



SYDNEY HARBOUR FEDERATION TRUST

173rd MEETING OF THE TRUST

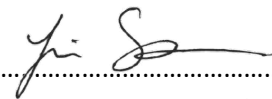
Meeting in Public

held in person and via webinar

Thursday 13 June 2024, 5.30pm – 6.30pm

MINUTES

True & Correct Record of the 173rd Meeting of the Trust



Professor Tim Entwisle, Chair

Minutes of the 173rd meeting of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust held in public (in person and via webinar) on Thursday 13 June 2024.

Present

Prof Tim Entwisle	Chair
Mr Terry Bailey	Member
Ms Ann Sherry AO	Member
Ms Alexandra O'Mara	Member

Apologies

Ms Alison Page	Deputy Chair
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In attendance

Members of the public and Harbour Trust staff members were in attendance (in person and via webinar) to observe the meeting.

The meeting commenced at 5.30pm.

1. Chair's Welcome

- a) The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed attendees and acknowledged the traditional owners and custodians of the lands on which the meeting was being held, and paid respects to elders, past and present.

Due to some technical difficulties, those attending online were unable to connect for a short while, so the Chair halted proceedings until these had been resolved.

Update from the Chair:

After the two Members unable to be at the last meeting (Ms Sherry and Ms O'Mara) introduced themselves, the Chair advised that there are still three vacancies on the Trust and that the Department and the Minister's office are working towards filling these.

The Chair reported on the Meeting of the Trust (in private) which was held immediately prior to this meeting:

- The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Minister for the Environment and Water attended for part of the meeting and discussion included the Statement of Intent; the master plans for Cockatoo Island / Wareamah and North Head Sanctuary; and an update on the \$45.2m investment from the Australian Government.
- The Members of the Trust approved the sign-off of the Harbour Trust's Statement of Intent (in response to the Minister's Statement of Expectations); and gave in-principle approval for the draft Corporate Plan; the draft Volunteer Strategy; and the draft Emissions Reduction Plan.

2. Executive Director update

The Chair introduced Ms Janet Carding, Executive Director, who spoke to the presentation prepared for the meeting. The presentation included:

a) Achievements over the last 6 months

- Completion of Torpedo Factory and opening of Wirra Birra Park at Sub Base Platypus
- Finalisation and approval of the North Head Sanctuary Master Plan
- Finalisation and approval of the Middle Head / Gubbuh Gubbuh Master Plan
- Finalisation of the Cockatoo Island / Wareamah Master Plan Consultation Outcomes report

- Onboarding of Anderson Environment and Planning at North Head Sanctuary
- Reopening of gun emplacements at North Head Sanctuary
- New tours at Macquarie Lightstation and Cockatoo Island / Wareamah
- Consultation with staff and volunteers on the Volunteer Strategy
- Development of an Emissions Reduction Plan, including a workshop with the Advisory Groups
- Observation Post restoration by volunteer team at North Head Sanctuary completed
- Development of new Capital Works/Repairs and Maintenance page on the Harbour Trust website
- Two nominations for National Trust awards – Sub Base Platypus and Cockatoo Island / Wareamah
- Anzac Day service at Headland Park and Defence of Sydney service at North Head Sanctuary

b) Update on minor works, heritage works, maintenance & infrastructure works

North Head Sanctuary

- Maintenance work undertaken on the external fabric of Building 1, focusing on returning the building to a watertight condition to prevent further deterioration.
- Building 17 (gym): Construction, air conditioning, painting and utility connections are complete. The solar array and battery supply to be installed from end June 2024.
- Domestic & Fire water separation project is nearing completion with final system commissioning in progress.

Cockatoo Island / Wareamah

- Containers have been installed in Tunnel 1 as an interim solution to enable public access. The tunnel was reopened on 28 March 2024.
- Restoring and conserving the industrial precinct to ensure its ongoing preservation.
- Patrol Boat Wharf has reached its end of life and it is proposed to rebuild the wharf as part of the Maintenance and Infrastructure Works.
- Cranes remediation project to repair the Commonwealth heritage-listed cranes to ensure their ongoing preservation.
- Renovation and updating of heritage cottages to enable them to be available for short-term accommodation (Buildings 9 and 20).

