



MEDIA RELEASE

Federal Member for Warringah

Tony Abbott MHR

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WORK FOR THE DOLE GIVES HISTORIC BOAT FROM HMAS SYDNEY A NEW LIFE

After a 10 month Work for the Dole restoration project, the 1945 Captain's launch off HMAS Sydney entered the harbour today in its new life with the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust.

Launching the boat at Chowder Bay in Mosman today, Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business and local federal member, Tony Abbott, said the restoration project has been a tremendous success for all involved.

"Through this project, 15 young people from the North Shore and Northern Beaches have received valuable on-the-job training in boat building, maintenance and repair," Mr Abbott said.

"The participants have learnt skills that they will be able to apply to a wide range of other jobs."

"The restoration project has enabled a significant vessel associated with Australian Naval and maritime history to be restored and put to good use."

The restored Captain's launch will now be used by the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust to access many of the lands on the harbour that they are preparing plans for, particularly Cockatoo and Snapper Islands, and Woolwich Dock.

"The use of the Captains launch off HMAS Sydney by the Harbour Trust provides a link to the history of former Defence occupation of many of these lands," Mr Abbott said.

Attending today's launch were two former Captains off HMAS Sydney and several former crew members, many who have fond memories of the launch from when it was in use by the Navy.

The 30 foot long timber boat was originally built in 1945 in England. It is one of two vessels that were acquired by the Australian Navy to serve as the Captains launches to the aircraft carriers, HMAS Sydney and the HMAS Melbourne.

The *Fast Motor Boat 45/802*, as the Navy knew it, is the only remaining example of this type of vessel in Australia, and possibly the world. The other Captain's launch is believed to now lie at the bottom of Lavender Bay.

Prior to its restoration, the launch had been sitting on Spectacle Island. In October 2000 it was transferred to the Harbour Trust from Defence Disposals.

Restoration has been under the guidance of experienced shipwright, Ian Smith. It has involved stripping the boat back to its core and repairing timber on the interior and exterior. The entire deck and cabin sides had to be rebuilt and the fittings reconditioned. A Perkins diesel engine, also supplied by Defence Disposals, was installed and electrics rewired.

Mr Abbott said costs involved in restoring the boat are significantly less than if the Harbour Trust were to rely on the use of commercial transport, or purchase a new vessel with the same capability.

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