



**HERITAGE
COUNCIL**
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

DRAFT – Register Entry

1. **DATA BASE No.** P24491
2. **NAME** Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle
FORMER NAME (or OTHER NAMES)
3. **LOCATION** Mews Road, Fremantle
4. **DESCRIPTION OF PLACE INCLUDED IN THIS ENTRY**
Part Reserve 32382 being Lots 1996 and 1997 on DP215338 being the whole of the land contained in Crown Land Title Volume 3137 Folios 406-407. Part Reserve 32382 being Lots 2022-2024 on DP216457 being the whole of the land contained in Crown Land Title Volume 3137 Folios 408-410. Part Reserve 32382 being Lots 2029,2031,2032 on DP216583 being the whole of the land contained in Crown Land Title Volume 3137 Folios 411-413. Part Reserve 32382 being Pt of Lot 2033 on DP216585 being part of the land contained in LR3121/416. Reserve 27807 being Lots 1878 and 1879 on DP171849 being the whole of the land contained Crown Land Title Volume 3128 Folios 534-535. Reserve 27807 being Lots 1880-1895 and 1904 on DP209838 being the whole of the land contained in Crown Land Title Volume 3128 Folios 536-552. Reserve 27807 being Lot 2097 on DP240410 being the whole of the land contained in LR3128/553. Reserve 27807 being Lot 325 on DP50236 being the whole of the land contained in LR3138/110. Reserve 27807 being Lot 500 on DP55744 being the whole of the land contained in LR3147/11. Reserve 27807 being Lot 501 on DP55744 being the whole of the land contained in LR3147/12. Reserve 49172 being Lot 502 on DP55744 being the whole of the land contained in LR3147/13. Part Reserve 51212 being portion of Lot 301 on DP49868 and being part of the land contained in LR3136/978.
5. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA** City of Fremantle
6. **HERITAGE LISTINGS**
 - Register of Heritage Places: -----
 - National Trust Classification: -----
 - Local Planning Scheme – Heritage List: 08/03/2007
 - Local Heritage Survey: 18/09/2000
 - Register of the National Estate: -----
 - Aboriginal Sites Register – Site ID 3776 Indian Ocean -----
 - Site ID 3420 Anglesea Point -----

7. ORDERS UNDER SECTION OF THE ACT

8. HERITAGE AGREEMENT

9. STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle (1924) comprises a harbour with a working fishing fleet and associated infrastructure and 'The Jetty' Memorial (2004), that is also a popular tourism precinct lined with restaurants and boardwalks that offer picturesque waterfront views and vistas.

the place has strong associations with the history of post-WWII migration to Western Australia, with many migrants from Southern Europe, particularly those from Italy, engaged in the commercial fishing industry historically and today (Factor A);

the continuous use of the place as a working harbour from 1924 to the present and its association with the evolution of the fishing industry in Fremantle, reflects the successful story of Fremantle's migrant communities, with the intangible value of this story being of importance to both migrant families and their descendants and the wider Western Australian community (Factor I);

the place holds a high degree of social value to the local Italian community, and other migrant communities associated with the fishing industry as the end point of the annual Blessing of the Fleet procession, a well-established religious and civic tradition, that has been an integral part of Fremantle's cultural heritage for more than 75 years (Factor E);

the place has historic value as the site of South Jetty, one of the first landing sites erected in 1829, in the newly founded Swan River Colony (Factor A);

the place is of aesthetic value for its panoramic water views coupled with the iconic blue fishing vessels of a working fishing fleet, that add to the distinctive character of the place as a working harbour, and as a popular recreational area for locals and tourists alike (Factor F);

the place has historic value as the site of the staging of the 26th challenge for the America's Cup in 1987, when Fremantle became the subject of worldwide focus with *Kookaburra III's* defence of the Royal Perth Yacht Clubs title (Factor A);

the place has a high degree of social value to past and current day fishermen and their families as demonstrated by their contribution and involvement in a project to recognise the 608 fishermen who pioneered the fishing industry at Fremantle, by way of 'The Jetty' memorial (Factor E); and,

the place is an iconic landmark that is a popular visitor destination for tourists and the local and wider community and contributes to the identity of Fremantle and in particular the city's West End (Factors E & F).

While the overall place is considered to be of heritage significance, the current built fabric, with the exception of 'The Jetty' memorial is not.



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REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES **DRAFT – Supporting Information**

PLEASE NOTE: This Assessment Documentation is intended to provide sufficient information to consider the place for inclusion in the State Register. It is not intended to provide a complete record of the history of the place or its physical presentation.

10. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

This section identifies the cultural heritage values or Factors of the place. Values that make a strong contribution to the place's cultural heritage significance are also included in the Statement of Cultural Heritage Significance above.