Macquarie Lightstation

Greenway Wall Restoration project to restore and conserve the Commonwealth heritage-listed stone wall to provide a better visitor experience and to stop further degradation.

Sub Base Platypus

Retort House restoration including the removal of hazmat and replacement of roofing and recladding of walls.

Chowder Bay

Work continues to the wharf and slipway. Inclement weather in May 2024 hampered progress, however, completion is on schedule for late August 2024.

c) Look ahead to the next financial year

- Finalisation of the Cockatoo Island / Wareamah Master Plan
- Implementation of Stage 1 of Cockatoo Island / Wareamah Master plan including:
 - o Pilot projects with SIMS
 - o Interpretation projects

- Implementation of Stage 1 of the Middle Head / Gubbuh Gubbuh Master Plan including:
 - o Remediation works to brick barrack buildings
 - o Interpretation, accessible loop track and parklands
 - o EPBC referral for removal of timber buildings
- Implementation of Stage 1 of the North Head Sanctuary Master Plan
- Review and update Woolwich Management Plan
- Middle Head amenities block renovation
- Visitor research finalisation and insights shared
- Continuation of repair and maintenance projects
- Finalisation and implementation of Volunteer Strategy
- Development and implementation of First Nations Strategy.

3. Guest Speaker

Presentation from Mr Brent Fenton, Chief Operating Officer, Sydney Institute of Marine Science (SIMS).

Mr Fenton's presentation 'Understanding & Restoring Marine Environments in Sydney Harbour' provided an overview of the work of SIMS, including learning more about kingfish, tagging seals, living seawalls and the Sydney Seahorse Project (in collaboration with the UTS and NSW Department of Primary Industries). The project aims to conserve the White's Seahorse (an endangered native species) through a conservation stocking program, the installation of artificial habitat (seahorse hotels) and the restoration of natural habitats.

On Friday 31 May 2024, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Minister for the Environment and Water, attended a private release of 100 White's Seahorses into Chowder Bay. Following the release of the seahorses, the Minister announced the new partnership between SIMS and the Harbour Trust to study and restore Marine Environments around Cockatoo Island / Wareamah.

The Cockatoo Island / Wareamah research program is underway and the recent sighting of a White's Seahorse in kelp off Cockatoo Island / Wareamah, marks the most westerly documented sighting of the species within the harbour.

The Chair thanked Mr Fenton for his presentation.

4. Meeting Closure

The meeting closed at 6.30pm and was followed by a Questions and Answers session led by the Chair of the Trust.

Attachment A: Trust Meeting in Public – 13 June 2024 – presentation



Meeting will
commence at
5.30pm

Meeting of the Trust (in public) ***13 June 2024***

5.30pm – 7.00pm



Welcome & Acknowledgement of Country

Prof Tim Entwisle, Harbour Trust Chair



Update from Prof Tim Entwisle, Harbour Trust Chair



Update from Ms Janet Carding, Executive Director



Achievements over the last 6 months



North Head Sanctuary Master Plan
February 2024

Harbour Trust

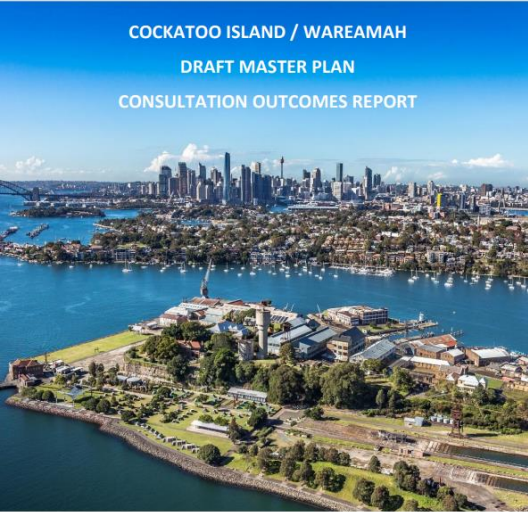
COX



Middle Head / Gubbuh Gubbuh
Master Plan
December 2023

Harbour Trust

COX



COCKATOO ISLAND / WAREAMAH
DRAFT MASTER PLAN
CONSULTATION OUTCOMES REPORT



Harbour Trust

Australian Government
Sydney Harbour Federation Trust

Update on minor works, heritage works, maintenance & infrastructure works Attachment A

