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7 March 2022

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Joint Standing Committee on Treaties,

On behalf of the Queensland Heritage Council (Heritage Council), I write to express our support for Australia ratifying the *2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage*.

Australia's maritime heritage is fundamental to this nation's existence, with the movement of Aboriginal peoples into mainland Australia via watercraft occurring at least 65,000 years ago. This is further reflected in the 8000 wrecks throughout Australian waters that have come into existence since, including over 1800 in Queensland's waters, which relate to our ongoing maritime and underwater cultural heritage.

Queensland's support for Australia's ratification reflects the Heritage Council's view that it will be a critical part of affirming Australia's status on the international stage as a member state complying with the *2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage*. Ratification will ensure joint protection of our underwater cultural heritage in international waters, strengthening our ties to other state parties.

The Heritage Council respectfully requests that the *2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage* be ratified.

Should there be further questions about this submission, please contact the Heritage Council via Ms Celeste Jordan, Principal Heritage Officer, Department of Environment and Science, [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

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Ms Leslie Shirreffs PSM
Chair