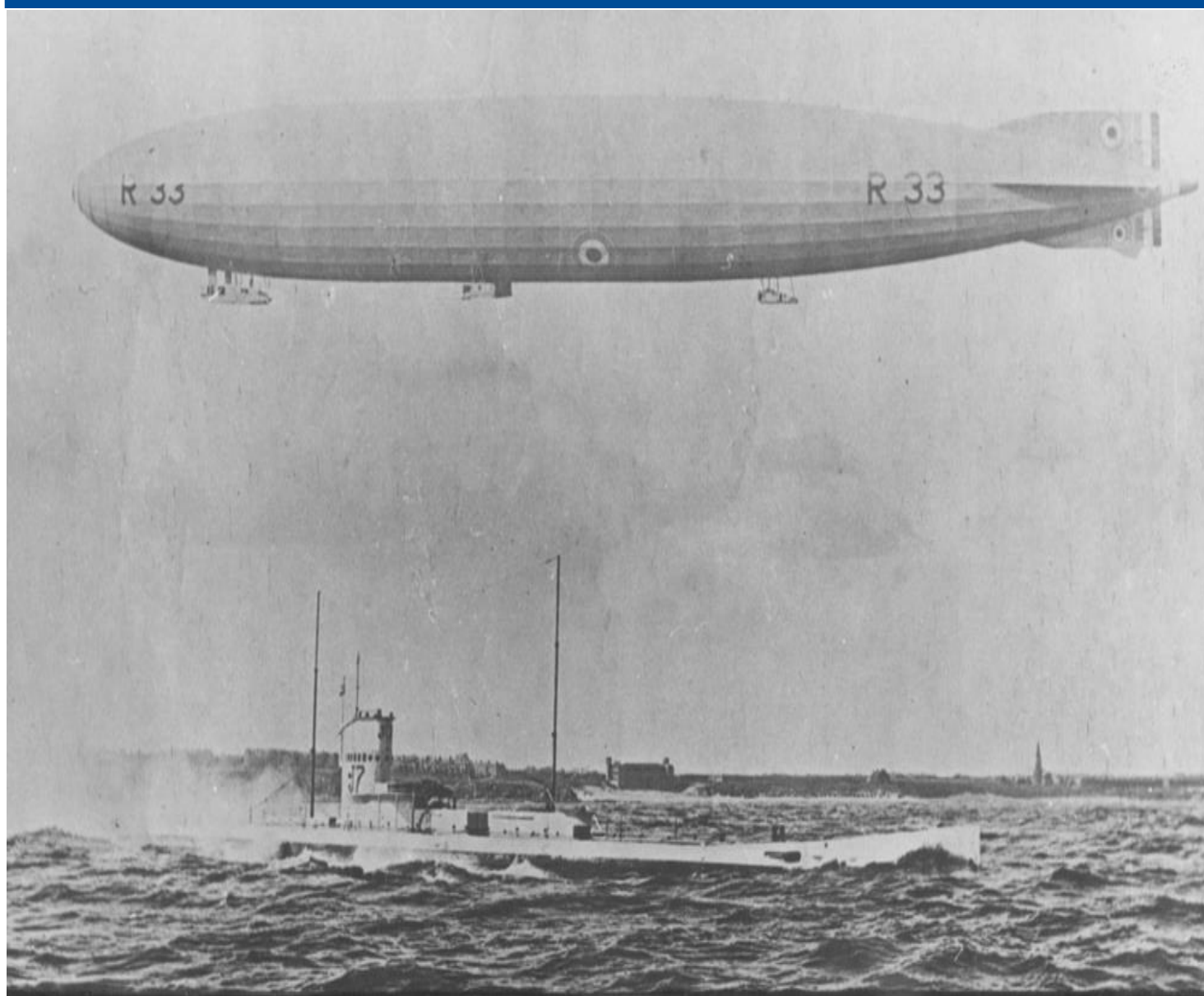


Maritime Heritage at Risk Program Annual Report: 2023/24



The Maritime Heritage at Risk Program aims to focus attention on Victoria’s fragile underwater cultural heritage by protecting Victoria’s most significant shipwrecks and aircraft wrecks at the greatest risk.