Building 1 External Works - North Head Sanctuary

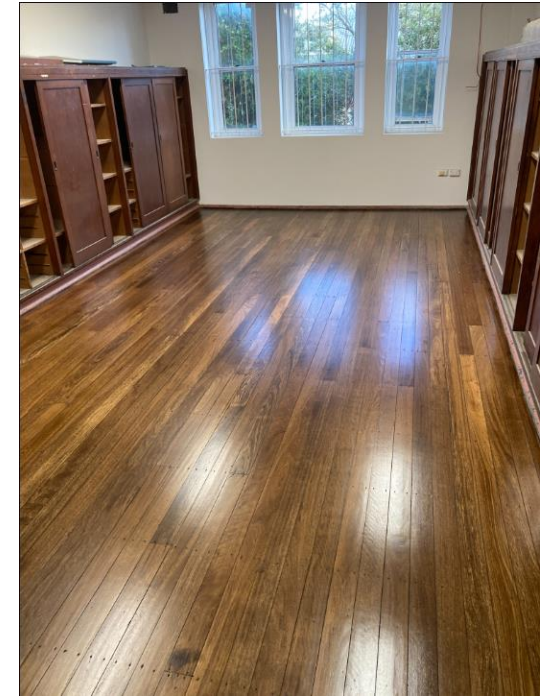
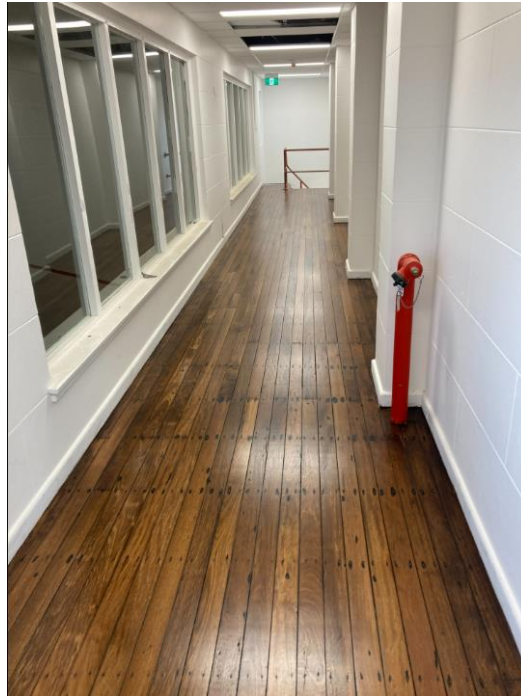
- Maintenance work to the external fabric of Building 1, focussing on returning the building to a watertight condition to prevent further deterioration.



Update on minor works, heritage works, maintenance & infrastructure works Attachment A

Building 17 (Gym) – North Head Sanctuary

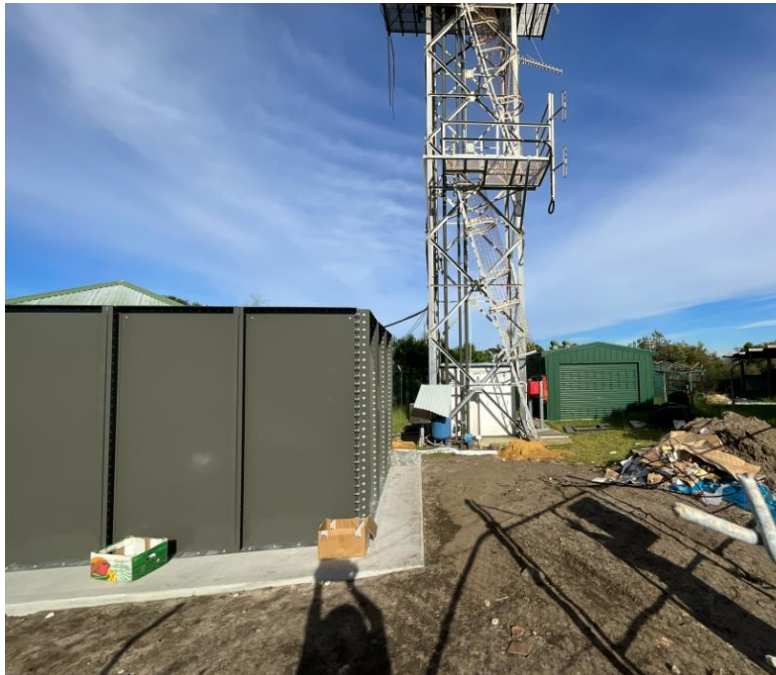
- All construction, A/C, painting and utility connections are complete. The solar array and battery supply to be installed from end June 2024.



