



# Media Statement

## Parramatta Female Factory Friends (PFFF)

### UNESCO World Heritage Listing Submission – Parramatta Female Factory & Institutions Precinct (PFFIP)

National Heritage List (November 2017)

1–5 Fleet Street, North Parramatta

**22 February 2026**

#### **Deeply disappointed — but determined to continue the fight for recognition**

The Parramatta Female Factory Friends (PFFF), the Parramatta community, descendants, researchers, and the many thousands of supporters who have backed this cause through petitions and advocacy over the years, are deeply disappointed by the outcome of the UNESCO World Heritage nomination process for the **Parramatta Female Factory and Institutions Precinct (PFFIP)**.

This is a profound setback for all who have worked over the past 16 years for recognition of one of Australia's most significant sites of women's history, forced migration, institutionalisation and state care.

The nomination process received strong support from local, state and federal representatives. We acknowledge and commend in particular the support of Donna Davis MP, the Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC, the Hon. Dr. Andrew Charlton MP, and former federal member Julie Owens, as well as public advocates including Tom and Meg Keneally and the late Jack Munday and Judy Munday.

We understand that concerns were raised during the assessment process about whether the site met the threshold of Outstanding Universal Value, including the impact of changes to the site over time. However, the Precinct retains substantial and highly significant heritage fabric, including convict-era buildings, the 3rd Class Sleeping Quarters and Penitentiary (c1823), sandstone walls (1818–1838), legible convict yards, and the nearby Roman Catholic Orphan School (c1840).

It is also deeply disappointing that, despite community input, the nomination did not adequately foreground the **Parramatta Female Factory's foundational convict history** and its unique place in Australian heritage and identity.

The Parramatta Female Factory and Institutions Precinct is an extraordinary place. Its layered history - convict women, child removal, institutional care, labour, punishment, maternity care and survival across two centuries - makes it one of the most important places in Australia for understanding women's experiences in the colonial and institutional past.

#### **Looking to the future — governance, funding and heritage protections**

While the site is protected under the **Heritage Act 1977 (NSW)** and listed on the **National Heritage List** under the **Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)**, it remains vulnerable to fragmented governance, under-resourcing and inappropriate development pressure.

PFFF calls on the NSW and Commonwealth Governments to act immediately on the following priorities:

1. **Reinvigorate the World Heritage pathway** by pursuing the most credible next-step nomination strategy, including consideration of a **serial extension approach** to the existing Australian Convict Sites World Heritage property, where supported by evidence and government commitment.
2. **Establish a single, transparent governance model** for the entire precinct to prevent fractured decision-making, piecemeal planning and erosion of heritage values.
3. **Provide dedicated multi-year resourcing** for custodial management, conservation works, interpretation design, research access, survivor-informed engagement, and high-quality visitor and education infrastructure.
4. **Fund and deliver a permanent, immersive museum and interpretation program on site** that honours the Precinct's foundational history and national significance. This site must not be reduced to a token exhibit or a backdrop for unrelated development.
5. **Commit to World Heritage-grade heritage impact standards** and genuine community consultation for any rezoning or major development proposal affecting the National Heritage-listed Precinct, with clearly defined limits that protect heritage fabric, setting and significance.

## **Moving forward**

PFFF is ready to work constructively with the State and Commonwealth Governments on a renewed pathway for international recognition, including consideration of mechanisms available under UNESCO processes for modifications or extensions to existing World Heritage properties, where appropriate.

The PFFF Committee and membership will continue advocating for this significant place—its compelling narratives, its rare and surviving heritage fabric, and its national and international heritage values. We acknowledge the support shown to date by government and call for that support to now be matched with a clear long-term custodial and funding commitment.

## **Media contacts**

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The Bicentenary 1818-2018



The Greenway Matrons Quarters and Hospital c 1818 - 1821.