The program assesses Underwater Cultural Heritage according to significance, community value and wreck condition. Based on this assessment the most important at-risk wrecks are included in a Risk Register.

These vulnerable wrecks are regularly monitored to safeguard them from environmental and human impacts. Data is also collected on their current and potential future risks to facilitate risk management activities.

Wrecks are removed from the Risk Register if they are deemed to be at minimal risk.

The key program changes in 2023/24 were:

- Changes to Risk Register shipwrecks.
- Development of a submerged aircraft wrecks Maritime Heritage at Risk (MHR) criteria.
- Inclusion of Port Fairy Surf Life Saving Club in the Community Shipwreck Monitoring Program.

RISK REGISTER CHANGES

Due to the PS *Clonmel* and *Clarence* shipwrecks being buried for over 12 months they have been removed from the 2023/24 Risk Register and replaced with the two next high priority shipwrecks on the “On Watch” list, SS *Casino* and HMAS *Goorangai* (see page 9).

The SS *Casino* was an iron steamship built in Dundee, Scotland in February 1882. It took cargo and passengers between Melbourne and the ports of Victoria’s Western District for nearly 50 years. On 10th July 1932, it sank with the loss of ten passengers and crew while trying to secure a mooring at Apollo Bay pier. The SS *Casino* played a vital role in Victoria’s western district coastal and passenger trade.

The steam trawler MV *Goorangai* was built at the NSW State Dockyard in Newcastle in 1919 and requisitioned for naval service on 8 September 1939. It was commissioned as HMAS *Goorangai* on 9 October 1939 for service as an auxiliary minesweeper. On 20 November 1940, while en-route from Queenscliff to Portsea in Port Phillip Bay, the vessel collided with MV *Duntroon* resulting in the loss of all 24 crew. *Goorangai* was the first Royal Australian Navy ship lost in World War II.



Figure 1. HMAS *Goorangai*. Source: Australian War Memorial (1940)

SUBMERGED AIRCRAFT WRECKS PROGRAM: DEVELOPMENT OF MHR CRITERIA

In 2023/24 Heritage Victoria progressed with the development of a database of all submerged aircraft wrecks in Victoria from 1909 to the present. The data is currently being manually uploaded in the Australasian Underwater Cultural Heritage Database (AUCHD).

The aircraft sites that have been located will be assessed against a modified Maritime Heritage at Risk (MHR) criteria to identify the most significant at-risk aircraft wrecks enabling Heritage Victoria to undertake site management activities at those wreck sites.

Submerged aircraft wrecks are assessed according to significance, community value and risk. Each criterion is segmented under several categories (Table 1).

Currently, Fairey Firefly (PP589) and Fairey Firefly (TW677), are included in the MHR program because of the previously reported presence of human remains.

Table 1. Submerged Aircraft Wrecks Criteria Categories

CRITERIA	CATEGORY
Significance	Historical Association with People and Events
	Type, Construction and Function
	Technology and Innovation
	Socio-economic Association
	Casualties
	Archaeological Research Potential
	Age (Date of Build)
Community Value	Visibility
	Accessibility
	Public Interest
Risk	Intactness
	Current Condition
	Condition Trend

INCLUSION OF PORT FAIRY SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Port Fairy Surf Life Saving Club has joined the Community Shipwreck Monitoring Program and will be monitoring four shipwrecks in Port Fairy Bay in western Victoria.