Update on minor works, heritage works, maintenance & infrastructure works Attachment A

Domestic & Fire water separation – North Head Sanctuary

- Project is nearing completion with final system commissioning in progress.



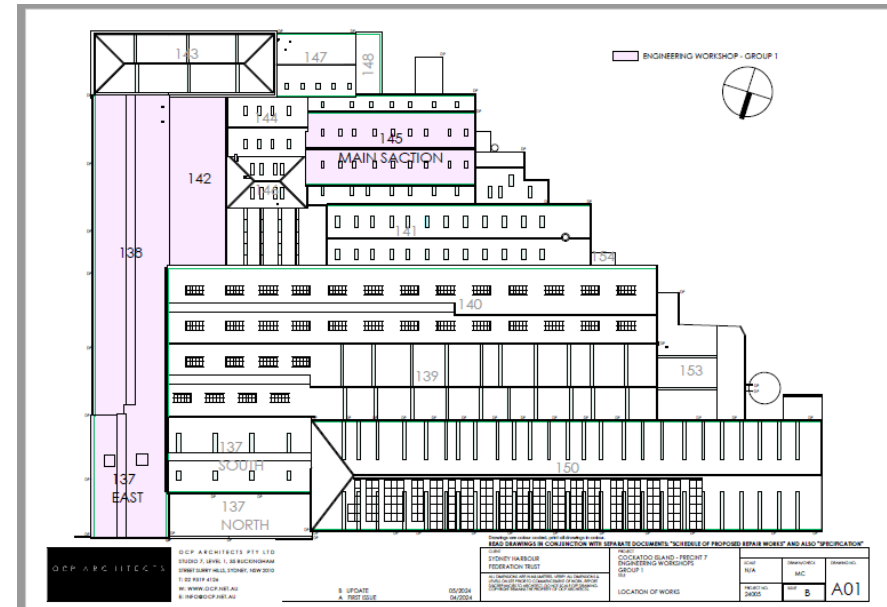
Update on minor works, heritage works, maintenance & infrastructure works Attachment A

Straight Tunnel temporary containers interim solution for public access – Cockatoo Island

- Tunnel project completed and reopened 28 March 2024



- Restore and conserve the Heritage Industrial Precinct to ensure its ongoing preservation.



Update on minor works, heritage works, maintenance & infrastructure works Attachment A

Patrol Boat Wharf – Cockatoo Island

- We have identified that the Patrol Boat Wharf has reached its end of life. It is therefore proposed to rebuild the Wharf as part of the Maintenance and Infrastructure Works.



Update on minor works, heritage works, maintenance & infrastructure works Attachment A

Cranes Remediation - Cockatoo Island

- It is the objective of the project to repair the Commonwealth Heritage Listed Cranes to ensure their ongoing preservation in a static condition.



Update on minor works, heritage works, maintenance & infrastructure works Attachment A

Buildings 09 & 20 renovation – Cockatoo Island

- Renovation and updating of heritage cottages on Cockatoo Island to establish them for public hire short term accommodation



Greenway Wall Restoration – Macquarie Lightstation

- It is the objective of the project to restore and conserve the Commonwealth Heritage Listed Greenway Stone Wall to provide a better visitor experience for guests at Macquarie Lightstation and to stop further degradation of the wall.



Update on minor works, heritage works, maintenance & infrastructure works Attachment A

Retort House Restoration – Sub Base Platypus

- Removal of hazmat (Steel structure and sandstone walls) Replacement of roofing and recladding of walls.



