



18 March 2022

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

Dear Madam/Sir,

The Maritime Archaeology Program at Flinders University, established in 2002, is the largest and most successful post-graduate program in this specialisation in Australasia. We train students to become professionals in maritime archaeology, underwater cultural heritage management and scientific diving, and we carry out research projects in Australia and abroad. We have an international student base and our graduates have gone on to work for national and state government institutions, museums, universities, and consulting firms in Australia and overseas.

Flinders University became the fifth member of the UNESCO University Twinning and Networking Programme (UNITWIN) for Underwater Archaeology in 2013, and we chaired the Network from 2015 to 2018—a global leadership position which now includes 32 university members, nine recognised partners and two accredited observers across six continents (<http://www.underwaterarchaeology.net/>). The Network aims to increase capacity and research in the participating countries through international cooperation and enhances the protection of underwater cultural heritage by connecting in a formal way universities and professional training institutions in the field of underwater archaeology. It complements the work of the Secretariat of the *Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage* (UNESCO 2001).

Australia has long been at the forefront globally of the development of rigorous, sustainable legislation to protect underwater cultural heritage of both local and international origins. Ratification of the *Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage* (UNESCO 2001) complements our national and state legislation for the protection of underwater cultural heritage, such as the Commonwealth *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act* 2018.

Most of Australia's known underwater cultural heritage represents a uniquely international form of shared heritage, and one that is at risk from any failure to adopt a common set of principles across national and maritime boundaries. The *Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage* (UNESCO 2001) provides the most effective multilateral framework for countries to manage and undertake activities involving underwater cultural heritage outside their own jurisdiction. It gives a widely recognised platform for the co-operation between countries and provides practical rules for the management and research of underwater cultural heritage.

We strongly support Australia ratifying the *Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage* (UNESCO, Paris, 2 November 2001).

Yours sincerely,

Wendy van Duivenvoorde
Associate Professor

Jonathan Benjamin
Associate Professor

John McCarthy
DECRA Fellow