

# Point Nepean

## National Park & Marine Education

### *Getting on with the job*



### A message from the Prime Minister

The Australian Government is getting on with the job of establishing Point Nepean as a National Park and using the existing buildings for a National Centre for Marine and Coastal Conservation to provide environmental education for our children and young people.

The outcome for Point Nepean comprises three commitments:

- First, inclusion of the full 294 hectares of Commonwealth land within a National Park for all Australians for all time. This is guaranteed and is reaffirmed by legally binding commitment.
- Second, approximately \$25 million in funding comprising almost \$15 million from the Australian Government and a \$10 million philanthropic contribution.
- Third, use of the existing Quarantine and Barracks buildings to establish a National Centre for Marine and Coastal Conservation, along with use by heritage groups and respite care for disadvantaged children and their families.

As in Sydney, the Australian Government has established a public trust to manage preservation and conversion of the military buildings to educational, heritage and community use. In Sydney, the Harbour Trust will take ten years to complete this work before transferring the land to the NSW Government.

By contrast, in Victoria, the Commonwealth is ready to transfer the bulk of the land (approximately 204 hectares) to National Park as soon as the Victorian Government accepts it and to transfer the Heritage precinct within a maximum of five years and potentially as soon as three years – one third of the time taken in Sydney.

The public trust has already begun the work of preparing the transition and establishing the National Centre for

Marine and Coastal Conservation which is to be run by the Australian Maritime College. The Australian Government has allocated \$9.7 million over 7 years to fund up to 110 student places in marine education. The Centre will also encourage visits from primary and secondary students, particularly from the Mornington Peninsula.

Use of the buildings is subject not only to Commonwealth but also to State and local planning laws. It is hoped to open the Heritage precinct to the public soon.

No-one could have fought more resolutely for a National Park and Marine Education Centre for Point Nepean, than the local Federal Member for Flinders Greg Hunt MP. He was unrelenting in his determination and uncompromising in arguing the local case in Canberra. And he succeeded wonderfully.

*John Howard*

## Completing the National Park

The Commonwealth land at Point Nepean will become a National Park in two stages. In Stage 1, the Commonwealth is ready to transfer the bulk of the bushland (approximately 204 hectares), to the Victorian Government for inclusion within the existing National Park, as soon as the Victorian Government accepts the land.

Under Stage 2, it is envisaged that the remaining 90 hectare Heritage precinct will be transferred within five years and potentially, as soon as three years. The Heritage precinct comprises 100 buildings of the former Army School of Health and Quarantine Station buildings, 65 of which are heritage listed.

As in Sydney, a public trust has been established to manage transition of the Heritage precinct to community, educational and heritage use and to assist in preparation of the heritage precinct for inclusion in the National Park.

The entire site is protected under the Commonwealth Heritage List against development, sale or damage to the heritage buildings. Transfer of the Heritage precinct may be brought forward once community use has been established and on agreement that the land will be declared National Park and the Heritage buildings maintained.

The first Object of the Trust requires that the Heritage Precinct is managed "consistent with the land becoming an Integrated National Park". It is hoped to open the Heritage area for public access in the near future.

## The Point Nepean Community Trust

The Point Nepean Community Trust is a public trust established on 10 June 2004. The Trust's vision is to work with community groups to create a sustainable future for the Heritage precinct as a Marine Education Centre within a world-class National Park.

The Community Trust Deed will ensure no commercial development of the land, preservation of all heritage buildings and the natural environment, guaranteed public access and consultation, application of State and Local Government planning laws and, management of the land in accordance with the key aspects of the Draft Community Master Plan as a National Park.

The trustees include:

- the Chairman, Mr Simon McKeon, who is also Chairman of MS Research Australia and a Board member of World Vision Australia;
- two elected members of the Community Reference Group, Dr Ursula de Jong and Mr David Stewart;
- the Chair of the Australian Heritage Council, Mr Tom Harley;
- a representative of the Australian Maritime College, Dr Paul McShane;
- a representative of the Australian Government;
- a representative of the Victorian Boonerwung Elders Land Council, Ms Carolyn Briggs; and,
- The CEO of Parks Victoria has also been invited to become, or to nominate a trustee.

Once community uses have been established, the Heritage precinct will be incorporated into the National Park. The Trust outlines three key community uses for the existing but vacant heritage buildings: to promote marine and coastal education; to encourage understanding of the indigenous and European history of the land and to provide respite care for a small number of families of children with disabilities. Community groups are also invited to approach the Trust with community initiatives.

\$15 million has been allocated to the Trust to prepare the Heritage precinct for community use and transition to National Park. A further \$9.7 million has been allocated to the Australian Maritime College to create a National Centre for Marine and Coastal Conservation.





## National Centre for Marine & Coastal Education: The Vision

The Australian Government has allocated \$9.7 million over 7 years to the Australian Maritime College to establish a National Centre for Marine and Coastal Conservation within the existing Barracks precinct.

