



## COUNCIL OF HERITAGE MOTOR CLUBS NSW INC.

### National Cultural Policy Survey

21 August 2022

The Council of Heritage Motor Clubs NSW (CHMC) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the process to develop a new National Cultural Policy.

The Council of Heritage Motor Clubs NSW is a federation of historic vehicle car clubs from across NSW, established in 1970. It is a peak body representing those clubs and their thousands of members to government, the public and business and community organisations, on all matters relevant to the preservation, conservation and operation of heritage motor vehicles. CHMC is an active member of Operating Heritage Australia and the Australian Historic Motoring Federation. Our membership is focussed on the protection, maintenance and use of historic vehicles for cultural, social and educational purposes.

CHMC would like to see a National Cultural Policy that strongly recognises and supports all moveable and technological heritage across Australia, including heritage motor vehicles. Movable and operating heritage has been largely unrecognised and under-valued in previous Australian cultural policies and by the traditional heritage sector.

Heritage vehicles and machinery are a significant part of our cultural, technological and economic heritage and history. These moveable heritage objects, and their related intangible heritage, are intrinsic to the identity and story of our nation yet are little, if at all, acknowledged by government in policies, protection and funding.

Largely unsupported and under-recognised by government, heritage vehicles and machines, the majority in the hands of private custodians and operators, continue to contribute to our economy and culture, their maintenance and preservation turning over millions of dollars per annum. The events associated with the display or touring of these vehicles and machines generate further millions of dollars through communities across the nation. The economic and value of heritage vehicles and machinery should not be underestimated, nor should their value as educational and technological objects be underrated. The public are consistent supporters of these objects, demonstrated clearly when no gathering or display of heritage vehicles and machinery goes without attracting the public's attention and enthusiastic interest.

The Council of Heritage Motor Clubs NSW would welcome the opportunity to be further involved in the National Cultural Policy, or to discuss issues and comments raised in this submission.

We agree that this submission can be made public (published).

For further information, please contact:  
The Secretary  
Council of Heritage Motor Clubs NSW Inc.  
[Secretary@heritagemotoringcouncil.org.au](mailto:Secretary@heritagemotoringcouncil.org.au)

What challenges and opportunities do you see in the pillar or pillars most relevant to you?

## 1. First Nations

We recognise the importance of First Nations cultural heritage and support the appropriate protection, management and use of all movable and intangible heritage.

## 2. A Place for Every Story

Cultural heritage is, or should be, more than iconic items and aesthetically pleasing objects. Our cultural “story”, to be valid and encompassing, must include those objects that have influenced everyday life as well as those that are celebrated, famous or well known.

Challenges and opportunities:

1. Commonwealth legislation fails to adequately protect or recognise movable and intangible heritage, lack of regulation and policy makes its preservation more difficult.  
The *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act* is meant to manage import and export, but as it has not been usefully updated since 1986 it repeatedly fails to adequately control exports of moveable heritage. The *Borders of Culture Report* (2015) was tabled and applauded by the movable heritage sector, but much needed revisions to the PMCH, based on the recommendations in the Report have still not been enacted.

There exists a significant opportunity for the Commonwealth Department of the Arts to be the “champion” for cultural heritage, if the National Cultural Policy provides it with a strong pathway to do so. As no other Government Department appears take interest in recognising and supporting moveable heritage it is appropriate that the Department of the Arts should be given an expanded and stronger role.

2. Traditional heritage thinking and practice often overlooks movable heritage in Australia: -
  - i. Moveable heritage is cursorily mentioned in Commonwealth publications and policy dealing with cultural heritage;
  - ii. Intangible heritage, i.e., knowledge and skills, is also largely ignored when it relates to operating heritage, machines, industrial heritage objects and heritage vehicles, yet the “stories” in the form of knowledge, skills and oral histories for other cultural sectors are frequently revered, encouraged and protected;
  - iii. “Place” is an interesting concept to highlight. If interpreted as physical place, then the current attachment of heritage significance in Commonwealth practice and policy to a “place” or site is restrictive, and ignores that an object can be significant to a substantial community of people who may be spread throughout the nation, e.g., a veteran vehicle that the community of veteran car enthusiasts across Australia consider to be of the highest significance;
  - iv. Museums and galleries are not the only custodians of moveable heritage, in fact they hold only a small fraction of Australia’s movable heritage objects. Operating heritage sectors estimate that at least 500,000 Australians are owners and custodians for automotive, aviation, maritime, industrial and agricultural heritage.

As to the cultural value of these non-museum collections, small and big in number, annually more than 3½ million people visit displays and gatherings of moveable and operating heritage, their interest in these “everyday” objects, including heritage vehicles, performing their original functions, indicates the level of interest outside of static displays in museums.

The new National Cultural Policy presents an opportunity for Government to address these issues and:

- i. Document more thoroughly the rightful place of movable heritage in the stories of our nation and,
  - that it is a valid and respected part of our cultural heritage, and
  - that all Government agencies acknowledge the importance of movable heritage and respond with well-informed and appropriate actions when dealing with moveable heritage;
- ii. Document that intangible heritage comes from all cultural heritage sectors, including moveable and technological heritage;
- iii. Document that “heritage significance” is not based on or restricted to “place or space”;
- iv. Highlight that cultural heritage is not just the prerogative of museums and galleries but that it is just as valid when held in private and community collections, and when it is distributed and not confined by place. Movable heritage does just that - it moves! It is re-locatable, and in the hands of private custodians most often is operational too, e.g., veteran cars and steam trains.

