

16 March 2022

Senator the Honourable Marise Payne
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Minister

Protection of Ukraine's Heritage

I write regarding the dire situation for the people of Ukraine and their cultural heritage, and the need for Russia to fulfill its international responsibilities.

ICOMOS – the International Council on Monuments and Sites – is a non-government professional organisation that promotes expertise in the conservation of cultural heritage. ICOMOS is also an official Advisory Body to the World Heritage Committee under the World Heritage Convention. Australia ICOMOS, formed in 1976, is one of over 100 national committees throughout the world. Australia ICOMOS has over 750 members in a range of heritage professions. We have a particular interest in World Heritage places.

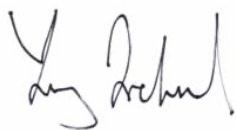
Australia ICOMOS, in lockstep with international ICOMOS, deplores and expresses its great concern for the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Ukraine, and the tragic consequences for its people, their safety and well-being. These threats to the safety and sovereignty of the people of Ukraine extend to threats to their treasured cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, either through unintended damage or potentially through deliberate targeting. Such unintentional damage and targeted threats to cultural heritage have been a regrettable feature of recent conflicts in, for instance, Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen, and these events have reinforced how threats to cultural heritage are tragic, not just for the loss of precious cultural material, but especially because these acts cause additional harms to the people who value these items, their culture, identity and humanity.

As one of the foremost Australian organisations in the cultural heritage field, and noting the ICOMOS role as an Advisory Body to the World Heritage Committee, Australia ICOMOS urgently requests that the Australian Government express its concern and urge the Russian Federation to:

- abide by its commitments and responsibilities under the 1954 Hague Convention and its two Protocols, and the 1972 World Heritage Convention; and
- recognise its absolute duty to do everything in its power to preserve from damage all heritage, in all its components and layers.

Australia ICOMOS, as part of the international ICOMOS community, is at the disposal of the Australian Government to provide any support or advice that may be required for the safeguarding of cultural heritage or risk preparedness measures.

Yours sincerely



**Professor Tracy Ireland, M.ICOMOS, FSA
President**

Copy: The Honourable Sussan Ley, Minister for the Environment