

# Senator the Hon Robert Hill



---

Leader of the Government in the Senate

---

Minister for the Environment and Heritage

---

## **Exhibition reveals hidden harbour sites**

The past, present and possible futures for six unique lands on Sydney Harbour are the focus for the exhibition *Sites Unseen*, opened today by Federal Environment and Heritage Minister Robert Hill.

Senator Hill described *Sites Unseen* at City Exhibition Space in Customs House as “the start of a process that will restore these magnificent harbour lands for the enrichment of Sydney and so they can be enjoyed by all Australians.”

“For the first time all Australians can see the preliminary plans for these unique military and defence lands that have been ‘hidden away’ for so many years,” Senator Hill said.

“The exhibition outlines the qualities we value about each of the lands, from their natural ecology through to built elements and their remarkable histories. *Sites Unseen* puts on show early planning ideas for how each of the lands may be used in the future.”

Senator Hill unveiled the preliminary plans, developed by the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, that offer ideas for each of the six sites.

“The plans suggest treating North Head – the former Artillery School with its amazing parade ground surrounded by art deco barracks and one of the best bushlands in Sydney – as a sanctuary for flora and fauna.

“It suggests extending this bushland to encircle the cluster of small buildings at Middle Head-Georges Height in Mosman and investigating making Woolwich Dock and its adjacent maritime facilities operational again.

“It pictures Cockatoo Island with its two dry docks, convict prison and history of over a century of shipbuilding activities revived with a diverse range of activities and a considerable population to overcome its isolation.

“The plans suggest future public access for the landmark Macquarie Light station at South Head and investigating retaining buildings, workshops and the collection of artefacts on Snapper Island.”

“From this exhibition we want to hear from the broad Sydney community what they value about these harbour lands and if what we are proposing is acceptable.”

Senator Hill said the exhibition provided people with a questionnaire for feedback so it would help the Harbour Trust produce the best possible plans for the lands.

*Sites Unseen*, which has been developed by the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust is on show from 26 May to 5 August. Admission is free and the exhibition is open from 10.00am until 5.00pm seven days.

The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust consists of a team of highly skilled and well-respected architects, planners, urban and landscape designers. It was set up by the Federal Government to work with the community in developing plans to protect, conserve and provide public access to the lands.

The lands are North Head Artillery School, Middle Head-Georges Heights, Woolwich Dock and Parklands, Cockatoo and Snapper Islands and Macquarie Lightstation.

Senator Hill said the Federal Government was committed to adaptive reuse of these lands, not redevelopment.

“We want to ensure that these lands are a lasting legacy for Sydney,” Senator Hill said.

“Future uses must keep with the character and quality of the lands, and minimise impact on surroundings.”

In this week’s budget, the Harbour Trust was allocated \$14 million. This will allow many of the lands to be opened up to the public and urgent repairs and maintenance to be carried out. It will also fund the planning process and community consultation.

The Harbour Trust expects the final draft plans for the lands will be completed by the end of next year. These will outline in detail how each of the lands will be used and managed in the future.

Friday, May 25, 2001

Contact: Belinda Huppatz (Senator Hill’s office) 02 62777640 or 0419 258364  
Kate Langford (Sydney Harbour Federation Trust) 02 8969 2100