

South Australian Heritage Council

Submission on whether the entry of **Australian Education Union Building (Raggatt House; SALT Building)** should be confirmed in the South Australian Heritage Register

A place is eligible for entry in the Heritage Register if it meets one or more of the criteria in Section 16(1) of the *Heritage Places Act 1993* (Act). Using the table below, please provide your evidence or further information to explain why you believe the place does or does not meet said criteria. For help in making a submission, please refer to the Guidelines for Interpreting State Heritage Criteria (**Attachment E**) and also available online: [Guidelines-for-Interpreting-State-Heritage-Criteria-Final-2024.pdf](#)

Criteria

Criteria under the <i>Heritage Places Act 1993</i> , section 16(1)	Provide evidence or other information why you believe criteria applies or does not apply to this place
(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history	<p>While the AEUSA/SAIT organisation has played a pivotal role in shaping the state's educational landscape, it is important to acknowledge that much of this influence was exercised beyond the confines of its building. The organisation's most significant contributions to the history of education in South Australia occurred through active dialogue with members, outreach to schools, and sustained advocacy in political arenas, particularly within the halls of parliament.</p> <p>Although the building served as a base of operations, it was not the primary site of historical activity. Rather, it was the collective efforts of the organisation's members—working in communities and lobbying for the professional recognition of teachers—that marked a turning point in the 1970s. These developments were driven by external actions and broader movements within the education sector, rather than by events confined to the physical structure itself.</p>

	<p>In this context, the historical significance lies not in the building per se, but in the work carried out by those associated with the organisation and their impact on educational reform in South Australia.</p>
<p>(b) it has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance</p>	
<p>(c) it may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history</p>	<p>The history of the Australian Education Union South Australia (AEUSA) is not embedded in bricks and mortar, but in the unwavering actions, voices, and solidarity of its members. For decades, this organisation has been at the forefront of advancing public education and defending the professional standing of teachers across South Australia. Its legacy is not confined to the physical structure that once housed its operations. Instead, it lives in the collective memory of protests, negotiations, and grassroots campaigns—many of which unfolded far beyond the building's walls.</p> <p>From challenging government policy to advocating for fair pay, better working conditions, and recognition of teaching as a profession, AEUSA members have consistently taken their cause to the streets, to parliament, and to the public. It is in these spaces—not the architecture of the building—that the organisation's true impact was realised. The actions that changed history happened in schoolyards, on picket lines, at rallies, and in moments of hard-fought negotiation. The physical building may have offered a base, but it was never the battleground. The real story of the AEUSA is one of people-powered movements and collective strength.</p> <p>Within the building, however, some elements do carry deep historical resonance—particularly the removable internal banners and campaign materials. These are not merely decorative pieces; they are visual records of struggle and achievement. Each banner tells a story of a</p>

	<p>campaign: of a stand taken, a message delivered, and a fight won. They are markers of the courage and resolve of educators who refused to be silent in the face of injustice. These items reflect the soul of the AEUSA far more authentically than any permanent fixture or architectural feature.</p> <p>As a current AEUSA member, I feel strongly that there is a profound difference between the building and what it contains. The building itself does not encapsulate the essence or historical importance of the AEUSA. Its walls did not bear witness to the most critical moments of the union's past. Rather, the heritage value lies in the stories, documents, images, and campaign artefacts—many of which are housed within the building and preserved in the State Library's collections. These materials represent the real legacy of the AEUSA: one of unity, advocacy, and lasting change.</p> <p>If we are to acknowledge the AEUSA's historical significance honestly and meaningfully, it must be through recognition of the people and the movements that shaped education in South Australia—not the building that temporarily accommodated them.</p>
<p>(d) it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance</p>	

(e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics

The current state of the building at 163 Greenhill Road reflects years of neglect and deterioration under previous custodians. It has been allowed to fall into disrepair to such an extent that meaningful restoration is now well beyond the financial and practical capacity of current AEUSA members. This is not a decision driven by preference, but by reality. The level of degradation is significant and irreversible without an unsustainable investment of resources—resources that, as educators and advocates, we believe are better directed towards advancing the future of education rather than preserving a structure that no longer serves its purpose.

It is also important to be clear: from an architectural standpoint, this building is not a unique or exemplary representation of its era or style. In fact, there are numerous better-preserved and more architecturally significant examples of similar mid-century office buildings throughout Adelaide. 163 Greenhill Road simply does not stand out. It neither contributes to a cohesive architectural streetscape nor does it hold individual merit that would justify heritage protection on aesthetic or design grounds.

What truly mattered about this site was never the building—it was the people within it, the work they did, and the values they championed. Now that the building no longer adequately reflects or supports those values, and with its physical condition having deteriorated beyond feasible repair, it is both reasonable and necessary to acknowledge that its time has passed.

Preserving heritage should be about honouring meaningful contributions to our history, not about clinging to structures that have lost their relevance and integrity. The legacy of the AEUSA is far too important to be reduced to a crumbling, outdated building. Our focus must remain on preserving and celebrating the stories, campaigns, and social movements that truly define this organisation's place in South Australia's history—not on the failing shell that once housed its administration.

