



## GET THE FACTS - HERITAGE INFORMATION SERIES

### 13. HERITAGE AS A CONCEPT CHANGES OVER TIME

Heritage is the concept that provides the link between the present and the past. In some cases, this link has been adulterated for commercial purposes. This apparent shift to a market orientation that focuses upon the relics of history as a product may generate irreversible errors when it comes to conserving items of built heritage. The impact of tourism has directly caused the shift. In New South Wales, The Rocks, Walsh Bay, The Sydney Harbour Foreshore and the CBD itself have over the last 20 to thirty years increasingly become tourist

destinations. It is the money and the incentive created from international and local tourism that has largely provided the funds for conservation. Converting previous uses to places of interest such as retail, commercial and non-contiguous uses has shaped and formed the way in which we manage such places today. One could argue that heritage is the product of a “commodification” process in which because of its temporal and functional shift, it becomes more creation than preservation of what already exists. In this manner,

the final product cannot reflect any supposedly accurate factual record of the past. Heritage values and concepts change over time not only by way of significance, but also through interpretation - in the way it is presented and also in the ways in which the public reacts to its presentation. Philosophically, we must be aware that concepts of heritage change over time and if we intervene too heavily now, we may obliterate fabric and significance for generations to come.