

HARBOUR TRUST LAUNCHES EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST CAMPAIGN FOR FORMER HMAS PLATYPUS SITE

August 31, 2017

One of Sydney Harbour's last remaining secrets was publicly unveiled today, with the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust launching a national campaign aimed at opening up the former HMAS Platypus site to the public for the first time in 150 years, and re-launching the site as Sub Base Platypus.

The Harbour Trust, which was set up by the Federal Government in 2001 as a custodian of some of the most important historical sites on Sydney Harbour, is calling for Expressions of Interest to turn the 1.8 hectare site into a cultural, community and commercial hub.

The Minister for the Environment and Energy, Josh Frydenberg, said the Expressions of Interest process is an important step to renewing the former naval site, which is an integral part of our nation's maritime and industrial history, while taking on board the views of the local community and indeed, Sydneysiders.

Launching the Expressions of Interest campaign, the Federal MP for North Sydney, Trent Zimmerman, said he was pleased to see one of the Harbour's most important historical and industrial locations opened up to the public after 150 years.

"Under its legislation, the Harbour Trust has a responsibility to ensure the site is opened up to the public and to contribute to its further protection, which is why the Government is happy to support this call for cultural, community and commercial groups to become part of the Sub Base Platypus story," Mr Zimmermann said.

"As the local Federal MP, I am delighted with the significant community consultation undertaken by the Harbour Trust in the development of the guiding vision for the site now being implemented, which will include new urban parklands, a new open space on the foreshore, and improvements to access, with a new over-water link to Kesterton Park."

The Chair of the Harbour Trust's Board, Kevin McCann, said the former submarine workshops would be revitalised to provide a sequence of terraces, streets, squares and gardens for public enjoyment by the waterfront.

"While the industrial heritage values of the buildings will be retained, the buildings and public spaces will be adapted and made available to cultural, community and commercial organisations, as part of the Harbour Trust's management plan for this highly valuable public asset. The Harbour Trust's proposals will see revenue raised through this leasing invested back into the parklands under our management," Mr McCann said.

According to the Chief Executive Officer of the Harbour Trust, Mary Darwell, parts of the site will be opened to the public from mid 2018, with the bulk of the work on the buildings expected to proceed over the next two years.

"Sub Base Platypus is a significant site just four kilometres from the Sydney CBD and well serviced by public transport," Ms Darwell said.

"The site has a lettable area of 12,000m² with spaces available ranging from 35m² - suiting boutique operations - through to the Torpedo factory, at 6,630m².

“Once completed, we will see Sub Base Platypus become a special destination for Sydneysiders and visitors alike, providing a range of facilities and venues for cultural performances, function areas, cafes and restaurants, as well as offices and commercial spaces.

“By establishing commercial uses on our sites in ways that complement heritage, the Harbour Trust derives revenue for reinvestment into sites. This means, we will ensure the cultural, community and commercial applications at Sub Base Platypus will be in keeping with the historical and heritage values of the site,” she said.

The site is Cammeraygal Country and was once a gasworks providing gas for street lights, homes and businesses on the North Shore of Sydney. As part of the war effort, the site was resumed by the Commonwealth Government in 1942 and became a torpedo manufacturing and maintenance factory as well as a service facility for the naval vessels of the Pacific Fleet.

In 1967 the site was commissioned as the base for the Royal Australian Navy’s Oberon-class submarines and was named HMAS Platypus. The submarine base was closed in 1998 and the asset was transferred to the Harbour Trust in 2005.

The Expressions of Interest campaign closes 4pm, 31 October. Expressions of Interest documents are available at subbaseplatypus.com.au

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The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust is an operationally self-funding agency created by the Australian Government to be responsible for the vision planning and management of former defence and Commonwealth sites around Sydney Harbour. Our sites are Cockatoo Island and Snapper Island in Sydney Harbour, Woolwich Dock and Parklands, Sub Base Platypus, Headland Park in Mosman, North Head Sanctuary in Manly, the Marine Biological Station in Watsons Bay and Macquarie Lightstation in Vaucluse. These public spaces and parklands offer major events, exhibitions, venue hire, accommodation, tours and business tenancy. www.harbourtrust.gov.au

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