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# MALABAR HEADLAND

## Heritage Conservation Area

*The area is of high scenic value and includes areas of remnant bushland as well as remains of a wartime coastal defence site.*

Malabar Headland contains two significant bushland remnants - referred to as the coastal section and the western section. Together, these contain what is probably the largest area of essentially unmodified bushland in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs. The bushland is a significant part of one of two semi-natural corridors between Botany Bay and Port Jackson. The two sections support at least seven distinct plant communities. This diversity of habitats is only matched in the Eastern Suburbs in Botany Bay National Park.

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### What is the area's significance?

#### **Aesthetic Significance:**

Malabar Headland demonstrates much of the range of landscapes which originally occurred in the Eastern Suburbs, including coastal rock platforms, sea cliffs and headlands in the coastal section, and sandstone escarpments and aeolian sand dunes in the western section.

#### **Historic Significance:**

The place includes a World War Two coastal defence site of historic significance, the Boora Point Battery. This is an imposing, purpose built coastal landmark which is important for providing tangible evidence of Australia's coastal defence efforts in the Sydney area during World War Two. The battery features a number of particularly unusual attributes, including a rare example of 6 inch Mark XII gun mountings, a completely underground counter bombardment facility, with gun crew ready rooms, ammunition supply and engine room and a small gauge sunken railway associated with an imposing observation post. The area includes a number of additional sites of cultural heritage value, including World War Two graffiti, and features associated with a significant town service - the south-west ocean outfall sewer.

#### **Social Significance**

The battery has particular social significance to World War Two veterans and those involved in its war time operations, or interested in the history of fortifications.

#### **Technical/Research Significance:**

The vegetation communities of Malabar Headland are of scientific and educational significance because they contain rare examples of coastal communities growing on Pleistocene sand deposits within the Sydney region. These communities have different species composition to those found elsewhere in the Sydney region.

Both the coastal and western sections of Malabar Headland support a high diversity of plant species, with species composition reflecting changes in aspect. At least three hundred plant species occur within the place and only fifty percent of the place's flora is common to both sections.

Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub, a nationally endangered ecological community occurs as heath and scrub in the coastal section and as a low woodland in the more protected western section. Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub is regarded as of extremely high conservation significance, due

to the extent of previous clearing. The community was once common on Quarternary sands in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney; now less than one percent of the original community remains and is restricted to Malabar Headland and La Perouse.

The western section contains remnants of dunes believed to have been formed as a result of the last major glacial period. These occur adjacent to sandstone outcrops and provide an opportunity to study the place's geomorphological formation.

The place contains the last known population of the once extensive Port Jackson mallee (*EUCALYPTUS OBSTANS*, formerly *OBTUSIFLORA*) in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney.

Local Aboriginal people in the area used the site for fishing and cultural activities - rock engravings, grinding grooves and middens remain in evidence.

### Themes Represented:

The following historical themes, identified in the 1989 Randwick Heritage Study, are directly illustrated in the heritage conservation area:

- Modifying the landscape
- Government and institutions
- Recreation, entertainment and leisure
- Industry and commerce

The following themes are indirectly represented:

- Promotion, culture, religion and education
- Transport and communications

