



## **National Heritage Assessment of the Governors' Domain and Civic Precinct**

### **The National Heritage List**

Australia's National Heritage List comprises places of outstanding heritage significance to Australia. Currently there are over 100 places of outstanding heritage value on the list including the Great Barrier Reef, Port Arthur Historic Site, and West Kimberley.

Some places within Sydney are already included on the National Heritage List including the Sydney Opera House, Bondi Beach, Hyde Park Barracks and the First Government House, Sydney.

### **Assessment of the Governors' Domain and Civic Precinct**

The Australian Heritage Council is seeking to recognise the outstanding national significance of a set of places located within the place named 'Governors' Domain and Civic Precinct' (originally nominated as 'Colonial Sydney'). The Precinct includes an extraordinary combination of historic public parks, gardens and buildings which as a whole, are able to tell a national story about Australia. The Precinct also has an outstanding capacity to connect people to the early history of interactions between Aboriginal people and British colonisers: whilst some developed personal relationships perceived to be mutually beneficial, there were also examples of violence and Aboriginal resistance. The proposed listing further seeks to recognise a number of people including Bennelong, Governors Phillip, Bligh and Macquarie, Elizabeth Macquarie and Francis Greenway. Archaeological material associated with some of Australia's most important heritage sites is also included in the proposed listing.

### **What would National Heritage listing mean?**

National Heritage listing is an acknowledgement of the importance of a place, it does not effect Native Title rights, change land tenure or ownership. If included in the National Heritage List, the National Heritage values of the listed place will be protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

## Proposed National Heritage values

There are nine National Heritage List criteria (a-i). The Australian Heritage Council has proposed that the Governors' Domain and Civic Precinct might have National Heritage values under criteria (a), (b), (c), (f) and (h). The full list of criteria is available on the Department of the Environment and Energy's website at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/about/national/national-heritage-list-criteria>

***(a) The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history.***

The Governors' Domain and Civic Precinct has outstanding importance because the place can demonstrate to an extraordinary degree four important historic patterns in Australia's development as a nation.

For the first several decades of British settlement, Aboriginal people and colonisers lived in close proximity and there was a complicated process of negotiating and re-negotiating relations. The Precinct has an outstanding capacity to connect people to the early history of interactions between Aboriginal people and British colonisers.

Over the nineteenth century new forms of parliamentary representation were established reflecting a shift away from military rule to a more independent form of colonial governance. The Precinct demonstrates this historic pattern to a high degree.

Over the course of Governor Macquarie's governorship a substantial and visionary building program was initiated and directed by Macquarie. His work to project a more ambitious future for the Colony was pivotal in the Sydney colony's early development. Making use of convict labour and the resources of new immigrants a 'bridge head' economy was established which was able to both sustain a remote population and provide a foundation for the trade of agricultural goods to a wider world. The Precinct demonstrates these historic patterns to a high degree.

The physical urban structure of streets, parks, gardens and buildings within the Governors' Domain and Civic Precinct have a direct connection to the first decades of British settlement in Sydney. This clarity of connection with this past era gifts the Precinct with an extraordinary capacity to inform Australians about their shared history and the development of a particular urban form in its capital cities. Specifically the Precinct demonstrates to a high degree the pairing of a Domain with a Botanic Garden and the placement of residential buildings (terraces) oriented towards and next to a parkland.

***(b) The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history.***

The Governors' Domain and Civic Precinct includes a rich collection of archaeological material associated with some of Australia's most important historic sites. This material is important and rare nationally as a record associated with pre and post colonisation in Australia. The archaeological material identified under this criterion relates to known and documented material protected under NSW legislation.

***(c) The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history.***

The Governors' Domain and Civic Precinct includes a rich collection of archaeological material associated with some of Australia's most important historic sites. This material is important as a resource for research associated with pre and post - colonisation in Australia. The archaeological material identified under this criterion relates to archaeological zones identified within NSW and City of Sydney planning instruments only.

***(f) The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period***

For the first several decades of British settlement the early Governors' Phillip, Bligh and Macquarie established, in an evolving way, the foundations for a core civic precinct which represented the civic, parliamentary and ceremonial face of the Colony attracting continued development as Sydney's premier city district. Many buildings, parks, gardens and streets remain from the colonial era gifting Sydney with a rich public domain and built heritage. The efforts of Elizabeth Macquarie in the design of elements of Macquarie's Sydney projects are also noted especially in relation to the design of parts of the Domain, the former Government stables and the Royal Botanic Garden.

The Precinct also demonstrates important early milestones in Australia's history of landscape design, town planning and architecture.

***(h) The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history.***

The Governors Domain and Civic Precinct is associated with the lives or works of a number of people of importance in Australia's cultural history; including Governor Lachlan Macquarie, Elizabeth Macquarie, Governor Phillip, Bennelong, Governor Bligh and Francis Greenway.

## Management implications

If included in the National Heritage List, the National Heritage values of the listed place will be protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The National Heritage values are the only aspects of a place which will be protected. This is an important distinction to note in relation to places being proposed for listing on the National Heritage List.

For general guidance the following applies in relation to this proposed listing:

- most of the buildings included in the proposed National Heritage values are important because of their demonstration of a broad thematic story. As a result detailed characteristics of a building or place are unlikely to be included in the proposed National Heritage values;
- a major component of the proposed National Heritage place is in public ownership;
- interiors of buildings are not included in the proposed National Heritage values;
- the proposed National Heritage values mostly relate to places or features already heritage listed at the State or local level; and
- the proposed listing will not impact on existing heritage listings.

## How can I make a submission?

The assessment of National Heritage values under the EPBC Act requires that all practicable steps are taken to advise owners, occupiers and Indigenous people with rights and/or interests in the place and provide the opportunity for them to comment in writing on whether the place should be considered for inclusion in the National Heritage List.

Please provide your written comments by 5:00 PM AEST on Friday 24 February 2017 by post to:

Australian Heritage Council  
GPO Box 787  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Or by email to: [heritage@environment.gov.au](mailto:heritage@environment.gov.au)

## What is the next step?

Following the close of the submission period, the Australian Heritage Council will give a report on the heritage values to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Energy. The Minister will decide whether to include the place in the

National Heritage List taking into account the Australian Heritage Council's report and submissions collected through this consultation process. The Minister may also seek, and have regard to, information or advice from any source.

### **Where can I get more information on the National Heritage List?**

Information about the National Heritage List, the assessment criteria and other places on the list can be found at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/heritage/heritage-places>