



Marion Scrymgour

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

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PERMANENT MEMORIAL UNVEILED ON VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Environment and Heritage Minister Marion Scrymgour today officially opened a unique memorial on the Stuart Hwy, which will serve as a permanent reminder of Darwin's frontline role during World War II.

Three life size aluminium cut-out fighter planes and new visitor facilities were unveiled at the Strauss Airstrip, Stuart Hwy, about 40km south of Darwin – on the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II.

The daughter of one of the original pilots who flew off Strauss – Clyde Barnett - also attended today's official unveiling.

"Exactly 60 years ago today, Australia received news that Japan had surrendered and that WWII had come to an end –bringing an end to the bloodiest conflict the world had ever known," Ms Scrymgour said.

"The Strauss airstrip played a pivotal role during the bombing of Darwin in February 1942. The site was selected as part of a program to construct a number of roadside strips south of Darwin in response to the Japanese threat.

"Therefore it is fitting that we unveil these new facilities today – which will include a visitor interpretive display, and three life-size fighter plane cut-outs which are visible to motorists travelling on the Stuart Hwy."

Ms Scrymgour said the NT Government declared the Strauss Airstrip a Heritage place in 2003 in a bid to save it from plans to duplicate the Stuart Hwy along that stretch of road.

"Strauss is one of the few roadside strips that is still relatively intact, and the NT Government was determined to save it.

"The NT Government is aware of the increasing interest in WWII history in Australia – and I believe we have something unique to offer the nation – and that is an amazing range of sites associated with WWII.

"It is for this reason I am writing to the Federal Government seeking national heritage listing for the best of our WWII sites – a national listing will give our sites special national significance and play a major role in tourism."