Community involvement is important in ensuring the ongoing protection of Victoria's significant shipwrecks which provide valuable social and economic benefits to coastal townships. It also allows coastal community groups to be directly involved in the protection and understanding of their local maritime sites and conduct important monitoring work.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: 2023/24

The key 2023/24 activities are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. 2023/24 key activities

ACTIVITY	LOCATION	
Shipwreck Monitoring	Clarence	S.S City of Launceston
	William Salthouse	P.S Thistle
	Alert	S.S Glenelg
	Joanna	Cheviot
	Mountain Maid	S.S Cambridge
	S.S Conside	S.S Queensland
	Coogee	Amazon
	Thistle	Lady Mary Pelham
	Essington	Socrates
Port Monitoring	Port Albert	Port Welshpool
Compliance	Ongoing activities	
Inspections	City of Launceston	Joanna
	Clarence	Barbara
	Cheviot	J-7 submarine
Site Management	Amazon	
Wreck Condition Reporting	Ongoing activities	

SHIPWRECK MONITORING

As part of the MHR Program, Heritage Victoria has teamed up with coastal community groups to safeguard the State's fragile and diverse maritime heritage. The Community Shipwreck Monitoring Program (CSMP) commenced in 2018 and monitors human activity at shipwreck sites.

The program is now in its seventh year of operation and currently consists of Queenscliff, Werribee, Port Albert and Port Welshpool Volunteer Coast Guards and Inverloch and Port Fairy Surf Life Saving Clubs. Participants monitor and report on human interference at eighteen important high risk wreck sites, including six Protection Zones.

Participants are on the look-out for any damaging activities including anchoring, fishing and diving which can cause irreversible damage to the most sensitive wrecks.

The participants conducted 141 site visits to shipwrecks during 2023/24. Most alerts were for the *City of Launceston* wreck site.

The CSMP is supported with funding from the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water as part of the Australasian Underwater Cultural Heritage Program.

Port Fairy Surf Life Saving Club

Port Fairy Surf Life Saving Club (SLSC) joined the program in March 2024. They are responsible for monitoring *Thistle*, *Lady Mary Pelham*, *Essington* and *Socrates*, four historically significant wrecks in Port Fairy Bay.



Figure 2. Port Fairy Surf Life Saving Club members. Source: Port Fairy Surf Life Saving Club (2024)

Port Fairy will be reporting on any suspicious behaviour and vessels observed at the sites, as well as recording information if the shipwrecks become exposed.

Thistle and *Lady Mary Pelham* are on the MHR 2023/24 Risk Register.



Figure 3. Thistle wreck site. Source: Heritage Victoria (2011)

Thistle

Thistle is significant to the settlement and early development of Victoria as it carried the first permanent European settlers, members of the Henty Family, to Portland in November 1834.

After Portland was settled, the vessel was one of the first ships trading between Victoria and Tasmania and has the distinction of carrying the first exported goods from Victoria - bales of merino wool.

After loading a cargo of wattle bark on Christmas Day 1837, the vessel broke its anchor cables in a gale and was driven ashore.

Lady Mary Pelham

Lady Mary Pelham was an early inter colonial trader built in 1816 and owned by Stephen Henty. It also spent some time as a whaler and is historically significant for its role in the development of Port Fairy and Portland.

Lady Mary Pelham about to sail for Sydney with general cargo on 31 August 1849 when severe weather forced the vessel ashore.

Essington

Essington was originally built as a New South Wales government brig. It is historically significant for its role in the whaling industry and the early development of Victoria. The vessel was beached in a gale while unloading sugar and general cargo on 3 May 1852.



Figure 4. *Lady Mary Pelham* wreck. Source: Heritage Victoria (1983)

Socrates

Socrates is historically significant for its association with the early Tasmanian and Victorian whaling industry, and for its role in the development of Port Fairy and Portland.

Socrates wrecked on 28 August 1843 with a cargo including parts for a windmill when the anchor cable broke in a severe storm and it was blown ashore.

PORT MONITORING

Port Albert and Port Welshpool Volunteer Coast Guards monitor vessels that may be involved in diving activities operating from jetties and boat ramps in their ports.

