



NATIONAL TRUST

MEDIA RELEASE

HMVS Cerberus gains recognition in fight for survival

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The National Trust today announced its inaugural 'Our Heritage at Risk' national top ten list in Hobart, Tasmania.

The final list was derived from over 60 'Our Heritage at Risk' places throughout Australia, identified by the Trusts earlier this year.

The HMVS Cerberus is not only of great significance to Australian heritage, but also internationally, as it was one of the World's first "Monitor" style warships.

The Cerberus was built 1867-69 for the purpose of defending Melbourne's gold, but went on to serve for 50 years. She was the flagship of the Victorian Colonial Navy before federation and the first capital ship of the Royal Australian Navy in 1911.

Having acted as a breakwater at Black Rock, Victoria since 1926 the majority of the deck is now under water and despite removal of its heavy guns, the hull is under imminent threat of collapse.

It was placed on the National Heritage List in December 2005 but has not yet received any funding to ensure its survival.

As well as being the only intact Monitor style ship to survive anywhere in the world, the Cerberus was itself a turning point in British battleship design. Its 'floating fortress' concept included many firsts – full steam power, a central superstructure with protective armoured breastwork, dual revolving gun turrets, low freeboard and a heavily armoured superstructure.

Martin Purslow, CEO of National Trust Victoria, says that the Cerberus marks a significant period in the history of the battleship.

"International naval historians recognise Cerberus as a crucial link between the period of timber line-of-battle ships and the more modern battleships", said Mr Purslow.

“We are very fortunate that this extraordinary vessel survives just a few hundred metres offshore. We are seeking the State and Federal governments to jointly fund the stabilisation of this rare heritage asset, before it is too late.”

For more information please call Steven Cooke on 0412 718 820