

PROTECTING THE FUTURE OF OUR AUTOMOTIVE PAST



Vintage cars at Trundle, CHMC Annual Rally 2014. © Jennifer Fawbert



September 9th 2015

The Council of Heritage Motor Clubs NSW welcomes this opportunity to provide this background document to our initial conversation with Heritage NSW.

Protecting the future of our automotive past is more than just museum displays, it is about ensuring that our automotive heritage is broadly appreciated and carefully preserved for future generations.

Protecting our automotive heritage overwhelmingly relies on individuals and groups who willingly take on the identification, preservation and use of heritage motoring artefacts. In using and displaying these artefacts as they were intended these individuals and groups share widely and frequently our automotive history with the wider community.¹

Background

Heritage vehicles are automobiles, motorcycles, utilitarian vehicles, trucks, buses, trailers, motor cycles and other mechanically operated vehicles as well as non-rail vehicles such as tractors, tracked vehicles and steam traction engines that are over 30 years old and are authentic or maintained as close to original as possible

Since 1945 the owners of older vehicles, the curators of vehicle collections and the restorers of vehicles have been very successful at salvaging, preserving and keeping heritage vehicles in operation.

Heritage vehicle owners became organised in a network of clubs, some locally based and several with national memberships. Some clubs specialise in a particular make or type of vehicle, others in a particular era, such as veteran or vintage. The members of these clubs own cars, trucks, motorbikes and tractors that are over 30 years old. Some vehicles are over 100 years old, some vehicles are unique, some are rare and many are everyday vehicles from our nation's transport past. Their owners share one common purpose, that is, to keep alive the sights and sounds of the vehicles that were an integral part of the automotive history of Australia.

In NSW many of those clubs belong to the Council of Heritage Motoring Clubs NSW Inc. (CHMC) which represents those clubs at state and national levels to government, business and community organisations. The CHMC actively represents its affiliated clubs at State and National levels by engaging with other motoring councils, government departments, community groups and business organisations where issues or trends affecting our member's opportunities to use and enjoy their heritage vehicles are concerned.

Council's objectives are to:

- Encourage the preservation of heritage vehicles and related artefacts to ensure that authentic examples of our automotive past are available for future generations.
- Protect the responsible use of heritage vehicles through supportive action and effective relations with state and national authorities.
- Promote a heritage vehicle culture through events and communication. Council supports activities that are consistent with its ideals.

To galvanise these objectives Council wishes to promote the concept of historic vehicles as items of moveable cultural heritage, and in turn signify the cultural and economic impact of the heritage vehicle on Australian society.

Aligned with these objectives Council and its member clubs support various activities aimed at raising public awareness of historic vehicles such as local and regional vehicle displays and National

¹ Turvey D. and Fawbert J. September 2015.

Motoring Heritage Day which commemorates our transport heritage while demonstrating just how many interesting heritage vehicles are still very capable of taking to the road.

The Council's major motoring event is the Annual Rally, hosted by a member club in a different region of NSW each year. This event attracts between 100 and 200 vehicles, owner and their families as well as hundreds of interested spectators. The larger of these 4 day Rallies have been estimated by one local Chamber of Commerce to bring up to \$500,000.00 into a regional economy. Even local club on a day rally can input several hundreds of dollars into a local community with food, fuel and regional and memorabilia purchases.

The CHMC is a member of the national confederation of state councils, the Australian Historic Motoring Federation, which represents the interests of heritage vehicle enthusiasts nationally. In that association CHMC has been strenuously advocating the importance for wider recognition and sympathetic management of our automotive heritage.

In the last few years the importance of heritage vehicles to the development of modern culture and lifestyles, and the influence of the automotive industry on the economy have been increasingly recognised, especially overseas. In the USA a U.S. Senate Resolution recognised that the *"collection and restoration of historic and classic cars is an important part of preserving the technological achievements and cultural heritage of the United States."* In the UK and several European countries government and heritage agencies have formally acknowledged the historical importance and economic value of heritage vehicles and the associated trades and skills that support those vehicles.

Noteworthy is the close working relationship that has developed between the Federation of British Historic Vehicles Clubs and English Heritage in recent years

CHMC would welcome closer alliances with agencies and organisations managing heritage in NSW and thus increase the opportunities for our vehicles and related structures and artefacts to be seen and acknowledged as heritage objects. We are keen to link historic vehicles with the well-established heritage world that concentrates so much on historic houses and sites. This sort of cooperation has been proving very successful in other countries, such as the UK and France, where it is seen to be of mutual benefit in both promoting and enhancing the historic vehicle movement and heritage properties and sites.