In determining cultural heritage significance, the Heritage Council has had regard to the factors in section 38 of the *Heritage Act 2018*. Cultural heritage significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for individuals or groups within Western Australia.

It is considered that the place warrants inclusion in the State Register against the following factors relevant to cultural heritage significance:

10(A) Importance in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Western Australia's history;

Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle is associated with the history of post-WWII migration to Western Australia, with many migrants from Southern Europe, particularly those from Italy, engaged in the commercial fishing industry (historic value).

Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle is associated with the evolution of the fishing industry in Fremantle with the continuous use of the place as a working harbour from 1924 to the present (historic value).

The place has historic significance as the site of South Jetty, one of the first landing sites erected in 1829, in the newly founded Swan River Colony (historic value).

Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle is associated with the staging of the 26th challenge for the America's Cup in 1987, when Fremantle became the subject of worldwide focus with *Kookaburra III's* defence of the Royal Perth Yacht Clubs title (historic value).

10(B) Importance in demonstrating rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of Western Australia's heritage;

Factor not relevant to this place

10(C) Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Western Australia's history;

Factor not relevant to this place

10(D) Its importance in demonstrating the characteristics of a broader class of places;

With its continued function and longevity as a working fishing boat harbour in the metropolitan area, the place demonstrates a way of life that has and continues to be dominated by Fremantle's migrant communities (historic value).

10(E) Any strong or special meaning it may have for any group or community because of social, cultural or spiritual associations;

Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle holds a high degree of social value to the local Italian community and other migrant communities associated with the fishing industry, as the end point of the annual Blessing of the Fleet procession, a well-established religious and civic tradition, that has been an integral part of Fremantle's cultural heritage for more than 70 years (social value).

Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle has a high degree of social value to past and current day fishermen and their families as demonstrated by their contribution and involvement in a project in 2004 to recognise the 608 fishermen who pioneered the fishing industry at Fremantle, by way of 'The Jetty' memorial (social value).

The place is an iconic landmark that is a popular visitor destination for tourists and the local and wider community and contributes to the identity of Fremantle and in particular the city's West End (social value).

10(F)¹ Its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by any group or community;

Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle is of aesthetic value for its panoramic water views coupled with the iconic blue fishing vessels of a working fishing fleet, that add to the distinctive character of the place as a working harbour, that is also a popular recreational area for locals and tourists alike (aesthetic value).

10(G) Any special association it may have with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in Western Australia's history;

Factor not relevant to this place

10(H) Its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement;

Factor not relevant to this place

¹ For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

10(I) Any other characteristic it may have that in the opinion of the Council is relevant to the assessment of cultural heritage significance.

The continuous use of the place as a working harbour from 1924 to the present and its association with the evolution of the fishing industry in Fremantle, reflects the successful story of Fremantle's migrant communities, with the intangible value of this story being of importance to both migrant families and their descendants and the wider Western Australian community (historic and social value).

11. SITE PLAN



Figure 1: Aerial site plan

12. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, in August 2024, with amendments and/or additions by the Heritage Council and the Department.

12.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle (1924) comprises a working fishing harbour with associated infrastructure, and 'The Jetty' Memorial (2004). It is a popular tourism precinct lined with restaurants and boardwalks, which is characterised by its panoramic waterfront views and vistas coupled with the iconic blue fishing vessels of a working fishing fleet.

For thousands of years, Fremantle has been a meeting place and area of cultural and ceremonial significance to the Whadjuk people, who gave the area its Noongar name, Walyalup. Historically, a rocky bar sheltered the Swan River estuary from the sea, providing good fishing grounds and a natural river crossing. As a result, an area on the south bank of the river near the river mouth and the headland, known to the Whadjuk people as Manjaree, became an important meeting and trading place. The arrival of British settlers in 1829 radically disturbed Noongar life, culture and customs and precipitated a period of conflict between Noongar people and the settlers. In the first half of the 20th century a period of exclusion prohibited Aboriginal people from entering Fremantle. Only a few Aboriginal men working on the wharf were allowed to enter and lived in camps at the fringe of the city.²

Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle - history

Following an exploratory voyage to the Swan River by Captain James Stirling in 1827, a decision was made to create a permanent settlement. An advance military deployment led by Captain Charles Howe Fremantle arrived in May 1829 and set up camp at Arthur Head, anticipating the area would become the capital of the new colony. Stirling and his first shipload of settlers arrived a month later. The Swan River Colony was declared on 18 June 1829, with Fremantle as its port and Perth as its capital.³

The current day *Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle* occupies the area originally named South Bay. In 1831, the first stone jetty was built in South Bay under the direction of Henry Reveley, Civil Engineer to the Colony. Built in the lee of Anglesea Point, the jetty soon deteriorated, and in the mid-1850s, it was replaced with the new 484 ft South Jetty. However, due to the shallow tidal water, ships had to anchor in Gage Road and lighter boats transported goods to South Jetty.⁴

