

RESPONSE TO HMAS DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Late 2018, Melissa Price then Hon. Minister for Environment, Department of Environment & Energy and Mr David Sharma campaigning to become a member to parliament for the Federal seat of Wentworth, made a public comment to see South Head alongside North Head listed as an iconic item on Australia's National Heritage Register.



Still of social media footage
Source: Save Watsons Bay Facebook

Question 1

In light of the current development proposal for the HMAS Watson Base, where does the National Listing for South Head, announced prior to the early 2019 election sit in relation to the 2019-2020 list now closed for places under priority assessment?

Question 2

In light of the acknowledgement for the significance of South Head to Sydney, her surrounds and our nation – why has this site been selected for expansion of base facilities?

Jervis Bay, near Nowra would be the most logical place to locate the expanded facilities, this site area allows for increased capacity.

South Head offers such an immense value in its topography and accessible location to the people of Sydney and residents in the greater city of Sydney stretching as far as the Blue Mountains to the West, Woolongong to the South and the Central coast to the North

The opportunity HMAS base can offer all Australians is one of the eventual return of all it's current defense facilities and infrastructure to the public domain. Most of North Head has been opened up to the public.

Precedent for successful public access to military archaeological footprint areas are in place at Middle Head (Headland Park)

Taken from the Harbour Trust Website

"One of the three headlands that define the entrance to Sydney Harbour, Middle Head features peaceful walking tracks that take you through fascinating military relics and scenic outlooks with panoramic harbour views.

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Question 3

The existing sewer line deposits to the Dover Heights outfall- the on-site sewer diagram indicates no on-site waste management treatment systems.

If a pipeline to the North Head tertiary treatment facility cannot be feasibly installed to account for the expanded HMAS base activity and the plan is to hook into existing third world infrastructure; (the existing suburbs of Vaucluse to Dover Heights and some parts of Rose Bay residences currently deposit raw untreated sewage into the ocean outfall at the base of Dover Heights), then **when is the State Government likely to commit to the pumping uphill for sewage to the secondary treatment facility distributing offshore Bondi Beach?**

The proposed increase in traffic and volume of users at the base, (plans indicating upward of 400 additional car parking spaces), will create an immense pressure on the existing urban road network. In turn the current emergency access / egress route for the base along Gap Bluff rd, will likely be made an arterial road and consumed by the existing civilian road network, which currently is insufficient for visitors in the Summer months and peak holiday periods.

Already vulnerable to proposed overflow car parking scenarios' from immanent tourism expansion being lobbied in the adjacent national park-

It is key this access / egress road be legislated as such belonging ONLY to HMAS base, withheld from public use as an arterial road, in order to preserve the recreational value of the adjacent modified open space within the national parkland, itself, through which this road passes. It is also key to maintaining the safety and livelihood for personnel in the base, particularly in light of the proposed intensification of training and use.

The intensification of activity proposed for the HMAS base, is out of scale with the current capacity of existing infrasture on site and the surrounding, fragile, thin ribbon of South Head national parkland.

The stormwater upgrade that occurred prior to 2015 as modelled by WMA, 1 in 100 year flood studies contracted to Woollahra council indicates the outlet running to Camp Cove beach and the reserve, previously known as Dunns Swamp would inundate, if a storm coincided with king tides.

The significant increase in hardstand carparking areas and roof catchment areas would significantly increase the downhill water catchment areas at both Camp Cove and Lady Bay beaches

CONCLUSION

In light of the proposed facilities upgrades to HMAS base,

- Have the alternative expansion and provision for these deemed necessary military expenditures been investigated as an option at Jervis Bay.
- Have the current upgraded facilities proposal been investigated with a total lifecycle capability such that return of these lands to the public domain be made feasible.
- Should a 20-30year plan preclude some of the key seagoing operations from eventual re-location as headquarter activities for the Australian Navy, like the other armed services left their land on Middle Head and North head to the people and went elsewhere; why does HMAS base need such facilities?

PROPOSED CHRONOLOGY

(Listed in Table 2.8 Chronology authored by DECC/OEH)

Period	Principal Events
Pre 1788	South Head occupied by the Birrabirragal
1877	The whole of South Head to the east and north of the present Cliff Street and Military Road re-dedicated as defense reserve
1912	New barracks and offices of School of Artillery/Gunnery commenced
1941	School of Artillery/Gunnery relocated away from South Head
1950-1980	Arrival of Navy and period of considerable development in association with establishment of H.M.A.S Watson this period of development has had the most impact visually on the headland. Some fortifications used for storage, otherwise no works carried out on fortifications apart from dismantling and removal of artefacts.
1982	Defence lands transferred to the National park. Most buildings associated with the former School of Artillery/Gunnery demolished by 1984”

1788 21st January

Captain Arthur Phillips’ Landing in the presence of Indigenous canoes at Camp Cove

1791

The site of the first marine light, a log fired beacon, was constructed by convicts on South Head, Sydney Harbour

1857 Wreck of the Dunbar

The site of the folkloric maritime arrival at the feet of the Gap, on South Head, Sydney Harbour, with only one remaining sole survivor

2020 South Head added to the Australian National Heritage Register

2030

Federal Government creates the largest national parkland within 20minutes public transport from a major international city centre, in the World.

