



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage & the
Arts

The Hon Bob McMullan MP

Parliamentary Secretary for
International Development Assistance

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AUSTRALIA HELPING CAMBODIA PROTECT WORLD HERITAGE ICON

The Australian Government today announced \$1.13 million to assist the Cambodian Government to better protect Angkor Wat, one of the world's most outstanding heritage sites.

The Angkor World Heritage site is visited by more than two million people each year. As a significant archaeological and cultural centre containing the remains of the capitals of the Khmer Empire, it is under pressure from its high tourist traffic and the rapid development of neighbouring communities.

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Peter Garrett and Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, Bob McMullan, today made the announcement as part of the Government's efforts to assist countries in the Asia-Pacific region maintain their World Heritage sites.

"This project is part of Australia's program to build the capacity of countries in the Asia-Pacific region to better look after their very special World Heritage sites - places that are of outstanding universal value to all humankind," Mr Garrett said.

"Working with the Royal Government of Cambodia to ensure that Angkor is appropriately maintained, will not only protect this universally significant site for future generations, but will ensure that it continues to attract visitors from all over the world to experience its wonders.

"Ensuring Angkor is maintained and protected will help to make sure visitors from all over the world can continue to experience this universally significant site, which brings major economic and social benefits to Cambodia."

Mr McMullan said careful management of Angkor is critical to preserving its World Heritage value as well as its potential as an ongoing source of economic development to help reduce poverty in Cambodia.

"Angkor is Cambodia's most valuable tourism and heritage asset. This initiative will help local communities boost their incomes by participating in the tourism industry, drawing on their unique culture and history," Mr McMullan said.

"Through projects like the Heritage Management Framework we are working with the Royal Government of Cambodia to improve its capacity to manage the future sustainability of heritage sites."

Australia's contribution has been made through UNESCO's World Heritage Centre to help fund the Angkor Heritage Management Framework. The framework is designed to strengthen the technical expertise and governance of the Cambodian Government managing agency, APSARA, so that the benefits of tourism and development at Angkor can be shared fairly, as well as to ensure environmental protection.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has also committed approximately AUD\$900,000 towards this work.

Emphasising the urgent need for a strong management plan for Angkor and for other major Cambodian heritage sites, Deputy Prime Minister and Chair of APSARA National Authority Sok An said: "Cambodia is very proud of its cultural heritage and is very pleased that the Australian Government is supporting the development of a sustainable future for this World Heritage site. This important initiative will help us to strengthen the management of Angkor and our national heritage management."

The project builds on development initiatives led by Sydney University - the *'Greater Angkor Project'* and the *'Living with Heritage Project'*. Australian consultants have been involved in the development of the Angkor Heritage Management Framework, coordinated through UNESCO's World Heritage Centre.