2.0 NHQS CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN:
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is the policy of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to prepare conservation management plans for historic places to guide future conservation, management and changes to the use or fabric of the place. The purpose of this Conservation Management Plan is to guide the conservation and management of the North Head Quarantine Station as part of Sydney Harbour National Park. The Plan establishes the cultural and natural significance and presents policies and strategies to ensure the conservation of the cultural and natural significance of the place.

This Conservation Management Plan is based on the Sydney Harbour National Park North Head Quarantine Station 1992 Conservation Plan; but is an entirely new document. The Plan has responded to the Brief requirements [refer Section 1.0 above and Appendix A below] and provided a detail overview and description of the Aboriginal, European/Asian and Natural heritage of the Quarantine Station site. This analysis has resulted in a new Statement of Significance for the place. The Plan also provides a discussion of policy issues leading to policy recommendations; and appropriate policy strategies and implementation.

The primary significance of the North Head and the Quarantine Station is its historical and social significance; and its associations with administration, arrival and public health. It is also significant for its contemporary associations with the descendants of internees; and for its Aboriginal and natural values. Strong meanings are embodied in the landform, the vegetation, the harbour and the sea. The significance of the place is strongly reflected in its intactness and its ability to demonstrate all phases of its history and to convey a sense of its uniqueness through its setting and the nature of its buildings and other elements.

Many aspects of the place contribute to its meaning and its significance. North Head has retained much of its traditional ambience. The strong meaning and spirituality of the place to Aboriginal people is tangible also to Europeans. Its isolation is palpable.

The Quarantine Station should be conserved and managed by NPWS in accordance with its outstanding significance as a place that retains and evokes powerful cultural meanings for a large number of indigenous, resident and newly-arrived Australians. Its natural features, cultural features and ambience should remain accessible to the local, state, national and international community.

The Quarantine Station is a place of outstanding significance in public ownership, and its management carries with it the expectation
of public access and presentation. NPWS, as manager, should be primarily focussed on the conservation and public presentation of the place, and ensure that the requisite skills for this task are available.

As the custodian of the place, NPWS should ensure that the values expressed in the statement of cultural significance will be retained and that the natural resources, historic fabric, artefacts, sites and meanings of the place, which are essential to the interpretation of its outstanding significance, will be conserved.

The management of the Quarantine Station by NPWS should maintain an appropriate level of community representation and public access, compatible with the objectives of protecting and interpreting its many layers of significance and efficiency in accordance with prevailing State Government policy requirements. The policies [and strategies for implementation of those policies] must be capable of implementation within any of the management options for the place, discussed within this Conservation Management Plan.

The Aboriginal, European/Asian and Natural heritage values of the Quarantine Station are integrally related to the values of North Head as a whole. Implementation of the Conservation Management Plan of the Quarantine Station site should be undertaken in the context and in conjunction with planning for North Head as a whole. Specifically, and as opportunities arise, the conservation management planning for the Quarantine Station should be considered in association with the proposed adaptive re-uses for the former School of Artillery Site [Defence property].

The most significant fabric at the Quarantine Station relates to its use for quarantine purposes from 1828 to 1984, its Aboriginal associations, and its natural values. All periods of quarantine use should be respected, and the conservation approach for fabric of any given period should not diminish the significance or ability to interpret the fabric of other periods and the evolution of the place over time. On balance, the station should reflect its form and appearance as it was in its final form in 1984.

Because this Conservation Plan covers the complex collection of buildings, sites and landscape that make up the whole of the Quarantine Station, assessment and policies are developed at a level appropriate to that large scale of generalisation. There is a need to develop more detailed supplementary conservation documents [such as discrete conservation plans] for each functional area of the station, and for major buildings and building groups. Such supplementary conservation documentation would be consistent with the significance assessment and policy directions given in this Conservation Management Plan.
In Section 9 most conservation policies are followed by specific strategies that are further developed in Section 10. These translate the policies into actions within specified time frames that can be carried out as part of the continuing conservation and management of the Quarantine Station.

This Final Conservation Management Plan will be considered by the NSW Heritage Council for endorsement. Once endorsed it will become the primary guide to the conservation of the Quarantine Station. However the Plan will need to work in conjunction with Environmental Impact Statements [EIS] which have to consider the wider social, environmental and economic impacts of any proposed development. Importantly, an Environmental Impact Statement is only required if there is a major change in the current management structure or planned use, however this Conservation Management Plan has been written to accommodate the management of the Quarantine Station in all foreseeable circumstances.