

CONSERVATION SOLUTIONS SUBMISSION TO THE  
PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION INTO THE POLICY  
FRAMEWORK FOR THE CONSERVATION OF  
HISTORIC HERITAGE

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This submission has been prepared by Conservation Solutions to respond to the Productivity Commission inquiry into the Policy Framework and Incentives for the Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage as defined by the Heritage Act.

## **2. ROLE OF “CONSERVATION SOLUTIONS”**

Conservation Solutions is a sole operated business located in Newtown servicing the private, museums and galleries sector, specialising in three main areas; textiles, paintings and Sydney sandstone. My mission is to conserve artefacts of cultural significance in a culturally sustainable way.

Conservation Solutions provides services in the following areas:

- Materials analysis
- Condition assessments
- Surveys
- Preventive and interventive conservation treatments
- Conservation education programmes and workshops

Since its inception in 2000, Conservation Solutions has been involved in two major projects:

(a) Design and implementation of a test sequence to evaluate the condition of Sydney sandstone buildings in conjunction with the University of Technology, Sydney and the Department of Public Works Services.

(b) Conservation of Indonesian textiles for the New Asian Gallery of the NSW Art Gallery.

## **3. MAJOR ISSUES**

The major issues for small conservation businesses are:

- Conservation education and training to address skills shortages in the heritage sector
- The high cost of insurance premiums

### **3.1 Conservation education & training to address skills shortages**

Since 1975 when the Pigott Report first identified the need for a national conservation training course, there has been no report on conservation training courses in Australia and the Pacific Rim.

Forty years on, the skills gap audit commissioned by the Australian Institute of the Conservation of Cultural Materials has identified areas of training required to address skills shortages in the heritage sector to carry out physical conservation work.

A report into education and training is now long overdue to assess training and education needs in the heritage sector.

### **3.2 High insurance premiums for private conservators**

The high cost of insurance premiums is a major limiting factor for work undertaken by conservators in private practice. For example, one quotation assessed a personal accident insurance premium at \$1,110.00 for capital and weekly accident benefits valued at \$400,000 and \$800.00 respectively over a period of 3-6months.

### **4. CONCLUSION**

This submission identifies two major issues affecting small conservation businesses in New South Wales:

- Conservation education and training to address the skills shortages required to carry out physical conservation work
- High cost of insurance premiums for sole operators.