In the 1870s and 1880s, the timber trade saw foreign ships arrive in ports south of Fremantle, manned by European crews of experienced mariners, navigators and fishers. Finding an environment similar to that of their Mediterranean homeland, the 'New World' provided an attractive option for a new life to men from places including the Italian fishing villages of Capo d' Orlando in Sicily and Molfetta on the

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- ² City of Fremantle, Aboriginal History: Available at: <https://www.fremantle.wa.gov.au/council/about-city-fremantle/aboriginal-history> [downloaded February 2024].
- ³ HCWA Heritage Assessment for P25225 *West End, Fremantle* 18 July 2017, p. 6, Available at : <https://inherit.dplh.wa.gov.au/Admin/api/file/9c5ff42e-35b5-4a74-9b19-295c575edd0b>
- ⁴ City of Fremantle Heritage List place record for P24491 Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle. Available: inherit at: <https://inherit.dplh.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/Details/e99e9c22-b669-40b7-9376-c9e5997878dd>

southeastern Italian coast, the Dalmation Coast in current day Croatia, and the Greek Island of Castellorizo.⁵

In 1883, a Commercial Treaty between the United Kingdom and Italy gave Italian subjects freedom of entry, travel and residence, and the rights to acquire property and businesses. This Treaty was adopted by all Australian states with the exception of South Australia, and initially attracted Italian migrants to Western Australia, seeking work on the Yilgarn goldfields. However, by the end of the 1890s, there was a growing community of Sicilian fishermen in Fremantle, closely followed by the growth of the Molfettese fishing community. Many of these early migrants lived a frugal life aboard their boats for several years or more in order to save money to send back to their families, who still remained in Italy.⁶

By the late 1890s, this new wave of migrants had made their mark on the fledgling fishing industry but were often subject to a degree of resentment from the British settlers. In 1899, the Colonial Secretary stated:

'... in this colony the fisheries are carried out very much by Greeks, Italians and other foreigners, who have not much interest in this colony... and when the rivers and harbours and the coast line are denuded of fish, they will probably go elsewhere'.⁷

In 1901, the Fisheries Department recorded licences for 218 boats and 400 fishermen that included 190 Italian; 90 British; 64 German/Scandinavian; 22 Greek; 22 Asian and 12 Austrian⁸ (Croatian). These numbers included fisheries at Fremantle, Perth, Bunbury, Albany and Mandurah.⁹

In Fremantle, the fishermen moored their boats in the natural harbour of South Bay, and sold their catch at South Jetty, despite a lack of storage facilities or capacity to preserve their produce. From 1902, the safety of the bay and its landing facilities were compromised with the development of the railway line south of Fremantle, as ship builders along Fitzgerald Terrace (now Marine Terrace) struggled to launch their boats across the railway line.¹⁰

In 1904, the Western Australian Government resumed control of South Bay from the Fremantle Harbour Trust and South Jetty was handed over to the State Fisheries Department. In 1905, the Department's annual report noted that 287 fishing licences and 147 boat licences had been issued, including 15 vessels that were engaged in crayfishing.¹¹

In 1908, a timber breakwater was built off South Jetty and timber fish markets were built on the jetty, which then became known as Fishermen's Jetty. At this time, it was compulsory for the fishermen to auction their catches at the fish market, and it became a thriving hub with a resident fishing community establishing itself in Fremantle. Most often the fishermen lived together in boarding houses or rented

5 May, Sally, R, *People, Places and Spaces* in Fremantle Studies Volume 5, Fremantle History Society 2007, p.34.

6 May, Sally 1999, 'The Italian fishermen of Fremantle: from blue-collar businessmen to lords of the sea', Fremantle Studies, 1: pp. 47-65.

7 Ibid, p.35

8 Modern day Croatia was part of the Austrian Hungarian Empire at this time (1901).

9 Ibid p.35.

10 City of Fremantle Heritage List place record for P24491 Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle. Available: inherit at: <https://inherit.dph.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/Details/e99e9c22-b669-40b7-9376-c9e5997878dd>

11 Ibid, May, Sally, R, p.35.

cottages in close proximity to the jetty and market. In later years, they would be in a financial position to purchase these cottages for their families.¹²

The timber breakwater soon fell apart and Fremantle's fishermen lacked a safe anchorage and suitable fish market arrangements. Construction of a new stone groyne promised in 1907, did not commence until 1921, due to a shortage of stone and labour, and debate about the design, and it was not completed until 1923.¹³

On 30 July 1924, Fishing Boat Harbour was proclaimed under the *Ports and Harbours Act of 1917*. In the late 1920s, the fish markets were moved to an area behind South Jetty. By 1930, the area comprised South Jetty, a boat harbourage breakwater, and swimming baths which were located at the end of Arundel Street.¹⁴

