



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Energy

National Heritage Assessment of the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct

The National Heritage List

Australia's National Heritage List comprises places of outstanding heritage significance to Australia. Currently there are over 100 places of outstanding heritage value on the list including the Great Barrier Reef, Port Arthur Historic Site, and West Kimberley.

Many places within Sydney are already included in the National Heritage List including the Sydney Opera House, Sydney Harbour Bridge, Bondi Beach and Old Government House and Domain, Parramatta.

Assessment of the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct

The Australian Heritage Council is seeking to recognise the key role of benevolent and other care institutions in Australia's history. The Council is currently assessing three institutions for potential inclusion in the National Heritage List: Parramatta Female Factory Precinct, Willow Court Barracks Precinct and Frescati House in Tasmania and Abbotsford Convent in Melbourne. The Parramatta Female Factory Precinct, including the former Roman Catholic Orphan School and Parramatta Girls' Home, may be a nationally significant example of the treatment of institutionalised women and children over a long period of Australian history.

What would National Heritage listing mean?

National Heritage listing is an acknowledgement of the importance of a place, it does not change land tenure or ownership. If included in the National Heritage List, the National Heritage values of the listed place will be protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

Proposed National Heritage values

There are nine National Heritage List criteria (a-i). The Australian Heritage Council has proposed that the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct might have National Heritage values under criteria (a) and (c). The full list of criteria is available on the Department of the Environment and Energy's website at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/about/national/national-heritage-list-criteria>

(a) The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history.

The Parramatta Female Factory Precinct is outstanding in its capacity to tell the stories of women and children in care or confined in institutions over the course of one hundred and fifty years of Australian history. In particular these stories provide a record of the experiences of convict women and in the case of benevolent institutions, the experiences of those in various institutions whose purpose and promise of care was in reality far from being realised.

Five thousand convict women were incarcerated in the Parramatta Female Factory (1821 – 1848), nearly half of all women that went through the factory system and a fifth of all convict women transported to Australia. The factory was simultaneously a place of confinement, a work-house, a marriage bureau, a hospital and a refuge for the convict women.

For the children of the Roman Catholic Orphan School (1844 – 1886), the promise of education was severely compromised by a flawed system coupled with the demands of living and working in a chronically underfunded institution, causing psychological damage and trauma.

Over 30,000 girls were admitted to the Parramatta Industrial Girls' School (1886 – 1974). Within this institution girls were often subject to systematic emotional, physical and sexual abuse. Their treatment characterises the treatment of many children in institutions over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. National Apologies to the Forgotten Australians and Stolen Generations acknowledge the lack of state protection for these children, including many Indigenous girls.

Over one hundred and fifty years the experiences, treatment and prejudices towards the women of the Female Factory, children of the Roman Catholic Orphan School and girls of the Industrial School were constant. This shows that in many ways, while Australian society became more compassionate and caring, some of the most vulnerable Australians were forgotten and left behind.

This value is expressed in the remaining fabric of the Parramatta Female Factory (North-East and South-East Ranges, Penitentiary Sleeping Ward and remaining walls) and Roman Catholic Orphan School-Girls' Industrial School (Main Administration Building, Covered Way, South-West Range, Chapel, Laundry, Bethel House and the Gatehouse).

(c) The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history.

The Parramatta Female Factory Precinct has outstanding potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the lives of convict women in early colonial Australia and institutionalised children during the mid to late nineteenth century and twentieth century. The remnant built fabric relating to the Parramatta Female Factory and Roman Catholic Orphan School is significant and further archaeological study of the area has the potential for finds of equal significance.

This value is expressed by the remnant built fabric and archaeological evidence found within the place relating to the Parramatta Female Factory, the Roman Catholic Orphan School and the Parramatta Industrial Girls' School.

Other Potential National Heritage values

The Australian Heritage Council is also considering whether the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct might have National Heritage value under criterion (g) or criterion (h) for its association with institutionalised women and children. Criterion (g) requires the place to have a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. Parramatta Female Factory Precinct may meet this threshold for the association that the Parramatta Girls' Home has with Forgotten Australians and/or Stolen Generations.

Criterion (h) requires the place has a special association with the life, or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history. Parramatta Female Factory Precinct may meet this threshold for the importance that tens of thousands of institutionalised women and children hold in Australian society and the on-going impact that their experiences at institutions within the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct have had or are having on their lives and the lives of their family and friends.

Through public consultation and further assessment, the Council will assess whether these values reach a threshold of outstanding significance to the nation.

How can I make a submission?

The assessment of National Heritage values under the EPBC Act requires that all practicable steps are taken to advise owners, occupiers and Indigenous people with rights and/or interests in the place and provide the opportunity for them to comment in writing on whether the place should be considered for inclusion in the National Heritage List.

Please provide your written comments by 5:00 PM AEST on Friday 23 September 2016 by post to:

Australian Heritage Council
GPO Box 787
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Or by email to: heritage@environment.gov.au

What is the next step?

Following the close of the submission period, the Australian Heritage Council will give a report on the heritage values to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Energy. The Minister will decide whether to include the place in the National Heritage List taking into account the Australian Heritage Council's report and submissions collected through this consultation process. The Minister may also seek, and have regard to, information or advice from any source.

Where can I get more information on the National Heritage List?

Information about the National Heritage List, the assessment criteria and other places on the list can be found at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/heritage/heritage-places>

Support Services

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<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/support-services>