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MEDIA RELEASE – For Immediate Release

Three major organisations concerned for Australia’s natural and cultural heritage places have joined forces creating a new alliance, the Australian Heritage Partnership.

The Australian Heritage Partnership, comprising the Australian Council of National Trusts (ACNT), Australia ICOMOS and Federation of Australian Historical Societies (FAHS), has been formed to undertake joint and coordinated advocacy activities to raise the profile Australia’s cultural heritage places.

The Chairman of the ACNT Dr Graeme Blackman said “It is very timely that our three organisations have agreed to work together to provide a unified and strong advocacy voice, particularly to government. The current government commitment to engagement in the development of a new National Heritage Strategy, illustrates the importance of our three peak bodies coordinating our resources and actions to achieve the best possible heritage outcomes.”

These three organisations have over 170,000 members, manage several hundred significant heritage places, and represent many cultural heritage professionals here in Australia. Australian Heritage Partnership members share a common concern that governments have sufficient capacity to meet the community’s high expectations for Australia’s heritage, and at all levels are able to support community efforts.

The President of Australia ICOMOS Dr Jane Harrington said “Australian communities cherish their heritage. This heritage is integral to our sense of self, of where we have come from and where we are going. If we lose it, it is gone forever. Much of the hard work caring for and preserving our heritage is done by the community, ordinary people and other custodians of heritage places. We need to make sure that the burden of caring for our cultural heritage is shared fairly and assisted through well-resourced government programs providing not just funding but access to heritage expertise and advice.”

Our heritage is highly significant for the nation and for the community, it gives integrity to the natural and cultural spaces within which we live, and promotes social cohesion through a sense of history, self, place and identity.

Assoc. Prof. Don Garden President of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies said, “FAHS is delighted to be a part of The Australian Heritage Partnership as an opportunity to work towards better heritage outcomes, while also promoting an understanding and appreciation of heritage and those who work for it within the community.”

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Background to the Organisations

The Australian Council of National Trusts (ACNT) was formed in 1965 as a community member based, non-government organisation, committed to promoting and conserving Australia's indigenous, natural and historic heritage through its advocacy work and its custodianship of heritage places and objects. Collectively the organisation represents over 70 000 members, owns or manages over 300 heritage places, with over 7000 volunteers and 350 staff.

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/>

Australia ICOMOS (the Australian National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites) is a peak non government organisation of cultural heritage professionals and practitioners which is concerned for the conservation of heritage places, including a special role in the case of World Heritage.

<http://australia.icomos.org/about-us/>

The Federation of Australian Historical Societies is the umbrella organization for community history and heritage societies and museums in Australia. It represents about 100,000 members in about 1000 societies. These societies are a vital element in preserving, recording and communicating our national heritage, and the volunteer labour of our members contributes many thousands of hours to these matters as well as to heritage tourism and community and national identity.

<http://www.history.org.au/>

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