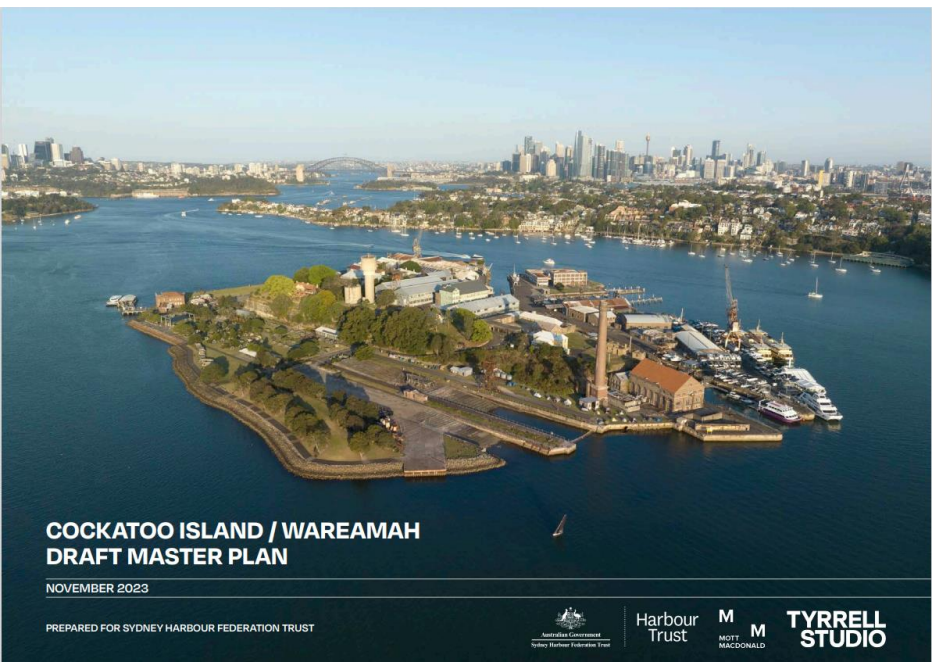
Update on minor works, heritage works, maintenance & infrastructure works Attachment A

Wharf & Slipway - Chowder Bay

- Work continues to the wharf and slipway.
- Inclement weather has hampered progress through May 2024.
- Completion on schedule for late August 2024.



Look ahead to the next financial year



Harbour Trust



Presentation from Brett Fenton

Sydney Institute of Marine Science (SIMS)



Understanding & Restoring Marine Environments in Sydney Harbour

The Sydney Institute of Marine Science



Acknowledgement



I ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND WHERE THE HARBOUR TRUST AND SIMS ARE SITUATED, THE CAMMERAYGAL PEOPLE OF THE EORA NATION – WHOSE CULTURES AND CUSTOMS HAVE NURTURED THE LAND SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL.

I ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THE LANDS, THEIR CUSTODIANS AND ALL ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND EMERGING FROM WHERE EVER YOU MAY BE JOINING FROM TODAY

