



Hon Kate Jones MP
Member for Ashgrove



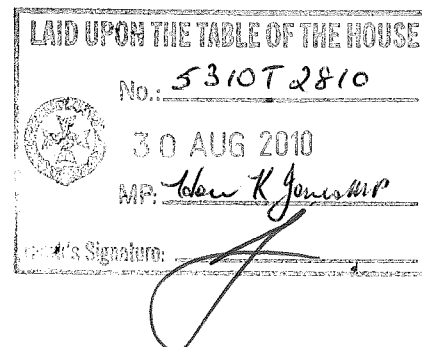
**Queensland
Government**

Ref CTS 13734/10

**Minister for Climate Change
and Sustainability**

26 AUG 2010

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000



Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 4 August 2010 enclosing a copy of Petition No 1467-10 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

The Petition requests that the House amend the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* (the Act) to return the power to the Minister to declare an "object" a heritage place, and use that power to save the Regent Showcase Theatre.

I appreciate the concerns that the community has about the Regent Theatre, a place much valued by the Brisbane community and Queenslanders generally. The Heritage values of the Regent Theatre are protected under the Act, such as the Queen Street part of the 1928-29 Regent Theatre which is entered in the Queensland Heritage Register, in recognition of the heritage value of the Regent to the Brisbane and Queensland communities. The Queen Street façade, five floors of tenancies and a basement, the entrance hall, grand entry foyer and marble staircase, are protected under the Act and are not threatened by current development proposals.

Between 1979 and 1980, the impressive and sumptuously decorated auditorium (seating more than 2500 patrons) and its associated public spaces, service areas and facilities, were demolished leaving only remnants of the original shell. The roof was then raised and four cinemas inserted within the outer walls addressing Elizabeth Street, using parts of the original shell and inserting new sections of brickwork. Some of the plaster decoration was salvaged during the demolition. These decorative elements were either incorporated into the Showcase Cinema No. 1, and its associated vestibule and bar, or employed to cast copies used to embellish these spaces.

When the Act came into force in 1992, the substantially intact 1928-29 part of the Regent Theatre, fronting Queen Street, and most of the 1978-80 remade rear section, fronting Elizabeth Street, was provisionally entered in the Queensland Heritage Register. When an objection to the heritage listing was lodged in 1993, an independent assessor was appointed to investigate the objection as required by the Act.

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The assessor recommended that the 1980 four cinema component on Elizabeth Street was not of state heritage significance. In 1994, after considering the independent assessor's report, the Heritage Council finalised the extent of the listing as the 1928-29 original Theatre elements.

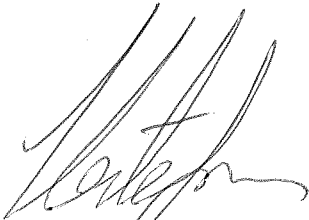
In 2007, an application to enter the 'cinema box' (the remnants of the brick shell that enclosed the demolished theatre and related spaces) was received. The Queensland Heritage Council again thoroughly investigated the heritage values of the Regent Theatre's Elizabeth Street component.

Further investigations were undertaken in 2009 after an application to enter the Showcase Cinema No. 1, and adjoining vestibule and bar, was received. These investigations concluded that as the original lavish auditorium, its back-of-house spaces and parts of the exterior brick shell that enclosed these facilities had been demolished in 1978-80. Only some of the decorative elements that had adorned the 1928-29 auditorium had been reused in the new Showcase cinema, adjoining vestibule and bar, and these remnants did not meet the criteria for listing as a state heritage place.

I am confident that the heritage assessments of the Regent Theatre have been rigorous and consider that the heritage values of the Regent Theatre are protected under the Act.

Should you have any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Mary Burns, Acting Manager, Heritage, of the Department of Environment and Resource Management on telephone 3330 5855.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Jones', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kate Jones MP
Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability