MEDIA RELEASE: Friday 15 December 2017

Australia to host the world’s most important cultural heritage event

The Australian Government and NSW Government joined the President of Australia ICOMOS Ian Travers today to announce that Sydney will host 1,200 global heritage experts in 2020, at the next Triennial General Assembly of ICOMOS, the International Council and Monuments and Sites.

Ian Travers welcomed strong government backing, including $2.6 million in financial and in-kind support from the Australian and State governments, which helped Australia’s bid succeed. He thanked Business Events Sydney, an independent not for profit organisation tasked by the NSW government to lead bidding and marketing efforts to secure international business events. They confirmed the event should draw $4 million direct expenditure into the visitor economy.

“The proposed General Assembly theme: ‘Shared Cultures – Shared Heritage – Shared Responsibility’ reflects both the global context of heritage as part of cultural identity at a time of rapid population shift and conflict, but also the important idea of shared stewardship, which is highly relevant to Traditional Owners of heritage places,” he said.

ICOMOS has over 10,000 members globally – architects, historians, planners, archaeologists and others – who provide expert advice to the World Heritage Committee and national governments.

Delegates will visit iconic Australian heritage sites including the Sydney Opera House, Hyde Park Barracks and the Blue Mountains, which are being showcased on the world stage. The event will highlight stories and techniques for conserving important cultural sites.

Minister for the Environment and Energy, the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, welcomed the announcement that Australia would host the prestigious symposium.

“This is great news, coming so soon after Australia secured a seat on the World Heritage Committee. The Australian Government is working hard to improve conservation and access to places recognised for their heritage significance to Australia and the world. Hosting the General Assembly aligns with the Australian Government’s commitment to World Heritage and national leadership under the Australian Heritage Strategy,” he said.

NSW Heritage Minister Gabrielle Upton said the 2020 ICOMOS General Assembly would highlight NSW’s significant heritage conservation work.

“I want our state’s extraordinary heritage to get the focus it deserves. Protecting and preserving our heritage gives people the opportunity to enjoy and value our history,” Ms Upton said.

The 2020 Opening Ceremony will be held at the Sydney Opera House, one of Australia’s iconic World Heritage Properties. Opera House CEO Louise Herron has welcomed the announcement, noting the opportunity it will present to “showcase Australia’s significant places and conservation achievements, as well as foster deeper understanding of its rich cultural heritage among international heritage professionals.”

Further Information: Georgia Meros, Australia ICOMOS Secretariat, 0413 053 618