



FAST FACTS

WORLD WAR II BUILDINGS OLIVER HILL BATTERY AND SIGNAL RIDGE, WADJEMUP / ROTTNEST ISLAND

World War II Buildings, Oliver Hill Battery and Signal Ridge, Wadjemup / Rottnest Island was entered in the State Register of Heritage Places in July 1992.

The Heritage Council of Western Australia has determined that consideration should be given to amending the area on the Register to include the nearby World War II buildings on Signal Ridge, Wadjemup / Rottnest Island and that stakeholders should be consulted on the matter.

The proposed amended entry in the Register would become *World War II Buildings, Oliver Hill Battery and Signal Ridge, Wadjemup / Rottnest Island*.

This fact sheet provides information about the proposed amendment.

What is the role of the Heritage Council of WA?

The Heritage Council of Western Australia is the State Government's advisory body on heritage matters. It is vested with functions and powers under the *Heritage Act 2018*. The Heritage Council is charged with the compilation of the State's Register of Heritage Places. The Minister for Heritage makes the final decision on whether a place is entered in the State Register.

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage provides administrative support to the Heritage Council.

What is the State Register?

The State Register is a statutory list of places that helps tell the story of Western Australia's history and development. Entry in the Register is reserved for places

COVER: H1 9.2 inch Gun Platform, Oliver Hill Battery



ABOVE: H1 Tunnel, Oliver Hill Battery

that the Heritage Council has assessed as being of State cultural heritage significance. The Register's primary focus is on places dating from after European contact and settlement and includes places to which both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians retain a connection. The Register acknowledges the value and importance of a place and helps promote its conservation into the future. There are currently 1,382 places in the State Register.

Who decides what should be entered in the State Register?

The role of the Heritage Council of WA is to determine the State significance of a place. The Minister for Heritage makes the final decision on whether a place is entered in the State Register or if an amendment to an existing registration should be made.

What is the heritage significance of World War II Buildings, Oliver Hill Battery and Signal Ridge, Wadjemup / Rottnest Island?

World War II Buildings, Oliver Hill Battery and Signal Ridge, Wadjemup / Rottnest Island is associated with the defence of Wadjemup / Rottnest Island and the Port of

Fremantle during World War II. The three buildings located at Signal Ridge, and the gun battery and associated infrastructure located at Oliver Hill Battery, were sites of strategic importance in Australia's coastal defences during the war.

Both locations are also noteworthy in their demonstration of the importance of the Army and Navy, particularly in reflecting the role of Australian servicewomen in World War II through the Australian Women's Army Service, which operated the plotting rooms at Oliver Hill Battery, and the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service, which operated the Port War Signal Station at Signal Ridge.

The elevated and panoramic views from both Oliver Hill and Signal Ridge led to their use as military sites and they remain popular with visitors for their landscape views. Oliver Hill Battery is a popular tourist

BELOW: Timber Signal Station, view looking north-west, Signal Ridge



location educating visitors on the role of Wadjemup / Rottnest Island during World War II. The two 9.2 inch guns manufactured in 1901 and 1902 are the last of this type remaining in position in Australia, and the place is one of only five locations anywhere in the world where these guns remain in position.

What does amending the registration on the State Register mean for World War II Buildings, Oliver Hill Battery and Signal Ridge, Wadjemup / Rottnest Island?

Entry in the Register will recognise and celebrate the distinctive heritage values of the three buildings and the archaeological sites located at Signal Ridge; and will offer

protection under the *Heritage Act 2018*, ensuring any major changes proposed for the place are in keeping with its cultural heritage significance.

The proposed amended entry in the Register for *World War II Buildings, Oliver Hill Battery and Signal Ridge, Wadjemup / Rottnest Island* now tells the story of why these places make an important contribution to understanding the military history of Western Australia. Recognising both places is an opportunity to celebrate and commemorate the significant heritage values of these places as a group.

An important role of the Heritage Council is to provide advice to the relevant decision maker on any development that may impact the cultural heritage significance of a place on the State Register. The decision maker for Wadjemup / Rottnest Island is the Rottnest Island Authority. The Heritage Council will continue to be consulted,

BELOW: View down Hell's Gully with railway line leading to H2 (left) and H1 (right), Oliver Hill Battery



as it has been since 1992, on proposed development and works to ensure that they are in keeping with the cultural heritage significance of these two important places.

As Oliver Hill Battery is already on the State Register, nothing will change for that site.

Why isn't the whole island proposed for entry in the Register?

The Heritage Council understands that Wadjemup / Rottnest Island is important to many Western Australians, and the island as a whole has been identified as warranting consideration for the Register.

The current priority, however, is to amend the existing registration of Oliver Hill Battery to reflect the importance of both military sites at Oliver Hill and Signal Ridge.

Can development and other changes still be made?

Yes. The entry of a place or a precinct such as *World War II Buildings, Oliver Hill Battery and Signal Ridge, Wadjemup / Rottnest Island* in the State Register does not prevent changes to that place or to individual properties within a precinct. Tenants and business operators will continue to apply to the Rottnest Island Authority for development approval at Signal Ridge or Oliver Hill Battery. As it has done over the past 30 years, the Rottnest Island Authority will refer proposals to the Heritage Council for advice on the heritage aspects of the proposal with regard to the cultural heritage values of either place.

BELOW: View of Battery Observation Point and WRANS House from Signal Station, Signal Ridge



Will tourism accommodation and recreational activities be adversely impacted by final registration?

No. In fact, the opposite will be the case. The updated assessment recognises the importance of the provision of tourist and recreational activities on the island. The Rottnest Island Authority will continue to refer any proposed new development to Signal Ridge and Oliver Hill Battery to the Heritage Council for advice.

The Heritage Council promotes the appropriate use of places on the State Register to ensure they meet contemporary needs. Its role is to ensure that any new development continues to reflect and enhance the existing heritage values, which are key to making both places what they are today.

What are the benefits of registration?

Registration recognises the place and its significance to Western Australia's story and ensures the story can continue to be recognised into the future. Registration also provides the opportunity to apply to the Heritage Grants Program to provide funding for any physical conservation works or preparation of conservation management planning documents.

Will finalising registration affect leases, tenancies or public access?

No. Registration does not change existing leases or tenancies. Nor does it allow the public any more access than is currently permitted.

What happens next?

Comments on the amendment to registration can be made online through the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage's [Consultation Hub](#) or by email to HCWAregistration@dplh.wa.gov.au.

The comment period closes **Friday 23 September 2022**.

Once the comment period has closed the Heritage Council will consider whether to recommend amending the registration to the Minister for Heritage, who will make the final decision on whether an amendment is made to the existing entry on the State Register. Both the Heritage Council and the Minister take into account submissions as part of the decision-making process.