

# Heritage buildings could be in jeopardy

By Marianna Papadakis

STATE Government plans to reform the NSW Heritage Act could jeopardise current and future heritage listings, says the National Trust's acting director of conservation, Graham Quint.

Mr Quint said the 65 recommendations could curtail community input and place more burdens on local government to assess heritage items without giving them additional resources.

Under Planning Minister Frank Sartor's reforms, the statutory 14-day ministerial review period of heritage items will be abolished.

Bodies such as the Royal Australian Historical Society and National Trust of Australia could be excluded from NSW Heritage Council membership and the grounds for objection widened at the same time the avenues of appeal were narrowed.

Gardens, trees and natural environment would not be considered heritage issues and heritage themes could be approved by NSW Planning Minister, Frank Sartor.

Tempe House was cited as an example of how further restrictions on curtilages [the



**Heritage:** State Government reforms of the Heritage Act could put art deco listings such as St George Tavern in jeopardy.

enclosed area immediately surrounding a house or dwelling] to property boundaries could threaten the listing of landscapes and damage the heritage value of a property.

A National Trust survey found that it took between three months and 33 months for 13 items recommended by the NSW Heritage Council for listing to be reviewed.

Another 41 items lodged up to 31 months ago are still awaiting determination.

"If there is to be a balance between development and conservation, the present log

jam needs to be broken, not permanently set in place," Mr Quint said.

NSW Local Government and Shires Association acting president, Leo Kelly, said reforms would give greater rights to property owners, but raised concern over recommendations, making it easier to remove sites.

Rockdale Councillor Gary Green applauded the recommendations, saying it would lead to greater conservation and more accountability of the councils in heritage listings which blocked or defeated development.