



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

PG /106

25 July 2008

FUNDING BOOST HELPS PROTECT HMVS CERBERUS

Heritage Minister Peter Garrett today said the National Trust of Victoria would use \$500,000 in Federal funding as a first step towards stabilising the HMVS *Cerberus* shipwreck.

The Minister announced the funding during a visit to the wreck, which sits as a breakwater a few hundred metres off the beach at Melbourne's Half Moon Bay, Black Rock.

"Purpose-built in 1868 for the Victorian Colonial Navy, the HMVS *Cerberus* is a unique part of our naval heritage. It was included in the National Heritage List in December 2005," Mr Garrett said.

"Named after the three-headed mythological guard dog, the *Cerberus* was Victoria's and then Australia's most powerful warship. Her heavy iron structure was the prototype for 19th century steam-powered battleships.

"After protecting Victoria from potential attacks for over 50 years, in 1924 she was declared surplus by the Navy and sold to a salvage company. The hulk was purchased for 150 pounds by the Sandringham Council, and scuttled at Half Moon Bay.

"In 1993 the hulk suffered a major collapse and since then has been sinking at a rate of about 16 millimetres per year.

"The \$500,000 we've provided is seed funding for a stabilisation project, which will see the *Cerberus* carefully raised and then placed on an underwater platform.

"Work began in 2004, with a Heritage Victoria grant to remove four 18-tonne guns. The next phase involves building an overhead jacking frame and the underwater supporting platform.

"This is a complex job. Minus the guns, the section of the vessel to be lifted is a massive 1900 tonnes. The extraordinary amount of iron and the state of the partially collapsed hull means a delicate operation will be required.

"I hope our funding will help advance this ambitious project, and I wish the National Trust of Victoria the best of luck in taking it forward. My thanks to Heritage Victoria for their work to this point.

"I'd also like to acknowledge the Friends of the *Cerberus* and others who've been raising awareness of the wreck for many years. Their passion for protecting our heritage means future generation will be able to share in it too."

Funding was provided by the National Heritage Investment Initiative. Other 2007-08 projects include exterior restoration at the Royal Society of Victoria Hall; stonework at Fort Denison, NSW; stonework at Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW; and conservation work at Fremantle Museum & Arts Centre, WA.

More information about the *Cerberus* is available at

<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national/hmvs-cerberus/index.html> and <http://www.cerberus.com.au/>