There were 23 port monitoring visits conducted during 2023/24. There was no indication of diver activity.

COMPLIANCE

On-going compliance activities, particularly regarding recreational fishing at the *City of Launceston* wreck site.

Continued monitoring of artefact sales websites.

INSPECTIONS

Six inspections and risk assessments were conducted during 2023/24.



The S.S **City of Launceston** is one of the most intact iron steamship wrecks of its age in Australian waters. It is one of Victoria's Protected Zone wrecks.

It was built specifically for the Bass Strait passenger trade and arrived in Melbourne in September 1863.

City of Launceston was visited by Heritage Victoria and James Parkinson in May 2024. The purpose of the visit was to identify any changes in the wreck's condition. Sections of hull plate have fallen to the seabed and there was significant degradation of the bow. Also, the anodes observed on the vessel have nearly been completely depleted.

Figure 5. Model of S.S City of Launceston wreck. Source: Heritage Victoria (2024)

Clarence was a 51-foot two-masted carvel-built schooner used in trading timber, cattle, sheep and other cargo between Sydney, Port Phillip, Port Albert and Twofold Bay. On 2 September 1850, *Clarence* ran aground on a sand bank in Port Phillip Bay while transporting sheep from Melbourne to Hobart.

Clarence was visited by Heritage Victoria in December 2023. The site was in a stable condition and no significant disturbance detected.



Figure 6. Clarence information plinth. Source: Heritage Victoria (2021)



Cheviot was built as an armed snow brig in 1827. It made voyages to Quebec in 1830-31 the southern whaling fisheries in 1832-3 and continued whaling to 1837. After that the primary activity of the vessel was inter-colonial trade. Foundered in a gale in Waterloo Bay, Wilsons Promontory on 24 March 1854.

Cheviot was visited in March 2024 in conjunction with a Heritage Victoria / Parks Victoria archaeological survey of Wilsons Promontory. The site does not appear to have undergone any changes since the last visit in March 2020. The overall condition of the wreck is stable with no visible damage from human interference.

Figure 7. Cheviot wreck site - blubber sieve. Source: Heritage Victoria (2004)

Joanna was a 36-ton two-masted wooden schooner built at Mount Eliza, Victoria, in 1856. The vessel was built for the lime trade. Sank with a cargo of lime in a heavy gale in the West Channel of Port Phillip Bay on 9 July 1857.

Joanna was visited in December 2023 when the wreck was buried and in a very good and stable condition.

The wreck is mainly vulnerable from natural causes such as sediment accumulation at the site.



Figure 8. Joanna artefact. Source: Heritage Victoria (2010)

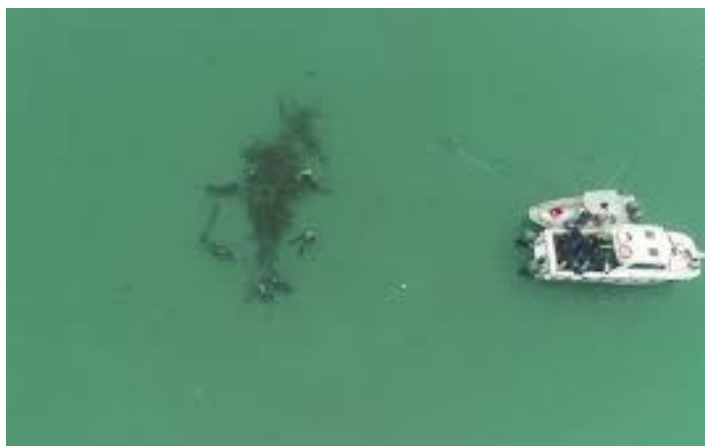


Figure 9. Barbara wreck site. Source: Flinders University (2020)

The **J7** was one of seven J Class submarines built for the British Navy at Devonport, United Kingdom in 1916. After World War I it was offered to the Australian Navy as a gift and decommissioned in 1924.