CHMC appreciates this opportunity to begin discussion with the Heritage Division of the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage.

.....

"If we want to be able to experience historic vehicles in the future, we must make sure they are recognised as a part of our culture worth protecting now, and that doesn't mean putting old vehicles in museums.

Quite the opposite, we hope....this leads to people seeing more classic vehicles on public roads. This is the only way to share their history and the fascination they hold with everybody."

FIVA president Horst Brüning, 2013 at the Launch of the Charter of Turin, a document that encourages international cultural heritage status for historic vehicles by aligning heritage in the automotive sector with UNESCO criteria and assisting the world's governments in recognition of historic automobiles as cultural artefacts. <http://www.fiva.org/site/en/publications/category/2-charta-of-turin?download=335:turin-charter-english-final-version>

Areas of common interest

CHMC has ascertained that it has areas of common interest with the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage and other peak heritage organisations, these being -

1. Moveable heritage - the vehicles, plant and associated equipment
2. Related architecture – factories, showrooms, private and public garages, *and*
3. Related built environments – roads, highways, bridges, signage.

CHMC feels that the preservation, continued operation of and accessibility to the following is highly important:

1. Heritage vehicles in all shapes and sizes including, passenger cars, motorcycles, commercial vehicles, buses, farm vehicles and military vehicles. Council's affiliated clubs contain many thousands of such vehicles, of such a diversity and range of heritage significance and historical importance that within almost any one club we could nominate appropriate examples.

Supporting the heritage vehicles are small and large document and item collections, as well as working examples, of specialised engineering machinery, coachbuilders supplies and equipment, fuel and garage equipment, and photographic and literature artefacts.

2. Related architecture. Motor vehicles in particular had a major transformational role in architecture, both residential and commercial in the twentieth century. *For example* -
 - The Ford Homebush factory,
 - The Perdriau then Dunlop tyre factory, Birkenhead 1904-1960,
 - motels,
 - roadside diners,
 - early public car parks,
 - The Royal Automobile Club (1926-28) Sydney
 - The Studebaker building (1928), Yurong Street, Sydney,
 - Trundle Motors, Trundle.
 - Spanish Mission style service station (1928), Newtown
3. Related built environments. *For example* -
 - Surviving sections of the old Hume Highway, old Pacific Highway,
 - Putty Road and other wartime roads e.g. concrete sections of the Great Western Highway at Wallerawang,
 - The Cahill expressway,
 - Signage on the Johns River Service Station,
 - Mulwala Bridge (1924), Mulwala,
 - Long Gully Bridge (1939), Northbridge.

There is a dearth of coordinated and authenticated information on the vehicles, buildings and built environments relating to our Australian automotive heritage, much of which was and is seemingly unprotected by listed-building legislation. Possibly because of this very lack of available documentation the built environment has been and is vulnerable to alteration or loss, particularly structures still occupied by the motor industry where often change and novelty drive building unmonitored modifications.

CHMC has identified that....

- **Ensuring the heritage car fleet remains in an unmolested and authentic condition is a growing problem.**
 - The strong and persistent influence of American car shows emphasising modifications and modernisation as both profitable and desirable has resulted in many historic vehicles being irreversibly altered or placed at risk of such actions. (A parallel could be drawn with old buildings and modernisation or destruction by developers in NSW recent past).
 - State and Federal legislation often is "one-size fits all for vehicles" and does not consider the unique design of heritage vehicle, for example early heritage vehicles are unsuitable for fitting child safety restraints. We lack "champions" in government agencies who fully appreciate the value of heritage vehicles to help us lobby for appropriate and sensible consideration of such vehicles in legislation.