### 3. The Centrality of the Artist

Heritage vehicles, indeed all heritage transport and movable heritage objects are testament to the creativity of artists of all kinds, both in their initial design and creation – think car designers and stylists, craftsmen coach builders, and in their operational condition the impact of those objects on the worlds of painting, sculpture, architecture, photography and film. Recognition of the creativity and skilled hands of the various artists and craftsmen in, for example, classic vehicles, is evidenced by the featured displays of such vehicles at internationally celebrated art galleries and museums.

But the creativity of those who designed, developed and produced everyday cultural heritage must also be respected, named and acclaimed. As noted above, cultural heritage should not be limited to the iconic and famous.

All too often the creativity involved and skills in producing movable objects is overlooked in cultural heritage.

There is an opportunity for the new National Cultural Policy to expand the concept of “the artist’ beyond the traditional and to recognise that creativity exists in many areas other than “the arts”.

### 4. Strong Institutions

We have interpreted “institutions” to include all groups that are custodians of Australian cultural heritage, not just museums and galleries. The historic vehicle movement across Australia includes in excess of 3,000 clubs, in addition operating heritage organisations account for hundreds more.

These organisations are almost entirely run by volunteers, are self-funded, receiving little or no Government support, they are invariably well-connected with their local communities and regions, and provide diverse opportunities for all ages and genders to engage directly with movable and operating heritage as owners, restorers, curators and enthusiasts. They collectively care for a huge and diverse collection of Australia’s movable cultural heritage. They are, in effect, collecting and curating institutions.

As a heritage sector, these organisations, big and small, would consider themselves a strong group, numerically, socially and culturally. Individually though, many struggle with:

- i. Funding, all too often traditional heritage funding opportunities exclude either their type of organisation or the movable heritage objects they seek to get funding to preserve;
- ii. Accessing relevant and quality training and skills for preserving and operating movable heritage;
- iii. Complying with 21<sup>st</sup> century regulations and operating protocols that have been applied unilaterally, without due consideration or consultation to pre-21<sup>st</sup> century objects, and which impact greatly in their viability.

These issues significantly affect the strength of many of our movable heritage “institutions” and highlight their vulnerability.

The new National Cultural Policy has the opportunity to acknowledge the vital contribution of these associations and communities make to our cultural heritage, and to:

- i. Signify that all Commonwealth cultural heritage funding must also be inclusive of and accessible to these groups and objects and related intangible heritage;
- ii. Indicate that all cultural heritage groups have inclusive and equitable access to heritage training and skills;
- iii. Emphasize that before legislation and regulations are developed governments must first consider and negotiate with movable and operating heritage custodians to avoid adverse consequences for the objects.

## 5. Reaching the Audience

As noted above, the membership of the organisations and groups that make up the movable heritage community in Australia represent at least ½ million people, a significant “in-house audience”. Add to that number the more than 3½ million people who annually seek out and experience movable cultural heritage through the displays, rallies, field day, tours and community events that the clubs and related organisations hold, that’s a significantly sizeable audience who see movable heritage as something of value and interest. It demonstrates how their forebears engaged with transport and technology, and this is what brings them to see it.

While those audience numbers are solid and ostensibly indicate a strong sector, they mask underlying challenges in sustaining the audience and reaching more. The movable heritage sector has identified several areas that need urgent attention:

- i. Better understanding of movable heritage by the public, government agencies and traditional heritage professions, and an appreciation of the significance of movable cultural heritage objects and their appropriate preservation rather than tolerance or acceptance of their deterioration or desecration;
- ii. Imposition of blanket legislation and regulations that pays no heed to the peculiarities of movable and operating heritage, imposition of regulations for current technologies that impede the safe and viable operation of old technologies;
- iii. The sector is dominated by an older demographic, engaging more younger people in the preservation and operation of movable heritage is widely seen as critical to its future;
- iv. While “audience” numbers are good, this has been achieved with little or no support from governments, the sector needs assistance in accurately measuring its impact and in promoting its opportunities.

The new National Cultural Policy presents an opportunity for Government to explain and promote movable cultural heritage to all Australians by:

- i. Documenting in the new Policy the cultural heritage significance of all movable heritage, thus sending a message that it is not an area to be overlooked and undervalued;

- ii. Indicating that heritage technologies have different operating and management requirements to contemporary technologies, and that these differences should be applauded and highlighted (under appropriate and agreed safe operating protocols) and not obstructed by inappropriate regulations. Regulations conceived for current technologies should not unduly impinge on the opportunities for heritage technologies to educate a wider and ongoing audience;
  - iii. Indicating in the Policy that movable heritage is a respected and valuable sector of national heritage, this will encourage interest in it by various generations, and bring it to the attention of the next generations of heritage academics and custodians;
  - iv. Acknowledging the size and economic and tourism value of the movable cultural heritage sector to the nation in the National Cultural Policy will improve the opportunities for movable heritage sector administrators to seek marketing assistance and thus greater audience engagement.
-