In August 1930 it was sunk as a breakwater at Sandringham Yacht Club.

The submarine was visited by Heritage Victoria in February 2024. The wreck is in a very good and stable condition primarily due to its secure and sheltered location in the Yacht Club marina in Port Phillip Bay.

Barbara was built as a two-masted wooden schooner at Exeter River, Tasmania in 1841.

It was engaged in the lime trade. Wrecked in a strong gale at Rye, in Port Phillip Bay on 6 August 1852.

Barbara was visited in January 2024 where it was found to be in a stable condition with minor deterioration.

A 3D model of the Barbara is being completed.



Figure 10. J7 submarine. Source: Heritage Victoria (2023)

SITE MANAGEMENT

Amazon

After being lost in a gale in 1863 the wreck of the *Amazon* was reported to be lying broadside on Inverloch Surf Beach and embedded in the sand. The wreck was also reported to be dry at low tide and that sixty feet of the main keel had broken off and was lying on the beach.

Given its exposed position on the beach, the *Amazon* site has undergone major changes in sand cover and wreck exposure over the years. Heritage Victoria, in partnership with Inverloch Surf Life Saving Club, commenced regularly monitoring the wreck in November 2018. Subsequently, monitoring and conservation activities have also been undertaken by the Amazon 1863 Project Inc community group.

From 2018 to February 2022 there was significant material continuously exposed on the beach including part of the hull, frames and other wooden fragments.

From that date, the wreck was primarily exposed during the December to February period with some frames and wooden fragments becoming visible in June 2024.

Permits were issued during the year to the Amazon 1863 Project Inc community group to be the custodians of several artefacts from the wreck.



Figure 11. Amazon beach wreckage. Source: Heritage Victoria (2015)

WRECK CONDITION REPORTING

The MHR reporting of shipwreck condition commenced in 2018/19. The Wreck Condition Report includes details such as site environment, seabed sediment and how vulnerable the wreck is to fishing, natural processes and socio-economic activity. An assessment is also made of the current condition and the condition trend of the wreck.

To 2023/24, 38 reports have been prepared, 18 for Risk Register shipwrecks, 5 for On Watch wrecks and 15 for other wreck sites. Most reports were prepared by Heritage Victoria staff, with other reports provided by professional divers. The information included in the reports enables an assessment on how the condition of a shipwreck changes over time and if any site management activities can be implemented to minimise the deterioration of the wreck.

For example, *City of Launceston* was visited in 2020/21, 2022/23 and 2023/24. During this period the condition trend has changed from stable to deteriorating.

RISK REGISTER: 2023/24

Table 3 is updated to include the most significant Victorian shipwrecks at the highest risk in 2023/24.

Table 3. Risk Register 2023/24

Priority	Shipwreck	Location	Date Lost
1	Amazon	Surf Beach, Inverloch.	December 1863
2	S.S Conside	Lonsdale Reef, Port Phillip Heads.	September 1852