Brett Fenton

**CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
SYDNEY INSTITUTE OF MARINE SCIENCE**



brett.fenton@sims.org.au



UNSW
SYDNEY



MACQUARIE
University



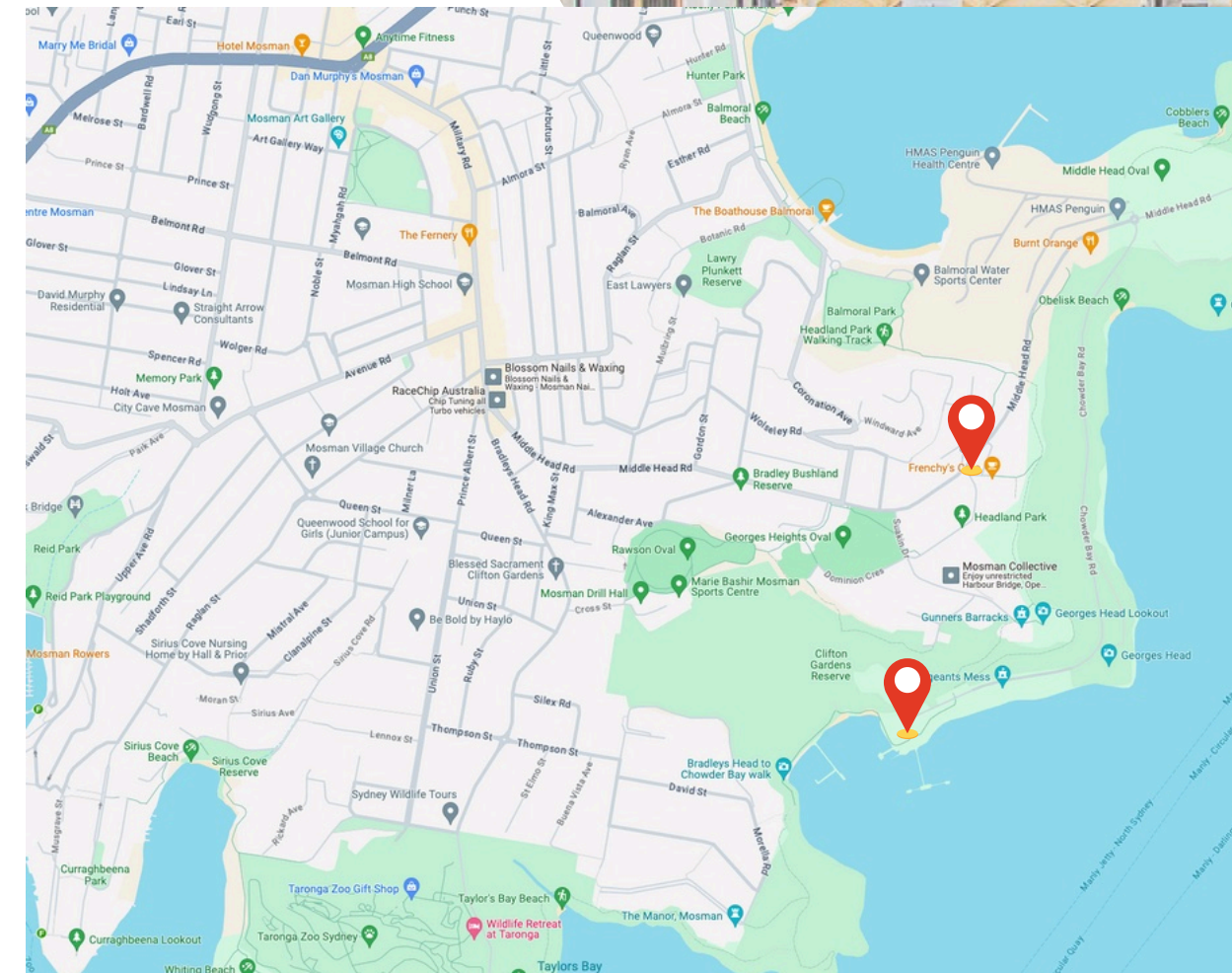
THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Attachment A



About SIMS

- Partnership between 4 Sydney based universities
- Founded in 2005
- Moved to Chowder Bay in 2007
- About 30 staff onsite
- Typically managing about 40 concurrent projects
- Site hosts a large indoor and outdoor aquarium





PROJECT KINGFISH

Partnering with recreational fishers to learn more about kingfish.



ANIMAL TAGGING - SEALS

Turning seals into scientists to understand remote waters.



LIVING SEAWALLS

Using eco-engineering to increase shoreline biodiversity on artificial seawalls.



PROJECT RESTORE

2023 REVIEW

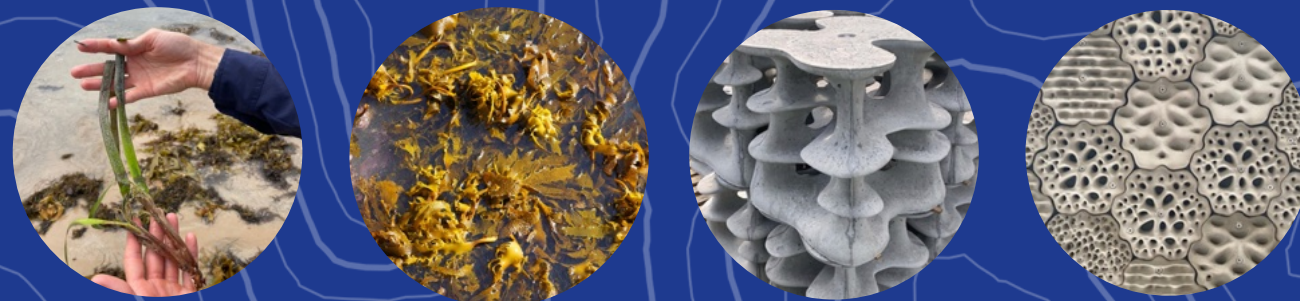
61 SITES SCOPED
14 SHORTLISTED



500+ Hours of baseline monitoring footage captured.

