



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

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DIVERSE PLACES BEING CONSIDERED FOR HERITAGE HONOUR

The HMAS *Sydney II* and HSK *Kormoran* battle site and wrecks, the Snowy Mountains Scheme and the West MacDonnell National Park are just a few of the incredibly fascinating places up for the latest round of heritage assessment.

Heritage Minister, Peter Garrett, today said the Australian Heritage Council would assess 13 sites around the country for inclusion in Australia's National or Commonwealth Heritage Lists.

"We're looking for the 'best of the best' historic, natural and Indigenous places that make Australia so special," Mr Garrett said.

"There are already more than 75 places in the National Heritage List, from Queensland's ancient dinosaur stampede site, near Winton, to Sydney's beloved Bondi Beach.

"The Australian Heritage Council considered all 129 nominations it received for assessment in 2008-09, and has selected 13 very special sites for detailed assessments. These usually take at least 12 months and involve consultation with owners, occupiers and the public.

"Newly discovered off Western Australia, the battle site of the HMAS *Sydney II* and HSK *Kormoran* will be considered for both the National and Commonwealth Heritage Lists.

"For more than 66 years the fate of the vessels was the subject of much public speculation and heartache, and we want to honour and protect their final resting place.

"In New South Wales the Council will assess one of the seven Civil Engineering Wonders of the World – the Snowy Mountains Scheme. Built between 1949 and 1974 and still operating today, the Scheme has employed more than 100,000 people from over 30 countries.

"Spectacular natural and Indigenous places are also being assessed. They include the Northern Territory's awe-inspiring West MacDonnell ranges, which were an inspiration to famous artists like Albert Namitjira and others from the Hermannsburg School.

"The Western Kimberley is also being considered. This beautiful landscape is truly unique – it's at once a tropical wilderness, rugged range, a home to animals and plants found nowhere else in the world and a treasure of past and continuing Aboriginal culture."

Mr Garrett said sites may attract increased numbers of national and international visitors. Sites are also protected under the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The National Heritage List represents the nation's most important places. It reflects the story of our development, from our original inhabitants to present day, Australia's spirit and ingenuity, and our unique, living landscapes. For more information and for the full 2008-09

National and Commonwealth Heritage Finalised Priority Assessment Lists, visit <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/laws/index.html>