



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Senator Ian Campbell
*Australian Minister for the
Environment and Heritage*

Frank Sartor MP
New South Wales Minister for Planning

Bob Debus MP
New South Wales Minister for the Arts

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SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE SETS SAIL FOR WORLD HERITAGE BID

Sydney's internationally renowned Opera House has been officially nominated for inclusion on the World Heritage List.

The despatch of the official submission to Paris was announced on the Opera House steps today by Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell, NSW Arts Minister Bob Debus, and NSW Planning Minister Frank Sartor.

"I believe most Australians share my view that the Opera House is one of the world's most outstanding buildings deserving a place on the world's premier heritage list," Senator Campbell said.

"Since the Opera House was included in the National Heritage List last July, officials from my Department have been working with their counterparts in New South Wales to prepare a comprehensive assessment of its outstanding universal value as part of the rigorous international World Heritage listing process.

"This assessment shows it is clearly a work of architectural and engineering genius that is internationally renowned."

Senator Campbell thanked his colleagues in New South Wales, Ministers Sartor and Debus, for the critical role they played in ensuring the World Heritage nomination has every chance of success.

Mr Debus said the Sydney Opera House has become a focus for the arts at a national and international level.

"Its stunning emergence on the world stage over the past 30 years underlines its appeal to people across all countries and walks of life," he said.

"It is Australia's iconic home of the arts and truly deserving of the highest level of protection possible."

Mr Sartor said the chances of a World Heritage listing for the Opera House have been significantly boosted with the establishment of a buffer zone around the international icon.

“If listed, the Opera House will become only the second building in Australia to receive formal recognition from World Heritage authorities.

“It is the jewel of our Harbour, and Jørn Utzon’s dazzling design clearly meets the benchmark as a ‘masterpiece of human creative genius’.

“The buffer zone will ensure public views of the Opera House from across Sydney Harbour are preserved, by making it a factor in development decisions.

“A new bilateral agreement between the Iemma Government and the Commonwealth will also streamline the planning approvals process for the site.”

Minister Sartor said the draft buffer zone is currently on exhibition for public comment.

Dane Jørn Utzon started design work on the Opera House in 1957 and construction began in March 1959. It was officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II on 20 October 1973.

Mr Utzon was re-engaged as the Sydney Opera House architect in 2002.

A decision on the World Heritage nomination is not expected to be known until the middle of next year when the World Heritage Committee meets.

The first Australian building to be included on the World Heritage List was the Royal Exhibition Buildings and Carlton Gardens in Melbourne in 2004.

The official Sydney Opera House World Heritage nomination is available on the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage web site at <http://www.deh.gov.au/heritage/whatsnew/>

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