guidance Series are formatted to include practical examples.
  - Providing workshops and seminars for heritage practitioners on topics such as Interpreting and working with the ICOMOS Charter and Heritage New Zealand Sustainable Management Guidelines; "RMA consenting processes" or "Working with owners and their heritage projects".
  - Promoting and supporting mentoring for heritage specialists embarking on heritage projects to expand their skill set and to expand the number of related professionals cognisant of heritage processes.

- Recognising ICOMOS NZ who have identified available training opportunities internationally and are currently promoting these learning and qualification opportunities to the professions in addition to considering offering and encouraging the provision of other professional development opportunities locally. For example, in May 2016 ICOMOS will be offering four heritage Comparative Analysis workshops across New Zealand to heritage professionals. These workshops have direct relevance to the RMA particularly in the assessment of heritage significance for consents processes as well as preparing conservation plans and the more complex comparative analysis required for preparation of a World Heritage nomination.
15. The above ideas are not about certification, but broadening the practitioner knowledge base and promoting learning opportunities to strengthen existing practitioner skills. There is an opportunity also to provide learning opportunities for those other related professionals such as architects wanting to expand their abilities into the heritage sector.
  16. Certification then might instead take the form of training and guidance. This information could then be incorporated into a list that identifies individual professional experience, qualifications and professional development that could be used as a resource by Councils, owners and Heritage New Zealand to select heritage practitioners best matched to a particular project.

Dated this 25<sup>th</sup> day of February 2016

  
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