Appendix -

Significance for South Head nominated to Australian National Heritage register November 2018

South Head is important as the southern expression of the seaward entrance to Sydney Harbour (Port Jackson) and plays an important role in defining our national identity, being the site of the first landing place of Captain Arthur Philip in Sydney Harbour in 1788. **The Heads** have signified arrival and departure at Port Jackson since 1788 and are recognised as important iconic landmarks. The landing occurred in the presence of indigenous canoes and changed the course of Australia's history. South Head was traditionally a site of ceremonial significance to traditional owners. The world was altered according to this singular event defining the colonial expansion of Great Britain. In 1812, The 'Heads' were referred to as Port Jackson Heads', later as the 'Sydney Heads'. The Sydney Heads have iconic status for aesthetic values as landmarks in their own right but equally as part of the setting for Sydney and its harbour. South Head is important for its association with the establishment of a series of lighthouses on the Eastern seaboard of Australia, being the inaugural site of a maritime navigational mark in 1791. With the establishment of the first marine light in the colony of NSW and with Australia's development as an island nation, reliant on shipping, South Head was iconic then. The formalisation of Hornby South Head lighthouse in response to shipwrecks, has led to South Head being the most significant land site to have an effect on navigational history, as warranted by the folkloric wreck of the Dunbar.

South Head, "THE HEADS" 'Port Jackson Heads', Sydney Heads'
Pre-european settlement, known as Boree/Garungel and Ta-ral-be/Burra.wa-ra/Mit-ta-la*

South Head contains best example of forts and barracks and their associated infrastructure, access requirements, roads, trails, tunnels, footings, markers.

South Head contains the earliest example of lighthouse which became the establishment of a series of lighthouses on the Eastern Seaboard of Australia.

South Head contains the site of the wreck of the Dunbar.

Refer to Australian Heritage Database- HMS Sirius
http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place_detail;place_id=106167

Refer to Australian Heritage Database- HMVS Cerberus

http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place_detail;place_id=105764

The arrival on the harbour side of South Head of Captain Arthur Phillip at Camp Cove, Port Jackson, in the presence of indigenous canoes changed the course of Australia's history. The world was altered according to this singular event defining the colonial expansion of Great Britain. On the 21st January, 1788 Captain Arthur Phillips arrival at Camp Cove, Port Jackson, in the presence of indigenous canoes changed the course of Australia's history. The site contains the archaeological evidence to make legible the interface between indigenous and colonial Australia, with defense fortifications playing a major role in the cultural and military life of the colony of NSW. The original maritime beacons and subsequent lighthouse construction on the Eastern seaboard of Australia played a major role in Australia's coastal navigation and settlement.

As the southern landform of "THE HEADS" These two markers form the gateway to the arrival and departure of our island nation. They have a mythical status as "THE HEADS" marking our modern nation and they have a literal, geographical and topographical identity as the physical landforms demarcating the historic and contemporary gateposts to Australia's maritime city, Sydney. "THE HEADS" are symbolic of both a place of exit from Australia and historically an arrival to Australia.

Significant visual characteristics of "THE HEADS" have been described in many historical artworks.

Refer to <http://www.environment.gov.au/detail:placeid=105759>

Source Australian Heritage Database

"The coastal role of Port Jackson in the life of the colony of New South Wales led to the harbour and its landmarks being portrayed by artists, photographers and cartographers including Augustus Earle (c.1825) from the early years of the settlement into the twentieth century."

The site is exemplary at a national level, represented by 19 sites identified by AHIMS search, including a destroyed site 45-6-0723 near the Officers Mess (Refer to report on Gap Bluff Centre, June 2017 Archeological Assessment by Comber Consultants, p.26 OEH website)

The arrival at South Head of Captain Arthur Phillip at Camp Cove, Port Jackson, in the presence of indigenous canoes changed the course of Australia's history. The development and use of South Head has been influenced by its location and nearness to Sydney Cove, the contours, geology, natural terrain and remnant vegetation have safeguarded the pre-European environment from hastened development.

Refer to <http://www.environment.gov.au/detail:placeid=105759>

Source Australian Heritage Database

"George F Angas visited Sydney in 1844 and sought information on engravings from Old Queen Gooseberry (who was camping near CampCove....)

Source SOUTH HEAD SHNP Conservation Management Plan

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Volume 2A and 2B

“The roads and paths at South Head are the framework, which link the separate sites to each other and to the road network in the south. Until the division of the site between HMAS Watson and the National Park, the road layout was fairly coherent as it reflected the location of sites positioned to take advantage of prominent or level locations and the fact that access took paths of least resistance across the difficult terrain. Since the division of the site, understanding which of the roads and paths still follow the historical routes is difficult, as the existence of the HMAS Watson isolates the interior of the headland from its perimeter. The sites roads, which once simply passed through the centre of the headland are confused as they still physically pass in and out of the National Park but are now fenced and blocked at the boundary.”

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Willea Ferris

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