<p>(f) it has strong cultural or spiritual associations for the community or a group within it</p>	<p>Many members frequently remark, during AEU training sessions and events held at the current building, on its outdated and uncomfortable conditions. The building is often described as old, cold in winter, and uncomfortably hot in summer—hardly conducive to the needs of a modern union or supportive of contemporary approaches to teaching and learning. Visitors routinely ask when a new, purpose-built facility might be secured, reflecting a shared recognition that the existing space no longer meets the functional requirements of a union dedicated to the professional development and advocacy of educators.</p> <p>The core values of the AEUSA are grounded in solidarity and improving the conditions of those who need support most. These principles guide every decision about the organisation's future, including the redevelopment of the current site. The proposed plans embody this commitment by incorporating elements that extend beyond the union's immediate needs—most notably, the inclusion of social housing in the form of rental accommodations for essential workers. This initiative aligns directly with the South Australian Government's push for increased affordable housing, reinforcing AEUSA's role as a community-focused organisation invested in social justice both within and beyond education.</p> <p>Significantly, the AEUSA has engaged meaningfully with the Kaurna people, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the building stands, throughout the planning process. This consultation has ensured that cultural heritage is respectfully acknowledged and integrated into the development. Together, the AEUSA and Kaurna representatives have planned for the inclusion of local, endemic plant species in the landscaping, preserving and enhancing the natural greenery appropriate to the environment. Furthermore, a tree that was removed from the site will be transformed by local Kaurna artists into a sculpture to be installed in the building's foyer, symbolically connecting the new development to the land's cultural heritage.</p> <p>This thoughtful, values-driven approach to redevelopment demonstrates AEUSA's commitment to fostering a union environment that is both modern and socially responsible—one that honours the past while actively building a better future for educators, workers, and the wider community.</p>
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(g) it has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance

The AEUSA, formerly known as SALT, has never been confined to this single building. Throughout its history, the organisation has operated from multiple premises, with many of its most important meetings, decisions, and milestones occurring well beyond the walls of this site. The building at 163 Greenhill Road is only one chapter in a much broader story, and significantly, the interior spaces have been so extensively altered over time that they no longer provide an authentic or accurate reflection of the environment in which those pivotal decisions were made.

It is unlikely that most current AEUSA members would be able to identify, let alone recall, any specific important meetings or decisions tied to particular rooms within this building. The connection between the organisation's historic achievements and the physical site has grown increasingly tenuous. Furthermore, the building's present condition raises serious concerns: it poses a Workplace Health and Safety risk to both staff and members who use the premises daily. This reality starkly contrasts with any notion that the building holds substantial historical or cultural value worth preserving at great expense.

Should the building be formally recognised as historically significant, the practical consequences for the AEUSA membership would be profound. The only viable path forward would likely involve selling the building and relocating to a facility that genuinely meets the needs of a modern union—one that supports effective advocacy and professional development. The financial burden imposed by a heritage listing would be immense, potentially running into millions of dollars and placing a heavy strain on resources that have been built up over decades of member contributions and union hard work.

Historically, successive Branch Secretaries have envisioned a future where this building would be replaced with a new, fit-for-purpose facility that better serves the evolving requirements of AEUSA members. This vision reflects a long-standing commitment to ensuring that union members benefit from up-to-date, safe, and functional spaces that support their work and solidarity. Preserving a deteriorating structure at great cost would undermine that commitment and risk diverting funds away from the union's core mission.

In summary, the heritage significance of AEUSA lies not in this building, but in the collective action and determination of its members—actions that transcend any single location. It is essential that decisions regarding the building's future prioritise the safety, effectiveness, and financial sustainability of the organisation and its members.

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Declaration


The South Australian Heritage Council is committed to transparency in relation to the listing process and wishes to enhance public confidence in the nomination, listing and decision-making process. The Council's policy is to make nominations for State heritage listing and submissions on provisional entries publicly available via webpage or to interested parties. The Council will adhere to the Privacy Principles and your name and personal details will not be released.



— wish to make a written representation regarding the provisional entry of **Australian Education Union Building (Raggatt House; SAIT Building)**. The information I have provided is correct to my knowledge.

- ☐ I **support** the confirmation of this provisional entry.
☒ I **do not support** the confirmation of this provisional entry.

I **do** wish to appear personally before the Council to make oral representations.

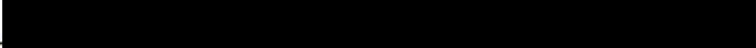
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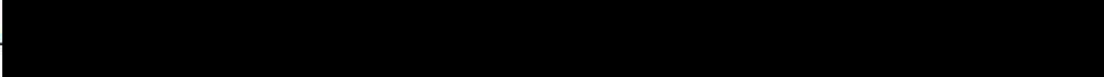
Date: 28-5-25

Please attach any relevant documents and be aware that a heritage officer may contact you to discuss your submission.

Please provide your contact details here:

Phone: 

Email: 

Address: 

This form must be received by 5pm on **4 June 2025**.

Please return completed submission form to the

Board and Policy Officer, South Australian Heritage Council

Via email: **DEWHeritage@sa.gov.au**

Or via post: **GPO Box 1047, Adelaide SA 5001**