3	Loch Ard	Loch Ard Gorge, east of Port Campbell.	June 1878
4	Monumental City	Tullaberga Island, near Gabo Island and Mallacoota.	May 1853
5	Thistle (currently buried)	Port Fairy.	December 1837
6	Barbara	Rye, Port Phillip Bay.	August 1852
7	H.M.V.S Cerberus *	Half Moon Bay, Port Phillip Bay.	September 1926
8	Cheviot	Waterloo Bay, Wilsons Promontory.	March 1854
9	S.S City of Launceston*	North of West Channel, Port Phillip Bay.	November 1865
10	Nautilus	Cape Liptrap.	January 1856
11	H.M.V.S Countess of Hopetoun	Swan Island, Port Phillip Bay.	November 1924
12	P.S Thistle	West bank of Port Albert entrance.	November 1859
13	William Salthouse*	North of Popes Eye, Port Phillip Bay.	November 1841
14	Alert*	Bass Strait, between Cape Schanck and Port Phillip Heads.	December 1893
15	S.S Cambridge	Bass Strait, 3.7 miles south-east of Wilsons Promontory.	November 1940
16	Carlisle	Bass Strait, near Crocodile Rock.	August 1890
17	Lady Mary Pelham	Port Fairy.	August 1849
18	M.V City of Rayville	Bass Strait, off Cape Otway.	November 1940
19	T.S.S Coramba	Bass Strait, off Phillip Island.	November 1934
20	S.S Glenelg*	Bass Strait, near Lakes Entrance.	March 1900
21	S.S Gulf of Carpentaria	Between Cleft and Anser Islands, Wilsons Promontory.	September 1885
22	S.S Kanowna	Twelve miles south-west of Cleft Island, Wilsons Promontory.	February 1929
23	S.S Queensland	Bass Strait, 15 miles north-east of Wilsons Promontory.	August 1876
24	S.S Casino	Apollo Bay.	July 1932
25	H.M.A.S Goorangai	South Channel, Port Phillip Bay.	November 1940

* Protected Zone wrecks.

ON WATCH LIST: 2023/24

Table 4 lists the Victorian shipwrecks and aircraft wrecks on the On Watch list in 2023/24.

Table 4. On Watch list 2023/24

Shipwreck	Location	Date Lost
P.S Clonmel*	Clonmel Island, Port Albert.	January 1841
Clarence*	Coles Channel, Port Phillip Bay.	September 1850
Monarch	Between Coles and West Channels, Port Phillip Bay.	July 1867
Mountain Maid	Between Coles and West Channels Port Phillip Bay.	September 1856
Ozone	Indented Head, Port Phillip Bay.	March 1925
Schomberg	Curdies Inlet, Peterborough.	December 1855
S.S Ant	Thirteenth Beach, Barwon Heads.	June 1866
S.S Auckland	Beware Reef, near Cape Conran.	May 1871
Columbine	Between Barwon Heads and Point Lonsdale.	April 1854
Coogee	Ships Graveyard, outside Port Phillip Heads.	February 1928
Eleutheria	Port Phillip Bay.	July 1866
J-7 Submarine	Picnic Point, Hampton (Sandringham Yacht Club).	August 1930
Schah	Shipwreck Creek, 6 miles south-east of Mallacoota.	December 1837
Victoria Tower	Point Impossible, west of Thompsons Creek, Breamlea.	October 1869
W.B Godfrey	Godfrey Creek, west of Lorne.	March 1891
Leven Lass	Little Rookery Beach, Phillip Island.	December 1854
Aircraft Wreck	Location	Date Lost
Fairey Firefly PP589 and TW677	Frankston, Port Phillip Bay.	July 1947

* Protected Zone wrecks.

OUR PARTNERS

Heritage Victoria would like to thank its partners (Table 5) for their contribution to the program in 2023/24.

Table 5. Our partners

Activity	Partner
Wreck Monitoring	Queenscliff Volunteer Coast Guard (VF 9). Werribee Volunteer Coast Guard (VF 10). Port Albert Volunteer Coast Guard (VF 19). Port Welshpool Volunteer Coast Guard (VF 20). Inverloch Surf Life Saving Club. Port Fairy Surf Life Saving Club
Port Monitoring	Port Albert Volunteer Coast Guard (VF 19). Port Welshpool Volunteer Coast Guard (VF 20).
Site Management	Parks Victoria. The Amazon 1863 Project Inc.
Funding	Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

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Deaf, hearing or speech impaired? Please contact the National Relay Service on 133 677 or www.relayservice.gov.au

Front Page Photo Credit: Submarine J7 on the River Tyne prior to sailing for Australia in February, 1919.
Source: Royal Australian Navy Website: October 2024.

HERITAGE
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