



THE HON TANYA PLIBERSEK MP
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

SYDNEY HARBOUR FEDERATION TRUST
STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS
2023

This Statement outlines the Government's expectations of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (the 'Harbour Trust') when carrying out its role and responsibilities. It forms part of the Government's commitment to the good governance of statutory authorities and reducing the regulatory burden on business and the community.

Introduction

The Harbour Trust was established under section 5 of the *Sydney Harbour Federation Trust Act 2001* ('Act'), to protect, manage and care for approximately 145 hectares of former Defence and other Commonwealth lands located around Sydney Harbour. The lands hold nationally and internationally significant cultural, natural, industrial and heritage value. The Harbour Trust ensures these lands remain public spaces open and accessible to all Australians, and its rich history preserved and shared for the benefit of everyone.

The lands are important for biodiversity and for providing green spaces within an urban environment. The Harbour Trust has a responsibility to comply and deliver on the legislative responsibilities for biodiversity and heritage conservation through the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (*EBPC Act*).

This statement is addressed to all Members of the Harbour Trust. The Members, collectively, constitute the "Accountable Authority" under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (*PGPA Act*). As such, Members are collectively responsible for the governance and performance of the Harbour Trust.

Ministerial direction

The history of the Sydney Harbour region spans 20,000 years, telling the story of Australia's First Nations connection and culture. It also marks the onset of colonial history along its shores, the strategic establishment of military bases for its defence, and the pivotal arrival point for new Australians.

I expect the Harbour Trust to share my vision to protect more of what's precious, to repair more of what's damaged, and to manage nature and heritage better for the future. This should be achieved through the protection and preservation of what makes the Harbour Trust lands so special to locals, to all Australians and to the world.

Protection and preservation

The Harbour Trust is responsible for protecting, conserving and interpreting the environmental and heritage values of nine iconic sites around the Harbour.

I expect the Harbour Trust to:

- Protect and preserve heritage assets and within the Harbour for future generations.
- Explore innovative opportunities to interpret and activate heritage assets across all sites, including through storytelling, signage and media.

Climate impacts on environmental sustainability

The Harbour Trust should plan for long-term environmental sustainability and environmental resilience.

I expect the Harbour Trust to be carbon neutral by 2030, through year-on-year reductions and offsetting in energy, water, fuel, waste management and green gas emissions and to integrate climate considerations into its planning.

Protect biodiversity and ecological habitats

I expect the Harbour Trust to protect the biodiversity of its sites by continuing to develop their ecological programs, protect their habitats and support community action to:

- Manage and preserve bushland and walking tracks.
- Preserve and regenerate threatened flora and fauna communities and species.
- Provide education and training opportunities.

These measures should contribute to the protection of the nationally significant threatened species and ecosystems and build their resilience.

On cojoined land the Harbour Trust are to engage with NSW Parks and Wildlife with the aim of building a shared vision and pathway to protect, manage and restore Australia's threatened species.

Biodiversity enhancements are to remain a key focus in Harbour Trust planning, in particular to the development of the master plan for North Head Sanctuary, a site of high ecological value, and home to the endangered Eastern Suburb Banksia Scrub and endangered Long nosed Bandicoots.

Financial sustainability

Capital plans should be developed to address the critical backlog of infrastructure works needed to ensure the safety and accessibility of Harbour Trust sites. This should be delivered in staged investment that will ensure the sites are accessible to national and international tourists, encouraging more visitors to Harbour Trust sites.

The foundational master plans for Cockatoo Island/Wareamah, North Head Sanctuary and Middle Head/Gubbuh Gubbuh, should detail the vision and ambition for each site, including appealing to more diverse audiences and offering more diverse experiences to visitors.

The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust should be considering revenue raising opportunities in everything they do, to ensure long-term financial sustainability of its sites, particularly through tourism and re-imagining the adaptive use of space across the Harbour sites.

Collaboration

The Harbour Trust should continue to:

- Engage and collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, particularly groups who live and work across the Harbour Trust sites.
- Build partnerships with expert organisations, and actively pursue ways to connect with business, community and environmental organisations.
- Look for collaborative opportunities with Commonwealth and State departments, particularly those with a history of association with the Harbour Trust sites.
- Work with members of the community to ensure community perspectives and context are provided, to help shape Harbour Trust programs, policies and services.
- Apply appropriate governance frameworks, data collation and reporting processes, to ensure transparency and integrity while reporting progress against the Harbour Trust goals.

I expect the Harbour Trust to work closely in partnership with the NSW Government, its agencies, and local governments to foster a whole of harbour approach to the sustainable management of Sydney Harbour for community benefit.

Conclusion

The Harbour Trust should carry out its functions in a way that ensures it maintains an effective balance between the requirement to protect and conserve the environmental and heritage values of the land with sensitive adaptive reuse that contributes to maximising public access to Trust land.

I expect the Harbour Trust to respond to my expectations with a Statement of Intent, which clearly articulates how the Harbour Trust will strive to adopt the principles of best practice for Commonwealth agencies and demonstrate delivery against this Statement of Expectations. I expect that the Harbour Trust will integrate this Statement of Expectations and responding Statement of Intent into its performance reporting processes as required under the PGPA Act and as part of its Corporate Plan and Annual Report.

Yours sincerely



TANYA PLIBERSEK

15 August 2023