

19 August 2026

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The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

HMAS PENGUIN

Dear Prime Minister,

I write to you as Mayor of Mosman because of the leadership you have shown over many years in advocating for the protection of Sydney Harbour and, in particular, the nationally significant headlands at Middle Head. I respectfully ask that you intervene to exclude HMAS Penguin from the Defence estate divestment program.

I write to you directly, rather than only to your Ministers, because of the position you have long held on this stretch of coastline. Speaking on the *Sydney Harbour Federation Trust Amendment Bill 2021*, you described Sydney Harbour as "*an asset that is a jewel for the entire country*" and warned that the sale of harbour land would be a retrograde step because "*if we get it wrong once, it disappears forever.*" You also described the Middle Head headlands as nationally significant assets and reminded Parliament, through the words of Tom Uren, that this land belongs not only to Mosman or Sydney, but to all Australians.

Council raises this matter in that same spirit. The community you referred to is the Mosman community. The place you described is Middle Head. The encroachment you warned against is now being contemplated by the Commonwealth itself.

Mosman Council fully supports the ongoing operation of HMAS Penguin as an important Defence facility. Our concern relates only to the proposed divestment of surplus land. The site comprises 16.64 hectares of irreplaceable harbour foreshore, including Commonwealth heritage values and a significant Angophora forest that contributes to the environmental and cultural significance of Sydney Harbour. This is not vacant or degraded land. Once transferred from public ownership, it cannot realistically be recovered, and decisions of this nature should be assessed not only against today's financial considerations but also against the interests of future generations.

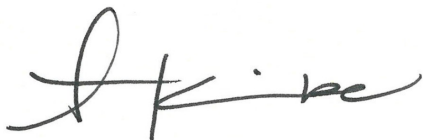
Council has unanimously resolved to oppose any sale of HMAS Penguin land, seek the protection of the Angophora forest in its entirety, and advocate for the site's retention in permanent public ownership, whether through continued Commonwealth ownership or transfer to the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust if any land is no longer required for Defence purposes. Council has also made a submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Management of Defence Estate Assets supporting this position.

I attended two community consultation forums relating to the proposal. The message was remarkably consistent. Residents, environmental organisations, heritage groups, former Defence personnel and the broader community all strongly expressed the view that this nationally significant land should remain in public ownership.

Prime Minister, your words to Parliament recognised that Sydney Harbour belongs to all Australians and that, once lost, public land cannot be recovered. I respectfully ask that those principles now guide the Commonwealth's decision regarding HMAS Penguin.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you, or your representatives, to discuss this matter further.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Kimber', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cr Ann Marie Kimber
Mayor of Mosman