

NOTICE AND STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR DECISION UNDER SECTION 303A OF THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION ACT 1999

I, IAN GORDON CAMPBELL, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, hereby provide notice and this statement of reasons under subsection 303A (7) of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) for my decision under subsection 303A (3) to exempt the Australian National Maritime Museum and its shipping agents, Global Specialised Services Pty. Ltd from the application of the provisions of Part 13 of the EPBC Act in relation to the following action:

Return (export) of a late eighth or early ninth century whale bone artefact known as a 'scar plaque' (smoothing board) to the Orkney Museum, in the United Kingdom which has been lent to the Australian National Maritime Museum for the recent 'Vikings' exhibition.

Background

- On 8 May 2006, I received a letter from Australian National Maritime Museum applying for an exemption under section 303A of the EPBC Act from the requirement to obtain a permit to export an historic artefact made from whale bone for exhibition purposes.
- Section 303A of the EPBC Act allows the Minister to grant exemptions from the requirement to obtain a permit if the matter is considered to be in the national interest.

Reasons for decision

- I decided in accordance with section 303A of the EPBC Act to exempt the Australian National Maritime Museum and their shipping agents, Global Specialised Services Pty. Ltd. from the application of the provisions of Part 13 in relation to the action involved to return a whalebone artefact on loan from the Orkney Museum, in the United Kingdom.
- I found that it would be in the national interest to allow the export of the artefact for the purposes of returning it to the original lending institution, the Orkney Museum, in the United Kingdom. The artefact is one of the Orkney Museum's most important archaeological pieces and failure to return the item would harm Australia's reputation internationally and have a negative impact on the ability of Australian museums and galleries to negotiate loans from international lending institutions in the future.



MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

12 / 6 / 2006