Further development of Western Australia's fishing industry was slow until the unprecedented expansion of the rock lobster industry after World War II. Prior to the war, relatively small quantities of rock lobsters were caught and canned for export. However, the industry expanded greatly when an export market for fresh frozen rock lobster tails was established in the United States. By 1955, the industry employed over 600 fishermen with annual catches in excess of 5000 tones.¹⁵

Post World War II immigration had a huge impact on the socio-economic development of Western Australia and Australia as a whole. Fuelled by the Federal Government's immigration policy 'Populate or Perish', this post-war immigration drive sought to populate the country for both defence purposes and to stimulate post-war development. Initially the program was directed at British immigrants, whom it was thought would more easily integrate into Australian society. However, in order to meet its immigration targets, the Federal Government was forced to look towards the huge refugee population in post-war Europe for potential migrants. Subsequently the 'Displaced Persons Scheme' brought thousands of European migrants to Western Australia, with the first displaced persons arriving in Fremantle on 13 February 1948 onboard the International Refugee Organisation transport the *General Stewart*.¹⁶

Between 1948 and 1952, a further 19,000 displaced persons arrived in Western Australia, a number that increased dramatically from 1952 when the Federal Government looked to southern and eastern Europe as a source of migrants. At the peak of post-war immigration approximately 200,000 passengers passed through the Port of Fremantle every year.¹⁷

In 1947, a three-day strike was held by Fremantle's fishermen to draw attention to the injustice of the governments price schedule, with the acquisition of the Fish Market and the right to sell their own produce a common objective. However, negotiations with the Fremantle Municipal Council and State Government failed, and the fishermen returned to work. Undeterred, local fisherman Frank Del Rosso aided by two of his colleagues, Sergio Cappellutti and Frank Iannello attempted to

12 Ibid, May, Sally, R, p.36.

13 Ibid – City of Fremantle Heritage List place record for P24491 Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle.

14 Ibid.

15 Morgan, G.R, Barker, E.H, Report No. 55, *The Western Rock Lobster Fishery 1961-71*, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, 1982, p.5.

16 Heritage Council Assessment documentation for P03363 *Port of Fremantle Passenger Terminal* (April 2002) pp, 5-6.

17 Ibid p.6.

acquire the Fish Market lease, but the price offered was beyond their reach. Determined that they should have control over the sale of their produce, the three men broke into the Fish Market and began to auction the days catches. This event was followed by a protracted investigation by the Fisheries Department which left the fishermen free to continue conducting their own auctions, breaking the Council's monopoly on auctioning and the wholesalers' monopoly on bidding. Although they were never granted a long-term lease, their occupation of the Fish Market was secured. ¹⁸

These events led to the establishment of the Fremantle Fishermen's Co-operative, with the first official meeting held on 9 August 1947. At the outset the Co-operative sought representation of Italian, Croatian and British interests on the management committee, with the Co-operative's first priority to acquire the lease on the Fish Market. Members of the Co-operative purchased shares in the company and were encouraged to sell their fish through the Co-operative's Fish Market, where members contributed a penny for every pound of fish or crayfish sold. In 1950, the Co-operative's headquarters were located behind the Fish markets, at 47 Mews Road (the current day location of hospitality venue Bather's Beach House) ¹⁹

In 1962 the southern breakwater was constructed to provide for a larger sheltered mooring area, increased wharf space, and an additional service jetty, with waterfront land provided for fishing companies and service industries. The Department of Harbour and Light (now Department of Transport) was responsible for the provision and maintenance of all roads, electricity & water services. ²⁰

In 1971, a new \$200,000 jetty was built and by 1973, the 40 acre Harbour provided safe anchorage for 150 fishing vessels and moorings for another 150, and was restricted to commercial fishing. In 1974, there were 640 licenced fishing vessels registered in Fremantle (approximately one third of those in the State), that were engaged in fishing rock lobster and prawns for export, and for the local domestic market. ²¹

In the late 1970s, congestion at the Harbour saw a new anchorage built to cater for an additional 400 vessels, with all anchorage and mooring used exclusively by fishermen. A new curving breakwater groyne, (the southern groyne between Fishing Boat and Success Harbours) constructed from approximately 80,000 tons of rock, sheltered the Harbour from the south-west winds. ²²

In 1982, land was reclaimed at the eastern end of the anchorage and was utilised for buildings and infrastructure directly associated with the fishing industry, including a slipway, boatyards and maintenance stores, and construction of the first stage of the new boat lifting facility. As the major fishing and marine industry refit

18 May, Sally 1999, *The Italian fishermen of Fremantle: from blue-collar businessmen to lords of the sea*, Fremantle Studies, 1: pp. 47-65.

