Robyn Parker MP
Minister for the Environment
Minister for Heritage

MEDIA RELEASE

BUTTERFLY CAVE DECLARED AN ABORIGINAL PLACE

Environment Minister Robyn Parker today announced that Butterfly Cave, West Wallsend, has been formally declared an Aboriginal Place to recognise the special cultural, social and historic significance of the site to the Aboriginal community.

The Awabakil Local Aboriginal Land Council nominated Butterfly Cave for declaration as an Aboriginal Place to ensure its recognition and protection as a place of special significance to Aboriginal culture.

"Butterfly Cave is significant to Aboriginal culture because the area was used as a traditional ceremony and meeting place for Awabakal women," Ms Parker said.

"It is part of a secluded women's area in a safe haven beneath a rock platform, in an area with an abundance of natural recourses.

"The area was used as a traditional ceremony and meeting place for Awabakal women.

"The area is highly valued by the Aboriginal peoples of the Awabakal region for its abundant bush food resources and natural beauty.

"Elements of the vegetation, rock formations, and the women's site are enhanced by the aesthetic and spiritual value of the place."

In announcing the latest declaration, Ms Parker reaffirmed that the NSW Government's commitment to the recognition and conservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

"By declaring significant lands as Aboriginal Places, we recognise and acknowledge that Aboriginal culture is living and continuing, and that the connection of Aboriginal people to the land and culture is immensely important to their wellbeing and future," Ms Parker said.

"It is important to recognise and preserve Aboriginal history and an Aboriginal Place declaration achieves this without hindering the current land use."

"The declaration of an Aboriginal Place does not change the status of the land or affect ownership rights, however a person must not harm or desecrate an Aboriginal Place."

Media: John McCormack 0467 731 806