

Australia's heritage defines the Australian character and is a lasting record of the nation's cultural history. We recognise the significance and breadth of this heritage and its protection now and into the future is of the utmost importance.

In 2003 the Democrats supported major legislative reform for heritage, bringing its protection under the Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act but with hundreds of amendments to strengthen provisions. Lack of political will and inadequate resources, particularly for enforcement, have however limited progress on heritage protection and in 2006 the Government substantially weakened the Act.

## Our Plan

- Repeal the 2006 changes to the EPBC Act that:
  - weaken options for third party enforcement by removing the review of ministerial decisions by the AAT
  - impose requirements for financial undertakings for interim injunctions
  - weaken heritage nominations and listing processes
  - give the minister discretionary powers over the Priority Assessment List and emergency listings
- Establish a national heritage strategy involving all levels of government
- Establish a Ministerial Council to advise on national standards and guidelines and the allocation of funds to support projects of national importance

- Prepare nominations for following sites for World Heritage listing: The High Country, from Victorian Alps to Atherton Tablelands; 11 convict sites as an example of the global story of forced migration; Lake Eyre region; Bradshaw rock art of the Kimberley; Carnarvon Gorge; Lake Condah; Dampier Rock Art on the Burrup Peninsula; and Norfolk Island
- Provide appropriate funding to enable increased private conservation activity
- Provide greater support for national and state-based Trusts and their properties
- Introduce Negotiated Conservation Agreements between Government and non- government owners and allow appeals on the grounds of 'unreasonable costs'
- Strengthen Commonwealth legislation to protect nationally significant heritage sites and artefacts by adopting all recommendations of the Schofield Report
- Maintain public ownership of Commonwealth sites with significant heritage values and ensure public access to those sites.
- Establish the registration of endangered sites and artefacts to ensure that priority action is taken to preserve them
- Re-establish a Tax Incentive Scheme for private owners of heritage properties as part of a package of measures to assist conservation
- Strengthen the protection afforded to Indigenous heritage in state planning and environmental legislation.
- Establish an Indigenous Heritage Advisory Council, comprised of Indigenous people to advise on Indigenous heritage policy and ensure appropriate resources are available to protect and manage places of Indigenous heritage significance.