



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

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MUSEUM VICTORIA ACQUIRES PHAR LAP'S TONIC BOOK

The purchase at auction of Phar Lap's tonic recipe book will ensure that another piece of history associated with the iconic racing legend will remain in public hands, Heritage Minister, Peter Garrett said.

The 1930s handwritten tonic book that was used by Harry Telford, trainer and part owner of Phar Lap was bought at auction last night by Museum Victoria for \$37,862 with assistance of \$20,000 from the Australian Government's National Cultural Heritage Account.

"Through the National Cultural Heritage Account the Australian Government encourages cultural organisations to purchase objects that they could not otherwise afford, with the aim of preserving and making them accessible to the Australian public," Mr Garrett said

The 82 page tonic book details 30 recipes used by Phar Lap's trainers to prepare him for races. Many ingredients in these recipes include poisonous substances such as arsenic and strychnine.

"Phar Lap was an Australian sporting hero. He conquered the Australian racing scene winning 37 of 51 races he entered, including the 1930 Melbourne Cup at the iconic National Heritage Listed Flemington Racecourse.

"Great mystery and conspiracy has surrounded the death of 'Big Red' and I am very pleased that this book will enter the collection of the Museum of Victoria for us all to enjoy.

Dr Robin Hirst, Acting Chief Executive Officer Museum Victoria said "The significance of this exceptional recipe book lies not only in its origin, but also in the evidence it potentially provides about Phar Lap's untimely death. We are honoured to have it in our collection and it will join our rich collection of Phar Lap artifacts, currently on display at Melbourne Museum."

The National Cultural Heritage Account was established under the *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986*.

Other items acquired through the Account include Phar Lap's saddle, obtained by Museum Victoria in 2004, the *Aboriginal Man, Woman and Child, Yarra Yarra Tribe* portrait by Douglas Kilburn also acquired by Museum Victoria, the Bussell family diaries acquired by the State Library of Western Australia, and World War One sketchbooks by Arthur Streeton, acquired by the Australian War Memorial.

For more information www.heritage.gov.au