



The Privatisation of Rural Heritage in New South Wales

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Of all the constituent types, rural heritage is amongst a group that struggles the most in adapting to 21st Century urbanization. By urbanization, I mean the incipient and often rapacious development that creeps up on some of the country's very earliest farming estates; reducing their curtilage and settings to ridiculously small and compromised remnants. The nature of distortion that is set in train after each one of these items (farms and farm houses from the 18th and 19th Centuries) is heritage listed, is the key focus of this paper. The onslaught of suburbia, industry, infrastructure and commerce upon the fragile settings of these delicate historical remnants provides the overall context of my paper. What I attempt to reveal is the ineffectual achievement of heritage listing as a means of capturing and communicating the now threatened cultural values comprised in the remnant rural heritage stock of NSW. I will show that while listing may go some way towards conserving important physical fabric, it largely fails to achieve its own programmatic ideal of communicating heritage values to those for whom it is targeted i.e. the people of NSW. I have selected 'rural heritage' as a species of the remnant built heritage stock because I believe that its illustration of this point is most cogent. The five examples of State-listed rural heritage properties that I discuss exemplify the problems associated with the viability of heritage listing as a means of capturing and communicating historic heritage values.

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