



The Hon. Tony Burke MP

T R A N S C R I P T

## National heritage listing of the Great Ocean Road

E&OE Transcript

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**TONY BURKE:** Thanks everybody for coming out today. The National Heritage List is the way as an Australian Government, we recognise what are the most important stories in Australia, what are the places where there is a truly Australian story that should always be told and should always be protected.

We're still in the first 100 of those stories around Australia as we build the National Heritage List and we only have just 20 of those stories that are coastal.

Today we're recognising on the National Heritage List something that the people of this part of Australia have always known was part of our heritage and that many Australians who've driven up and down this road have always known as part of our heritage.

Whether it's the story of those Australian servicemen, like Alex, who worked tirelessly for years in building the Great Ocean Road, whether it's the natural heritage story of the Twelve Apostles or the surfing heritage of Bells Beach, whether it's the tourism story that so many people have now become part of. In every way, when you come to the Great Ocean Road, you see a classic part of Australian heritage.

And today I'm pleased to announce officially the Great Ocean Road is now part of the National Heritage List.

[applause]

What that means is it's now part of my environmental decisions. Whenever development comes in different parts of the country, we often get questions as to whether that development is going to complement and work with people enjoying our heritage or whether it's potentially a threat, a way of wrecking our heritage.

To make sure that we know what the values are that we want to protect, that's why we have the list. We have the list to say that developments and different ways of people enjoying an area are important, they're part of facilitating things working. They're part of people enjoying an area into the future.

But in doing that, you never want to compromise the values and the stories of the area itself, heritage that goes long before, long before there was formal white settlement in this area, an Indigenous heritage, a national heritage, a heritage of the people who built the development and a heritage of people who continue to enjoy it.

Their values are protected on the National Heritage List. The Australian Government now has caught up with what you already knew and that's there is an important part of the Australian story, it lives here and always will.

**REPORTER:** Does that mean the Commonwealth is now responsible for its upkeep?

**TONY BURKE:** No. It's in terms of the National Heritage List which is about when applications come for further development.

And it's two things. The practical legal impact is that. But secondly the mere fact of the recognition I think matters. And I don't think we should understate the importance of what it says to any area when you're told: what you hold here isn't just a local treasure, it's a national one.

**REPORTER:** When you say development, are we talking from houses right through to potential hotel type development?

**TONY BURKE:** It's when something is seen to potentially compromise the values, then a referral is made. People make the referrals voluntarily, very often they make a referral to simply check whether or not what they want to would affect the values that are listed there for the heritage.

In almost all instances, things don't but sometimes you do get areas where a change that's wanted to be made does, in fact, impact on the values of keeping an area special. Now, we don't just have your standard endangered species issues. We've actually got the values that are known here as part of the values of the Great Ocean Road.

**REPORTER:** We know she's a bit challenged at the moment with land slips and age and erosion, does it mean anything in any way for those problems?

**TONY BURKE:** In terms of your standard natural upkeep, that's not what today's announcement is about. Today's announcement and those – it's not to undermine those protections, it's just that's not the legal impact of today's announcement.

Today's announcement is about if anyone actively wants to make a direct threat to those values, it's now subject to the protection of national environmental law.

**REPORTER:** So it's an extra layer of protection?

**TONY BURKE:** It's an extra layer of protection. I'm not going to pretend that it's a be all and end all.

But in terms of protection, there's a whole lot of values that a week ago weren't protected, now are.

And In terms of national recognition, it was always there in the Australian people. We've now finally ticked the official box.

**REPORTER:** Was it a hard decision to make for you, once you saw all the evidence laid out? Was it hard to say, this one actually does belong on the heritage list?

**TONY BURKE:** I can't think of an easier decision that's come to me.

The concept itself you initially think why isn't it already done? When you looked at the work that had been done by the National Heritage Council in recommending the listing to me, you will not find – you would be very hard pressed to find a case for a stronger listing than this one.

Often a listing has natural values or a listing has a historic story or a listing has a very modern story, like surfing at Bells. This one's got it all.

**REPORTER:** So the values you're referring to are like the tourism and the surfing and the history and that sort of thing?

**TONY BURKE:** Yes. Okay. Thanks very much.

**ENDS**