- **The training and supply of tradesman skilled in the preservation and restoration of heritage vehicles is declining** – including motor engineers, automotive electricians, coachbuilders, blacksmiths, motor body painters, sheet metal workers, wheelwrights (most horse drawn carriage wheelwrights are not skilled at or knowledgeable of automotive wooden wheels) – all such trades need specialised training to understand and be able to successfully practice the largely manual and non-digital skills needed for preserving, maintaining and operating older vehicles.
- **Public perception of authentically heritage vehicles is not well developed.** The general public just sees “old cars” and “old tractors”, much as they did for many years see just “old buildings”. Now thanks to the success of campaigns and education programs highlighting the heritage value of “old buildings” the public has a better concept and conscience about the maintenance and importance of those old buildings. Council would like to see public empathy for heritage vehicles in NSW significantly developed. Council acknowledges that it needs assistance in how best to effectively raise public awareness and engagement in the preservation and continued use of our automotive heritage.
- **Government attitude and response to moveable and built-environment heritage is an area that is outside the scope of CHMC’s normal legislation monitoring efforts**, which concentrate on motoring issues. Council would appreciate access to government information and discussions on the wider heritage issues and trends that affect automotive heritage.
- **The knowledge of how best to preserve heritage vehicles, related sites and equipment in our movement is limited.** Our members are very, very good at restoring vehicles, what they lack though is guidance in best practice for preserving vehicles, machinery and artefacts.

Areas of possible collaboration

- **Advocacy in Government.** CHMC has, over the last 40 years, had a good working relationship with the senior staff of the RMS NSW. However, CHMC would welcome further opportunities to collaborate with staff and ministers in other government departments to ensure the preservation of a strong and healthy heritage vehicle movement in NSW and to ensure that changes in legislation do not affect the access of heritage motor vehicles to the roads of NSW.
- **Promoting “Heritage Open Days”** which would encourage CHMC member clubs to display historic vehicles at a participating heritage site. In some CHMC local clubs this already occurs due to their alliance with a local museum or historic property, however we would like this to become a state- wide initiative and see greater opportunities for collaboration with local clubs and heritage sites. The size of such events and the vehicles presented could be tailored to suit the heritage venue.

Some heritage motorists often have other heritage related interests, such as local museums. This is particularly the case for those members from CHMC’s country and regional clubs as in smaller communities they are often committed to supporting their local heritage and history via their vehicles.

We see that a strengthening of the alliance between local CHMC clubs and local and regional heritage sites would be mutually beneficial. CHMC can provide much assistance in brokering those alliances.

Conclusion

The CHMC, its affiliated clubs and their members, by preserving, maintaining and operating heritage vehicles share a common desire to protect our social and engineering heritage, a heritage that is significantly demonstrated in the vehicles and related artefacts that have survived.

Those members and groups require an increased level of support and encouragement from government and the wider community to ensure the ongoing use and preservation of those vehicles into the future.

CHMC requests the Heritage Division of the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage assist it in identifying and collaborating with strong partners in NSW Government to protect the future of our automotive past by ensuring that heritage vehicles remain mobile, accessible and very present in the NSW community.

"It took the best part of 100 years for the railway infrastructure to be appreciated, now it is the turn of the car."²

For The Council of Heritage Motor Clubs NSW Inc.

Don Turvey, Registrar and Jenny Fawbert, Webmaster. September 9th 2015

The Council of Heritage Motor Clubs NSW Inc.

Email: secretarychmc@bushcouncil.com.au

Website: www.bushcouncil.com.au



Vehicles at Saumarez Homestead, Armidale. CHMC Annual Rally 2015 © Jennifer Fawbert

Addenda

Some important NSW automotive heritage facts:

- **First self-propelled road transport in Australia** – E.G. Clerk's Boydell-Garret steam traction engine "Megaethon" – driven from Sydney wharves to "Clerkness" Bundara 1857.
- **From 1900 to 1980 almost all NSW cities and towns** saw the birth and significant development of vehicle assembly, motor coachbuilding and motor body building industries, vehicle service and repair operations, and related industries such as tyres and accessories alongside the proliferation of roads and buildings to support the vehicles. The importance of these enterprises to the economies, development and history of many centres as well as the State of NSW cannot be underestimated nor forgotten..
- **First serious attempt to develop an Australian automotive industry** – Australian Six, Rushcutters Bay and Fivedock. 1919-1925.
- **Australia's First Motor Cycle Grand Prix** – Goulburn, 1924.
- **First large-scale production of tractors in Australia** – Howard Auto-Cultivators Ltd., Northmead – DH 22, 30 year production run from 1930.
- **First scheme for conditional road registration of historic vehicles in Australia.**

² Morrison and Minnis. Carscapes: The Motor Car, Architecture and Landscape in England. (2012) Yale University Press