

Maritime Archaeology Association of Victoria

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Victoria

16 March 2022

To the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties,

On behalf of the Maritime Archaeology Association of Victoria (MAAV), I write of our support for the ratification of the *2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage*. The MAAV fully supports the protection of maritime sites, having been drivers of Victoria's adoption of legislation in the early 1980s. Our volunteer group is made up of a broad spectrum of society including PhD graduates and candidates, historians, professionals, tradespeople, as well as both avocational and vocational maritime archaeologists. Our group carries out its own projects while providing support and assistance with work carried out by the Maritime Heritage Unit, as part of Heritage Victoria. Coming into existence in 1978, whereby there was no relevant legislation in place, we have seen the benefit to the protection of Victoria's underwater cultural heritage sites by the introduction of protective legislation, at a state level. Importantly, the Convention broadly aligns with Australia's legislation and imposes obligations on Australia to manage shared heritage in the contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone in a particular manner that reflects the Law of the Sea. With 71 countries already adopting the Convention, and several more in the process, it is time for Australia to play its part with the ratification of the Convention.

Yours sincerely for Maritime Archaeology of Victoria,

Peter Taylor secretary