The vision is for a world class marine research facility. This will provide opportunities for students from the Mornington Peninsula and throughout Australia to study Victoria's marine and coastal environment.

The Centre will be modest in size comprising approximately 110 tertiary students with an intake of 40 students per year. It is anticipated that students will be able to live in existing dormitories. It is hoped a small number of international researchers will visit the Centre to provide instruction to students.

Local Primary and Secondary students will be invited to visit the Centre either for a day or for a few days at a time. The Primary and Secondary schools program will begin in 2005 with a focus in the first year on local school students. Short course tertiary places will also begin in 2005 with the full course expected to begin the following year.

The Australian Maritime College will work with the Trust to create a truly co-operative National Centre through research partnerships with educational and environmental groups such as the Dolphin Research Institute.

## Questions?

**Is the Commonwealth committed to transferring its land to National Park?**

**Yes** - The Commonwealth has committed and is ready to transfer the bulk of the bushland (approximately 204 hectares) to Victoria for inclusion in the National Park as soon as the Victorian Government accepts the land. The 90 hectare Heritage precinct will also become National Park once the Centre for Marine Education and other community uses for the buildings have been established. This will occur within a maximum of five years and potentially within three years.

**Can there be commercial development under the Trust?**

**No** - commercial development is ruled out by the Trust Deed. Existing buildings will include modest dining facilities and limited student accommodation.

**By contrast can there be commercial development under the Bracks Government's proposal?**

**Yes** - On 3 October 2003 the Bracks Government released a proposal for an 80 bed 3 star cliff-top accommodation facility, 150 bed Backpacker precinct, Conference facilities and Holiday Homes on Police Point.

**Why is a Trust necessary?**

As in Sydney, the Australian Government has established a transitional public trust to **manage the preservation and conversion of the historic military precinct to educational, heritage and community use**. Unlike NSW, the Victorian Government rejected a previous free offer of the Heritage precinct on 20 March 2001 and did so again on 11 September 2002. The Victorian Government also sought a three year handover period on 3 October 2003.

**How much funding is available?**

A total of **almost \$25 million in funding has been allocated**. This comprises almost \$15 million from the Australian Government and a \$10 million philanthropic contribution which has been formally verified.

# Future steps

## ACTIONS COMPLETED TO DATE

1. Commitment to include all 294 hectares of commonwealth land within National Park.
  - Commitment to transfer the bulk of the land (approximately 204 hectares) for inclusion in the National Park as soon as the Victorian Government accepts the land;
  - 90 hectare Heritage Precinct to be incorporated into National Park within a maximum of 5 years and a minimum of 3 years.
2. \$4 million spent by Commonwealth on Heritage upgrade
3. Establishment of a Public Trust to manage transition of heritage precinct.
  - As in Sydney, the Australian Government has established a transitional public trust to manage preservation and conversion of the military buildings to educational, heritage & community use.
  - Initial Trustees and an Interim Manager have been appointed
4. \$15 million has been committed to the trust comprising a \$5 million Commonwealth and \$10 million philanthropic contribution
5. In addition, \$9.7 million of Commonwealth funding over 7 years has been allocated to the Australian Maritime

College to establish a National Centre for Marine and Coastal Conservation

6. Police Point has been transferred to Mornington Peninsula Shire to establish a public park by early 2005

## FUTURE STEPS

### Trust

- The Trust's overriding objective is to prepare the Heritage buildings for heritage and community use and inclusion within the National Park
- Establishment of consultative arrangements with Parks Victoria, the local Shire and community groups
- Development of plan for community use of Barracks buildings including indigenous site mapping.
  - Commercial development has been prohibited.
- Opening of Barracks area to public by early 2005
- Preparation of buildings for community use
- Transfer of Heritage precinct to the State for incorporation in National Park

### National Centre for Marine and Coastal Conservation

- Establishment of partnerships with marine and educational groups
- Appointment of Foundation Professor

- Establishment of Schools Program in 2005
- Establishment of a short course marine education program in 2005
- Establishment of a full course marine education program in 2006
- Ongoing community research and involvement

### Heritage Precinct

- Trust to establish partnerships with appropriate historical groups
- Development of joint plan for Heritage precinct with Indigenous and Heritage groups
- Establish centre for indigenous culture and training of indigenous students in conservation and land management
- Establishment of Heritage displays during 2005

### Children's Respite Care

- Trust to establish partnerships with respite groups within children's sector
- Trust and respite groups to develop plan and usage guidelines for small respite area
- Preparation of special accommodation and other needs in respite area
- Commencement of visits by disadvantaged children.



"I look forward to the creation of a Marine Education Centre within a world-class National Park at Point Nepean that preserves the heritage buildings and natural environment for future generations to enjoy.

"If you have any questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me on 5979 3188."

GREG HUNT MP  
Federal Member for Flinders