19 Ibid.

20 Department of transport. Fishing Boat Harbour: About the Harbour. Available at: <https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/mediaFiles/marine/MAC-G-Fishing-Boat-Harbour-Fremantle-About.pdf>

21 City of Fremantle Heritage List place record for P24491 Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle. Available: inherit at: <https://inherit.dph.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/Details/e99e9c22-b669-40b7-9376-c9e5997878dd>

22 Ibid.

site in the State, boats from as far afield as Darwin and Esperance came to use the facility.²³

In 1985, a government report noted that the main fishing activity at *Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle* was that of the rock lobster industry that was worth around \$80 - million a year in sales revenue. There were approximately 300 boats involved in the industry, creating around 1000 jobs directly, and there were nine onshore jobs created indirectly for every fisherman at sea.²⁴

In 1987, further upgrades to the harbour were undertaken to provide facilities for the defence and challenge of the America's Cup, which followed the unprecedented win in September 1983 by *Australia II* that claimed the Cup. In January and February 1987, Fremantle became the subject of worldwide focus, as the location for the staging of the America's Cup challenge. On 4 February, the San Diego Yacht Club in *Stars & Stripes* defeated the Royal Perth Yacht Club in *Kookaburra III* to take out the 26th Cup. On the day, tens of thousands of spectators lined every vantage point of the harbour to cheer on *Kookaburra III's* defence of the Cup.²⁵ Following the event, a major redevelopment of harbour facilities occurred over a very short period of time that generated enormous interest in the facility and changed its predominantly fishing industry focus. These changes included the construction of Challenger Harbour, sheet piled wharves, buildings including fish receival depots and fuelling/receival wharves for the fishing industry.²⁶

In 2004, the contribution of Western Australian's pioneering and modern-day professional fishermen was officially recognised by the construction of 'The Jetty' memorial at *Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle* (adjacent to Mews Park). Inscribed 'To the Fisherman', the memorial comprises two life size bronze sculptures of fishermen, a map of the coastline showing traditional fishing areas and a short history of the industry. Twelve timber columns on the jetty include the names of the 608 fishermen who were the pioneers of the fishing industry at Fremantle, with the names taken from pre-1947 fishing licence records, but all men and women who have participated in the industry are equally honoured for their pioneering spirit.²⁷ The project was commissioned by Fremantle Fishermen's Monument Trust and was designed by local artists Jon Tarry and Greg James.²⁸ The memorial was funded by donations of cash, labour, materials and professional expertise by the State Government, fishermen and their families, the private sector and the Fremantle City Council.²⁹

In 2008, a sculpture of Bon Scott, former front man of Australian band AC/DC was unveiled at *Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle*, adjacent to Mews Park. The sculpture

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- 23 Department of Transport. *Fishing Boat Harbour: About the Harbour* (2014). Available at: <https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/mediaFiles/marine/MAC-G-Fishing-Boat-Harbour-Fremantle-About.pdf>
- 24 Australian Fisheries Vol. 44 No. 6 (June 1985). *New deal for Fremantle?* p.38. Retrieved May 16, 2024, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-757901906>
- 25 America's Cup – *Fremantle Puts It on*. Available at: https://www.americascup.com/history/66_FREEMANTLE-PUTS-IT-ON
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Monument Australia – 'To the Fisherman'; - The Jetty. Available at: <https://monumentaaustralia.org.au/themes/technology/industry/display/60483-%22to-the-fishermen%22-the-jetty>
- 28 Greg James sculptor. Available at: <https://www.gregjamessculpture.com/public-art/the-fishermen>
- 29 Ibid, Department of Transport. *Fishing Boat Harbour: About the Harbour* (2014)

by artist Greg James acknowledges Scott's musical legacy following his death in 1980, and his childhood links to Fremantle.³⁰

In 2024, many of the fishing enterprises in Fremantle are still Italian operated. Since 1948, every year in October, the Italian tradition of the 'Blessing of the Fleet' takes place in Fremantle. This religious and civic ceremony is believed to date back to the 12th century, and is an annual tradition adopted by many fishing villages and ports throughout the world to bless the fishing fleet before the opening of the season and to pray for a safe and bountiful season. Some fishermen also invite their local priest to bless their newly made rock lobster pots for good luck in a private ceremony for family and friends at their homes.³¹

In Fremantle, the Blessing of the Fleet is traditionally held just before the opening of the rock lobster season in October-November when the fishing boats have been serviced and repainted in the months leading up to the new season. The ceremony is organised by local communities, principally the Italian Molfettese and Sicilian communities but also involves the Croatian and Portuguese communities and is performed under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church.³² The ceremony begins with a Mass at St Patrick's Basilica in Fremantle, after which the fishermen and their families walk through the streets of Fremantle carrying two statues of the Madonna, in a procession that runs from the Basilica to the *Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle* for the Blessing. The procession is followed by a celebration on the Esplanade Reserve that ends with a fireworks display.³³ Each year, the ceremony draws large crowds of locals and visitors to Fremantle.

