

YOUR VIRTUAL DISCOVERY VISIT – 67 TO THE HERITAGE STORIES OF ROTTNEST ISLAND



Virtual Visits were initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic when Rottnest Island was closed to the public due to lockdown and quarantine from March to June 2020. Virtual Visits have continued to enable a further enjoyment of stories introduced at the Wadjemup Museum, the Chapman Archives or sites around the Island.

Enjoy, reflect and share.



Australian Government

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Unless you are a devoted maritime history buff, you may have overlooked that 1 July 2021 marked the 106th anniversary of the Australian Government's management of lighthouses and other aids to navigation in Australian waters. It was just over a century ago, that the Commonwealth Lighthouse Service (CLS) officially accepted responsibility for all light stations around Australia's 37,600-kilometre coastline.

This role is now performed by the **Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA)**, which maintains a network of nearly 490 navigation aids at approximately 380 sites. AMSA's guiding "lights" extend to all points of the continental compass: to Bramble Cay, northeast of Thursday Island (closer to PNG than the Australian mainland), Maatsuyker Island in the Southern Ocean off Tasmania, Steep Point (WA), and to the mainland's most easterly point, Cape Byron (NSW).

The ownership and management of lighthouses in Australia is however a complex issue. When the lights were de-manned, control of the lights was transferred from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) to other authorities, mainly the Parks and Wildlife Services in each State. In some instances, the lights were leased back by AMSA. In other instances, local Port Authorities own the lights. The Rottnest Island Authority acquired the Wadjemup lighthouse and has leased it back to Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

AMSA recognises the importance of tourism to local communities, and the potential for tourism to create employment and economic activity in regional areas. AMSA currently has 16 of its heritage sites open to the public and they receive over 350,000 visitors in a typical year. Tourist access licence agreements are in place for all tourist sites. These licences detail the licensees' obligations for the site.

Revitalisation of the Wadjemup Hill Lighthouse precinct has been identified in the Rottnest Island Management Plan 2020-24 as a key initiative. This project is designed to enhance visitor experiences available at Wadjemup Hill, improve transport management, and upgrades to visitor facilities to further reveal to visitors the outstanding natural and built heritage features of the hill.

<https://www.amsa.gov.au/>

<https://www.ria.wa.gov.au/major-projects/national-tourism-icons>

<https://www.ria.wa.gov.au/major-projects/national-tourism-icons/wadjemup-hil>



Heritage Lighthouses in WA facilitated through AMSA

	LIGHTHOUSE	HERITAGE STATUS	REFERENCE
1	Point Moore	State	3927
2	Cape Levesque	State	7198
3	Cape Leewin	CHL + State	105416 + 104
4	Eclipse Island	State	15740
5	Breaksea Island	State	3353
6	Cape Inscription	State	3261
7	Cape Naturaliste	State	2914
8	Rottneest Island	State	3254

Search for details using the links below

https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=search_form;list_code=CHL
<http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/>

Environmental Threat of Microplastics

One of the threats to the marine environment in which AMSA plays an educational role is microplastics. Microplastics are one of the most serious ocean pollutants. When a plastic bottle enters the ocean, it slowly breaks down into small pieces over hundreds of years. Not only do these tiny particles contaminate the water, they can be mistaken for food by marine life. Ingested plastics can build up in an animal's stomach and absorbed into their bodies.

This means that plastic contaminants can land back on our tables when we drink water and eat fish and seafood. The highest source of plastic ingestion comes from water, regardless of whether you prefer to drink bottled or tap. A study conducted by the University of Newcastle in 2019 suggests the average person could be consuming the equivalent of a credit card in plastic each week!

[Microplastics \(amsa.gov.au\)](http://www.environment.gov.au/protection/waste/publications/national-plastics-plan)
<http://www.environment.gov.au/protection/waste/publications/national-plastics-plan>

Jurien Bay rescue highlights importance of EPIRBs

AMSA successfully coordinated the rescue of five people off the coast of Jurien Bay in Western Australia on 30 May 2021. A distress beacon was activated about 1130am (AWST) after a yacht hit a reef and started sinking, more than 200 kilometres north of Perth. AMSA tasked the Challenger jet from Fremantle to the scene, along with a RAC rescue helicopter, a private helicopter, a WA Fisheries vessel and Jurien Bay Marine Rescue vessel.



Three people, suffering shock and hypothermia, were rescued by the Fisheries vessel and after a more extensive search, the two other people—a man and his daughter—were located and transferred to hospital via helicopter.

AMSA Response Centre Manager Kevin McEvoy said the successful rescue highlighted the importance of having emergency equipment onboard the vessel.

“When the vessel struck trouble, an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) strapped to the body of one of the women was activated—and the three adults were rescued within about two-and-a-half hours. It took a further two hours to locate the father and his 11-year-old daughter, who had drifted away from the group.”

<https://beacons.amsa.gov.au/>