39 Monitoring fieldtrips completed.
That is over 300 hours in the field!
*since Aug 2023

4 RESTORATION METHODS



OUR PEOPLE



7 team members
23 local contractors employed



5.13 FTE in 2023

ENGAGEMENT

43 Stakeholder and community events

18M+ Total reach of people via media outreach



OPERATION POSIDONIA

Nurturing beach cast *Posidonia australis* fragments and replanting.

OPERATION CRAYWEED

Recovering our kelp forests.

FISH PODS

Installing artificial fish habitats to replace lost ecosystems.

LIVING SEAWALLS

Using eco-engineering to increase shoreline biodiversity on artificial seawalls.



SYDNEY SEAHORSE PROJECT



- ★ Replenishing an endangered native species, White's Seahorse
- ★ 1 of only 2 seahorse species globally to be recognised as endangered
- ★ SIMS breeds seahorses in our research aquarium in Chowder Bay
- ★ In 2023 we released 384 seahorses back into Chowder Bay
- ★ This is the largest release of any endangered marine species globally
- ★ In 2024 we have already released ~100 into Chowder Bay
- ★ Two further planned releases to Balmoral and Gamay in June 2024
- ★ Not just breeding and releasing, but undertaking scientific research also
- ★ Supported largely by a Commonwealth "Saving Native Species" grant
- ★ Current project and funding will release 400+ in both 2024 and again in 2025
- ★ Post release 2023/2024 monitoring shows captive bred seahorses reproducing
- ★ Partner with Gamay Rangers for site selection and ongoing monitoring
- ★ Partner with local divers to undertake Citizen Science



SIMS & The Harbour Trust

A NEW PARTNERSHIP TO STUDY AND
RESTORE MARINE ENVIRONMENTS
AROUND COCKATOO ISLAND



Harbour Trust





Cockatoo Island - 1944

COCKATOO ISLAND RESEARCH PROGRAM

Baseline survey and site assessment



- 01 ➤ February - Agreed to undertake baseline survey study
- 02 ➤ March-April SIMS commenced initial in water (drone) survey works
- 03 ➤ April baseline study report presented to Harbour Trust
- 04 ➤ May SIMS returned to hunt for seahorses
- 05 ➤ Project plan developed and agreed through mid-2025
- 06 ➤ May - SIMS/HT partnership announced by Minister Plibersek



COCKATOO ISLAND RESEARCH PROGRAM

Initial findings



- 01 ➤ Marine habitats far healthier than expected
- 02 ➤ Lots of healthy macro algae (kelp) coverage
- 03 ➤ Healthy and very unexpected mussel beds in multiple locations
- 04 ➤ 13 unique species of fish visually observed
- 05 ➤ Vertical wall structures were barren
- 06 ➤ We found an endangered Hippocampus whitei!



COCKATOO ISLAND RESEARCH PROGRAM

Next Steps



- 01 Install test eco-engineering structures - possibly boulders (August)
- 02 Install seahorse hotels x20 (July & November)
- 03 Seahorse breeding (September -January)
- 04 Seahorse release (January/February 2025)
- 05 LSW monitoring (October 2024 - June 2025)
- 06 Seahorse monitoring (February - June 2025)



COCKATOO ISLAND RESEARCH PROGRAM

2025 and beyond**



- 01 ➤ Bio and geo testing for heavy metals, dioxins and organochlorines
- 02 ➤ Scale LSW program depending on demonstrated success
- 03 ➤ Review of possibility of restoring flat oysters to Sydney Harbour
- 04 ➤ Possible sediment remediation
- 05 ➤ Additional seahorse releases depending on population health
- 06 ➤ Co-designed ecological educational programs on the island

**These are noted as ideal outcomes but subject to Commonwealth investment in the CI plan.



The End and Thankyou

Q&A?

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Meeting Closure

**To be followed by
Questions & Answers Session
6.30pm – 7.00pm**