



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

PG /69

19 May 2008

Minister affirms Nobbys Lighthouse decision

I have today informed the applicants for a proposed development next to the historic Nobbys Lighthouse in Newcastle of my decision not to allow this particular project because of the impacts it would have on the heritage values of the lighthouse.

My decision is made under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* 1999 and follows wide consultation with the developers, business groups, heritage experts and the community, as well as a visit to the site earlier this year.

I have given full and thorough consideration to all of the information I have received through this process as well as the more than 450 written submissions made by the Newcastle community during a recent public consultation period.

On balance, I believe this particular development proposal would significantly damage the heritage values of this Newcastle icon and the oldest surviving lighthouse in New South Wales.

Sensitive developments around historic places can and do draw thousands of tourists to heritage sites around Australia.

However, it is important that any such development does not compromise what is so special about these historic and iconic places.

My decision is therefore based on the concerns I have for this particular proposal to impact on the heritage values of the lighthouse.

This decision does not mean there cannot be development of the site in the future.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to this process and note that a common theme of the public submissions on the proposal was the desire of the people of Newcastle to have access to Nobbys Lighthouse.

I support this sentiment but it is important in finding a way for the site to be more accessible that we do not do it in a way that damages the precious historical and heritage values of the lighthouse itself.

My Department will therefore be available to provide advice to ensure the heritage values of the lighthouse are fully considered in any future application or proposal to improve access to the site.