Alison Anderson  
MINISTER FOR HERITAGE

26 February 2009

Declaration To Protect Darwin Harbour Relics

The last of six catalina wrecks found sunken in Darwin Harbour from World War II has been placed under an Interim Conservation Order by Heritage Minister Alison Anderson.

The sixth catalina was found during surveys of the Darwin Harbour sea bed in May last year, and is largely intact. The other five wrecks have each deteriorated to varying degrees.

Investigations by divers commissioned by the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport show that the wreck of the sixth catalina has recently been tampered with.

The Interim Conservation order will be accompanied by an exclusion zone with a radius of 200 metres around the wreck, which will be enforced by the Harbourmaster

Penalties of up to $100,000 apply under the Heritage Act for interfering with the wreck. The order will be in place for 90 days, and can be renewed.

Minister Anderson said the Heritage Advisory Council had recommended that the wreck be placed under the order.

“It’s important that we take steps to ensure that this war time relic and important piece of maritime heritage is protected,” Ms Anderson said.

“The exclusion zone will help us identify anyone who is in the area who shouldn’t be, and gives us powers to prosecute any unauthorised salvage attempts.”

The catalina flying boat was brought to Darwin by the United States Navy. It was sunk by the Japanese on 19 February 1942.

Contact: Shannon McRae 0419 340 735