The fishing fleet has greatly reduced in size in recent times due to the introduction of a quota based regulatory system that resulted in larger operators acquiring all the quotas. This has had a significant impact on the culture of the fishing community, with the majority of pens in the Harbour now occupied by private recreational boats. In the 2021/22 financial year, fishing receivers in the harbour processed over 55,000kg of rock lobster along with smaller quantities of fin fish, sardines and octopus.³⁴

In 2024, *Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle* including Challenger Harbour is recognised as the largest small boat harbour in Western Australia and is managed by the Department of Transport (Marine). The harbour has continuously changed over time to respond to operational requirements and has undergone various stages of land reclamation from the 1920s to the 1980s, as required with the ongoing use of the place as a working harbour.³⁵ It continues to be a popular recreational and tourism precinct.

12.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle (1924) comprises a working fishing harbour with associated infrastructure, and 'The Jetty' Memorial (2004). It is a popular tourism

³⁰ <http://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/people/arts/display/60474-bon-scott>

³¹ Western Australian Museum › WA Maritime Museum Audio Tour › 3. Blessing of the Fleet, Available at: <https://museum.wa.gov.au/wa-maritime-museum-audio-tour/blessing-fleet> [Accessed 29 April 2024]

³² Ibid.

³³ City of Fremantle – The Blessing of the Fleet: <https://www.fremantle.wa.gov.au/whats-on/blessing-fleet-2017>

³⁴ Fremantle Harbours Master Plan, September 2023, pp.12, 18. Available at: https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/mediaFiles/marine/PROJ_P_Fremantle_Harbours_Master_Plan.pdf

³⁵ Ibid, pp13-14.

precinct lined with restaurants and boardwalks, which is characterised by its panoramic waterfront views and vistas coupled with the iconic blue fishing vessels of a working fishing fleet.



Figure 2: Commercial fishing boats. Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle.

Photograph: DPLH staff (April 2024)

Siting

A complex of three harbours, Challenger, Fishing Boat and Success, are located on the southern point of Fremantle. The northernmost Challenger Harbour was built to house the teams taking part in the 1987 America's Cup, and Success Harbour is the location for the Fremantle Yacht Club. *Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle* is the largest of the three and is located adjacent to the Esplanade Reserve on Mews Road and forms the centre of the harbour complex. It is the base for an over 400-strong working fishing fleet and includes service jetties, wharves and refuelling and maintenance facilities.

As a popular tourism and hospitality precinct, *Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle* is lined with low level structures predominately comprising hospitality venues fronted by boardwalks that offer picturesque water views and vistas. It includes two memorials, a bronze statue of Bon Scott, former lead singer of Australian band AC/DC and 'The Jetty'. A memorial to commemorate local fisherman, it encompasses 12 timber columns, inscribed with the names of 608 fishermen who were pioneers of the fishing industry in Fremantle, and two life size bronze sculptures of fishermen. The former Fremantle Boat Lifters (c. 1982), adjacent to the railway line is now the venue for a popular boutique brewery.

Aerial imagery from 1947 and 1953 show a breakwater along the north west edge of the site, a small jetty protruding southward from the northern tip, and a small collection of sheds. Later aerial imagery shows the progressive development of the low scale structures on site today, and replacement of earlier elements, with the majority of the current fabric dating to the post-1970 period. Hence, the evidence suggests that no physical elements from the early use and development of the place as a Fishing Boat Harbour remains extant.

The following well known commercial venues form part of *Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle*. While the longevity of operation and changing nature of these structures

and business types within the harbour area contribute to the overall sense of place, the individual buildings and fabric are not considered to demonstrate cultural heritage significance.

- *Cicerellos* (44 Mews Road) - established by Steve Cicerello, the son of Salvatore Cicerello, who arrived from Cap d'Orlando in Sicily in the early 1900s and was a the pioneer of the crayfishing industry in the Abrolhos Islands. A Fremantle landmark since the late 1950s, the original Cicerello's Seafood Restaurant was sold in 1996 and the modest building demolished to make way for a new restaurant facing the harbour, that was completed in 1997.
- *Lombardos* (42 Mews Road) - was developed in the 1980s during the lead up to the America's Cup, and included three restaurants, three bars and a nightclub, and was refurbished in the late 1990s.
- *Fremantle Boat Lifters (former)* – Fremantle Boat Lifters opened their boat maintenance and repair facility at the Fishing Boat Harbour in 1982. In later years, it was the location of a crocodile farm tourist attraction and is now a well known boutique brewery (Little Creatures).
- *Fremantle Fishermen's Co-Operative Society (former)* (47 Mews Road) - the Fishermen's Co-Op was located behind the Fremantle Fish markets. The building was constructed c.1950.



