

**Standing Committee on Treaties**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water Portfolio**

**Inquiry:** Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage 2001  
**Question No:** IQ23-000099  
**Hearing Date:** 10 February 2023  
**Division/Agency:** Heritage Reef and Ocean Division (HROD) G3  
**Topic:** First Nations underwater cultural heritage sites  
**Hansard Page:** 18  
**Question Date:** 10 February 2023  
**Question Type:** Spoken

**Mr Wilson asked:**

CHAIR: I'll just ask you to take one question on notice if you don't mind. You said that almost none of the 8,000 would be First Nations related. If you can tell us if any of them are, that would be useful. Also, while it's obviously for states and territories to notify of First Nations heritage that they may have identified and registered, again, if you're aware of that being part of the work that states or territories have done—even just anecdotally, and even if it hasn't made its way onto the register—I think it will be worthwhile for us to have that information.

**Answer:**

- There is currently one First Nations underwater cultural heritage site registered on the Australasian Underwater Cultural Heritage Database (AUCHD): Brewarrina Aboriginal Fish Traps. The Fish Traps were entered into the AUCHD by the NSW agency as a terrestrial site (ID 10894) and include highly significant archaeological remains which are submerged in a freshwater environment. The Brewarrina Aboriginal Fish Traps are also included in the National Heritage List and are protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.
- Anecdotally the department is aware of Australia's first confirmed ancient underwater archaeological sites from the continental shelf, located off the Murujuga coastline in north-western Australia in 2020. Potential underwater sites in the Southwest Arm of Port Hacking, south of Sydney, were also reported in 2005 by a team of archaeologists and maritime archaeologists.