



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

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MINISTER LAUNCHES UNIQUE SYDNEY HARBOUR CAMPGROUND

Environment Minister Peter Garrett today officially opened the exciting new campground on Cockatoo Island - the largest island in Sydney Harbour and just eight minutes from Australia's largest city.

"From a former convict prison and shipbuilding yard this Island is becoming a landmark attraction in one of the world's most recognisable harbours, surrounded by some of the world's most recognisable architecture in the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Opera House.

"In a few short years, the Trust has decontaminated the island and made great progress in conserving and rehabilitating its buildings and facilities.

"The campground is the latest venture by the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust to breathe new life into the island and offers visitors from around the world a unique camping experience."

Mr Garrett said that Cockatoo Island's reputation as a place to visit had grown in recent years following the success of a number of cultural events including a music festival and the recent Biennale of Sydney which attracted over 80,000 people to the island.

"A visit here to this campground with its state-of-the-art solar powered facilities, is a wonderful way to experience the sights and sounds of Sydney and learn something of the rich history of this Heritage Listed site."

Mr Garrett said the former convict prison on Cockatoo Island was one of a number of convict sites around Australia nominated for world heritage listing.

Cockatoo Island's history is emblematic of the history of Sydney. It started life as a convict prison in the 1840s, became an industrial school and reformatory and reverted to a gaol in the late nineteenth century.

Maritime activity on the island began with the construction by convicts of the Fitzroy Dock in the late 1840s. In the 20th century, Cockatoo Island became the biggest shipbuilding yard in Australia, operating until the early 1990s.

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