Figure 3: The Jetty' - Fishermen's Memorial.
Photograph: DPLH staff (April 2024)



Figure 4: The Jetty' - Fishermen's Memorial.
Photograph: DPLH staff (April 2024)



Figure 5 Boardwalk restaurant. Photograph: DPLH staff (April 2024)



Figure 6: Mews Park looking towards *Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle*. Photograph: DPLH staff (April 2024)



Figure 7: Boardwalk looking towards the harbour. Photograph: DPLH staff (April 2024)



Figure 8: Boardwalk looking towards the Esplanade Reserve. Photograph: DPLH staff (April 2024)

12.3 CONDITION

The Department of Transport (Marine) has a regular maintenance schedule to upgrade services and amenities at *Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle*. The place is in good condition.

12.4 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION/THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Thematic Analysis

This analysis is based on the Thematic History of Western Australia³⁶ (WA Thematic). The following theme/s, key events and phases are relevant to the history of the place:

Peopling WA – Demographic Development

- 1829 - Fremantle the main port for Swan River settlements.
- 1946 - 1955 - National immigration program aiming to significantly increase size of Australia's population; 58,400 assisted migrants arrive in WA. Programs to resettle Europeans displaced by WWII see continental migrants sent through International Refugee Organisation and bilateral agreements with individual European countries. The 1951 Bilateral Accord (Italian-Australian Migration Agreement) sees Italy become the main source country for migrants to Australia.
- 1954 - Continental European migrant population reaches 53,854 (8.4% of WA population), up from 14,321 in 1947 due to post-World War II assisted migration schemes; comprises predominantly Italians (17,295), as well as Yugoslav (4,584), and Greek (3,213).

Economy – Natural Resources (living)

- 1890s - increased population expands markets; fishing industry established at Albany and Fremantle, including many Italians and Austro-Hungarians at Fremantle.
- 1904 - Italian migrants moving off the goldfields become central to fishing industry in Fremantle.

Cultural life – religion

- 1936 - first 'Blessing of the Fleet' ceremony in Fremantle; practice subsides during wartime but revived from 1948 and observed ever since.

Cultural Life – Recreation

- 1987 - America's Cup defence held in Fremantle.
- 1980s+ - Fremantle develops as tourist destination/cafe culture/restaurants.

Comparative Analysis

Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle is a working fishing harbour that incorporates a tourism precinct, located in the City of Fremantle. The heritage significance of *Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle* lies mainly in its historic associations with the early development of the fishing industry in Fremantle by southern European

³⁶ 'A Thematic History of Western Australia' (incl. Framework Spreadsheet & Narratives). Prepared for the Heritage Council of WA by Clare Menck, Historian, June 2018.

migrants, and its contribution to the story of post-World War II migration to Western Australia.

Places associated with pre and post-World War II Migration in Western Australia

The arrival of non-British migrants in the post-World War II period, and to a lesser degree in the pre-World War II period, had a significant impact on the history and development of Western Australia. However, few places which represent this story have been recognised for their cultural heritage significance on the State Register, with the exception of the following examples:

- P2676 *Luisini Winery Group* RHP (1929 -1986) – formerly the largest privately owned winery in Western Australia, established by Ezio Luisini, an important patron of the Italian community in Western Australia. From 1929 to the 1960s, the place was well known as the first place of employment in Western Australia for many new Italian migrants.
- P3363 *Port of Fremantle Passenger Terminal* RHP (1961-62) – has national importance as the point of entry for tens of thousands of migrants arriving in Australia due to the Federal Government’s post-war immigration policies and has special importance as the site of first landfall and first impressions of Australia for these arriving migrants.
- P4760 *Main Roads Migrant Camp (fmr)*, Narrogin RHP (1948) – three prefabricated, transportable corrugated iron Nissen Huts used to resettle displaced persons, refugees and former military personnel forces following World War II.
- P6126 *Northam Army Camp* RHP (1934-1960s) – the camp held approximately 3,500 Italian Prisoners of war during World War II, who contributed to the home front effort.
- P20203 *Fremantle Club* (RHP - part of P25225 *West End*, Fremantle) – In 1920, due to the increase in Italian immigrants post-World War I, the Italian Club was formed and established in this former hotel in Bannister Street. In 1927, it became ‘Club Giovane Italia’, a popular venue for Fremantle’s Italian community to eat, drink, dance, and gamble.
- P25228 *Harvey Agricultural College (fmr)* RHP (1940-) – the place is closely associated with the German and Italian men who were either internees or personnel at the internment and training camp during World War II. The place has significance to the descendants of Italian internees, and Italian and German prisoners of war, whose family members were interned at the No. 11 Internment Camp between 1940 and 1942.

