



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

PG/40

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PROTECTION FOR HMAS SYDNEY AND HSK KORMORAN SHIPWRECKS

Today I have placed a provisional declaration over the HMAS *Sydney* II and German raider HSK *Kormoran* under the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*.

The declaration gives legal protection to these historically significant vessels and relics, including their crews, from damage, disturbance or removal. Under the declaration, unauthorised intrusion into the sites of these final resting places is prohibited.

This action will ensure respect for the war dead of both our nations.

The declaration will not prevent further documentation of the site, by the Finding Sydney Foundation or another appropriate research body. However my approval under a Commonwealth permit will be required.

This morning Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced the discovery in Western Australian waters of the HMAS *Sydney* II by the Finding Sydney Foundation, 24 hours after the announcement of the finding of the HSK *Kormoran* and the battle site wreckage.

HMAS *Sydney* II sank after a fierce battle with the HSK *Kormoran* on 19 November 1941. All 645 crew were tragically lost in what was Australia's worst naval disaster. Over 80 German sailors also died.

For more than 66 years the fate of the HMAS *Sydney* II and HSK *Kormoran* has been the subject of public speculation and heartache. We will preserve and honour their resting places, ensuring that the final chapter of this tragic story is complete.

For more information about the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976* visit
<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/shipwrecks/shiplaw.html>

For more information about and high resolution sonar images of the wrecks visit
<http://presspass.findingsydney.com/>