

SYDNEY HARBOUR ASSOCIATION

PO Box 265 ROSE BAY NSW 2029

Lands Acquisition Act 1989 – Review

This Review of land acquisition arrangements of the Australian Government is concurrent with reviews of other legislation and policies relevant to the landholdings of the Government. We refer to the separate review of the *Sydney Harbour Federation Trust*, the separate exhibition of the Trust's *Draft Leasing Policy*, and the review of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Taken together, they constitute a broad canvas within which consistent principles of administration can and should be established.

Much recent community concern has focussed on the formal submission of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust to the *Independent Review* of its operations. We understand the reviewers have not yet reported to the Minister. We saw the Trust as arguing for the power to lease Trust lands on terms and for tenures of such length that lessees would be enabled to pursue their own commercial objectives largely as they wished, provided they were contributing to the on-going funding of the Trust. The lessees would become *de facto* landowners.

The interests of the Australian community and those of the lessees would, in that context, be highly likely to diverge, especially when matters of national heritage, environmental protection and culture are involved and are camouflaged under the cover of financial stringency by the Government itself.

We cannot see such an arrangement as a proper one for administration of Australian Government-owned landholdings and the uses to which they are put.

The best interests of the whole Australian people should be the primary and over-riding criterion for decision-making in acquisition, management, maintenance and disposal of Commonwealth land

The Australian Government should not acquire and hold land unless it ***makes proper and reliable financial provision to enable it to fulfil the purposes for which the land is acquired and held.***

The Australian Government should ***acquire and hold and protect and maintain lands that have unique and nationally-relevant cultural, environmental, historic and symbolic value for the Australian community, including the foreshores of Sydney Harbour presently administered by the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust.***

Hylde Rolfe, Secretary.

(Home: [REDACTED]; E: [REDACTED]; T: [REDACTED].)

2 April 2020

Sydney Harbour Association was established in 2010, as successor body to Sydney Harbour and Foreshores Committee (est. 1979). The Association is an unincorporated body of individuals interested in Sydney Harbour. At all times we are concerned to ensure that the catchment, foreshores, waterways and islands of Sydney Harbour are recognised, protected, enhanced and maintained

*(i) as an outstanding natural asset, and
(ii) as a public asset of national and heritage significance,
for existing and future generations.*