Harbours, Ports, Quays/Jetties

The current day *Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle* is located on the site of the former South Jetty, one of the first landing sites erected in 1829, in the newly founded Swan River Colony. The following places are also early townsites that included ports or jetties:

- P3239 *Cossack Townsite Precinct* (1860-1890) – established in 1863, the settlement was also the first port in the north west that serviced Western Australia’s first pearling industry. Includes a stone and concrete wharf (originally with a timber deck) covering the site of two former timber pile jetties. Now a significant archaeological site.

- P03444 *Old Onslow Townsite* (1885-) – developed as a port town to service the large pearling fleets that operated seasonally along the north west coastline, and the local pastoral industries. Now an archaeological site.
- P3607 *Albany Town Jetty* (RHP) – Constructed from 1862, the jetty was continually modified and extended until 1951 when it was no longer fit for purpose and demolished. The area is now incorporated in the current Port of Albany.

The following places comprise working harbours/ports, one of which is on the Register, the rest of which have not been considered by the Heritage Council:

- P3602 *Victoria Quay*, Fremantle (RHP) (1829 onwards) - a landmark industrial urban landscape, comprising a wharf structure with berths, transit and work sheds, jetties and slipways. It also includes visitor attractions, such as the WA Maritime Museum, markets and cafes.
- P9286 Geraldton Shipping Harbour (1857, 1916, 1935) – a commercial working port that includes a main harbour, a fishing boat harbour, grain and iron ore storage, including rail freight, and maintenance and engineering facilities. While the port receives cruise ships, it does not have any recreational or tourist facilities.
- P21312 Success Harbour, Fremantle (c1970s) – part of a complex of three harbours, that also include Challenger, and Fishing Boat Harbour. Success Harbour is located at the southern end of the harbour complex and is the location of the Fremantle Yacht Club.
- P26196 Broome Jetty/Port of Broome (1889) – Broome – the Broome Port was established in 1889 but with no wharf, vessels would come in on the tide and sit on the seabed once the tide went out. In 1897, a wharf was completed at Mangrove Point and serviced the pearling and cattle industries. Construction of the current Broome Port (P6720 Port of Broome) commenced in 1964, being expanded in 1996. The port continues to serve the Kimberley region.
- P11863 Fishing Boat Harbour, Port Denison (1974) - a harbour formed by two groins which extend westwards from the beach. Includes a jetty and two brick buildings which serve as offices for the harbour master and fishing inspector. The place is associated with the cray fishing industry. Facilities include commercial pens and moorings, service jetty, fuelling and maintenance facilities, and boat ramp.

Tourism precincts

Places with a similar tourist function that include a harbour or marina include the following places:

- P26470 *Sun City Precinct, Two Rocks* (RHP) – includes the Two Rocks Marina (P17942) - comprising a marina, shopping complex and tavern and sculptures. Initially constructed as a training base for the America's Cup, the Two Rocks Marina was the first harbour to be developed predominantly for recreation in Western Australia, focused on becoming a new population centre and a place of leisure.

The following places are not entered in the Historic Heritage database:

- Hillarys Boat Harbour - a popular tourist and recreational destination also constructed in 1987 to cater for the America's Cup Challenge Series. Includes the marina, retail precinct and the Western Australian Aquarium (AQWA).
- Mindarie Keys Marina - designed in preparation for the 1987 America's Cup in Fremantle but planning and environmental concerns stalled the project and it was not completed until 1989. The facility includes the harbour, hotel and marina.
- Mandurah Ocean Marina – (2001) - developed with the aim to provide 'a Western Australian icon tourism development that could effectively function as a strategically placed boat harbour'. It is the largest regional marina in Western Australia.

Conclusion

The location of *Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle* served as the main port for the Swan River settlements from 1829, and from 1924, the place has remained in constant use as a working fishing harbour that has evolved over time to incorporate a tourism precinct. It is strongly associated with post-war migration of Southern Europeans to Western Australia, who were the pioneers of the fishing industry in Fremantle, and continues to be valued for that history by their descendants, many of whom have continued to work in the harbour. The place is a unique example of a Western Australian harbour of a considerable scale that include both the elements of a working fishing harbour with a rich migrant history, and that of a popular tourism precinct.

12. 5 KEY REFERENCES

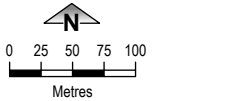
12. 6 FURTHER RESEARCH



HERITAGE
COUNCIL

HC CURTLAGE MAP P24491 FISHING BOAT HARBOUR, FREMANTLE

MAP 2 OF 2 PREPARED BY CASEY GINBEY (GEOSPATIAL DATA CAPTURE OFFICER) 31/07/2024



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Spatial Reference GDA 1994 MGA Zone 50

Legend

-  Curtilage
-  Cadastre