



Don Harwin
Special Minister of State

Geoff Lee
Acting Minister for Veterans

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW GOVERNMENT LEADS PROTECTION OF WWII HERITAGE SITES 75 YEARS ON

Today marks the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in the Pacific with the signing of the surrender documents aboard USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay, Japan.

Minister responsible for Heritage Don Harwin said the NSW Government is proud to have protected the offshore shipwreck of the Japanese midget submarine that entered Sydney Harbour in 1942, for future generations.

“It is a time for us to remember the men and women who protected our nation in its darkest hours and also recognise the significance of heritage sites from the war dotted across NSW,” Mr Harwin said.

“This global conflict extended to every corner of the world and to Australia’s doorstep. While the air raids on Darwin and Broome in early 1942 seemed far removed from the cities on the east coast, it was not long before Sydney would also come under direct attack,” he said.

“Today *M24* is an internationally significant heritage site protected under State and Commonwealth heritage legislation. It is gratifying to see a site like *M24*, created in conflict, now a symbol of peaceful cooperative management between the State, Commonwealth and Japanese governments,” Mr Harwin said.

Acting Minister for Veterans Geoff Lee said NSW is making a big effort to ensure this significant anniversary isn’t forgotten during the pandemic.

“It is now 75 years since the Second World War ended with the signing of the surrender documents and we reflect on the ultimate sacrifice paid by the men and women who served throughout the Pacific to defend our nation,” Mr Lee said.

“With careful management, conservation and protection of our Second World War heritage sites we will be able to tell the stories of our brave service men and service women for generations to come,” he said.

On the night of 31 May 1942, three Japanese Ko-hyoteki-class midget submarines entered Sydney Harbour leading to an audacious attack resulting in the sinking of

the HMAS *Kuttabul*, killing 21 Allied sailors. While two of the midget submarines were destroyed before they could fire their torpedoes inside the harbour, the third submarine, the *M24*, escaped and disappeared becoming one of our greatest wartime mysteries.

It was not until 2006 that the final resting place of the missing midget submarine was discovered off Sydney's northern beaches.

The NSW Government has won State and International heritage awards for best-practice management of this site and its sensitive values. The Government also just upgraded the leading camera surveillance system that monitors and protects the site from unlawful visitation.

A wide range of sites - from tank traps, underground bunkers and tunnel - are being conserved and protected for future generations.

More details about NSW Heritage sites can be found [here](#).

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