*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

INCLUSION OF A PLACE IN THE COMMONWEALTH HERITAGE LIST

**AUSTRALIA HOUSE**

I, Mark Butler, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Water, being satisfied that the place described in the Schedule has the Commonwealth Heritage values specified in the Schedule, include:

* the place described in the Schedule; and
* the Commonwealth Heritage values for that place

in the Commonwealth Heritage List under section 341JI (1) of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

Dated: 18/07/2013

*[signed by]*

Mark Butler

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Water

**United Kingdom**

**City of Westminister**

**Australia House:**

The Strand, corner of the Aldwych and The Strand, London WC2B 4LA, United Kingdom.

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| **Criterion** | | **Values** |
| **(a)** | the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history. | Australia House is historically significant as Australia’s first overseas diplomatic mission, created after Federation in 1901. The building was completed in 1918 and the substantial scale and high quality architectural design reflects Australia’s pride in its newly established nationhood, as well as the ongoing importance of Australia’s relationship with the United Kingdom at that time. Australia House also demonstrates Australia’s changing relationship with the United Kingdom over the course of the twentieth century.   Australia House is significant as one of a number of extraordinary national initiatives that were undertaken circa 1912 to display Australia’s independence and pride in the newly established nationhood.    The importance of this relationship for Australia is demonstrated by the fact that Australia House was Australia’s only overseas mission until 1940, and has remained a key diplomatic mission throughout the rest of the twentieth century until the present day. Over time Australia’s view of its national interests matured, which led to a change in diplomatic and defence alliances. The events of WWII played a significant role in this change as direct threats to Australia led to the formulation of independent defence relationships. Shifting trade relations in the post-war period and into the 21st century further contributed to a decline in the exclusivity of Australia’s ties to the United Kingdom.   Australia House was a key focal point for expatriate and visiting Australians in London up to the 1980s. This function reflected the early phases of what has grown to be a global tourism industry, and an approach to the support of Australian nationals overseas that is now no longer provided.   Australia House was the main immigration office for the post-World War II assisted passage migration scheme to Australia, which continued to the 1970s. This was a major scheme which helped over 1 million British subjects migrate to Australia and was to significantly shape Australia’s economic, social and political development. The prominence of Australia House as a migrant information and processing centre diminished substantially in the latter part of the twentieth century. |

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| **(b)**  *)* | the place has significant heritage value because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history. | Australia House is rare as Australia’s first and only foreign diplomatic mission until 1940. Australia House is also unusual in being the longest continuously occupied diplomatic mission building in both Britain and among Australia diplomatic missions. The impressive physical form of the building, coupled with its historical associations, reflect this unique international relationship with Britain that is uncommon in its clarity.   Australia House is also rare as an Australian Government building which displays a richness and exuberance in its form, scale and decoration, including much symbolic decoration reflecting national themes. The building was commissioned shortly after Federation; however as World War I and the Great Depression followed shortly afterwards, the resources and interest in such architecture and decoration in Australia for government buildings were not generally present after 1914. Therefore, the scale of this building and the rich materials used are quite unique. |
| **(f)** | the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period. | Australia House has significant heritage value because of the high degree of creative achievement in the combination of its architecture, interior design, decoration, materials and artworks.   The building’s design is impressive as it incorporates both Victoria House and Australia House on an awkward triangular site. The internal planning effectively links the main entry on the ground floor to the Exhibition Hall, enabling the visitor to view the entire length of this axis and appreciate the richness and monumental character of the architecture. The building is a fine example of the Beaux-Arts style with detailed decorative treatment of the exterior and interior, including extensive use of high quality Australian materials, decorative metalwork with gilt elements, sculpture, murals and paintings by Australia artists. These aspects, combined with the extensive inclusion of nationalistic symbols in the decoration, make Australia House a creative achievement of note dating to the early years of Australia’s nationhood.   Moveable artworks which are integral to the significance of Australia House include the Thompson and Carington Smith murals, and the Crooke paintings. |

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| **(h)** | the place has significant heritage value because of the place's special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history. | Australia House has a special association with Australia’s High Commissioners to the United Kingdom as their principal place of work. The High Commissioners are, as a group, important in Australia’s history. Until World War II, the High Commissioners were Australia’s only foreign-based diplomatic representatives. Even with the growth of Australia’s diplomatic service, and the changing importance of the United Kingdom to Australia, the High Commissioner’s post remains one of the most important for Australia.   Australia House has a special association with Stanley Melbourne Bruce. Bruce was the eighth Prime Minister of Australia, who was later appointed as High Commissioner. Bruce is an important figure in Australian history; however he has a special association with Australia House because of the important changes he achieved while in the role of High Commissioner. For the first time during Bruce’s tenure, the High Commissioner was able to play a major foreign policy and diplomatic role.  Bruce established coordination and control over the various Australian military and civilian officers working at the High Commission. These changes foreshadowed the future character of the Australian diplomatic service. |
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For more information on the place search the Australian Heritage Database at <http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl> using the name of the place.