Tobruk History Museum & Fishing Hall of Fame

The Wide Bay region was successful ahead of numerous competitors from around the country in securing the ex-Australian Navy heavy lift ship HMAS Tobruk to create a world-class artificial dive wreck in waters between Hervey Bay and Bundaberg. Whilst this new tourism asset will create jobs and inject millions of dollars into the regional economy each year for many decades to come, as a wreck it will only be accessible to divers. There remains an opportunity with the proud history of the unique vessel to create onshore tourism asset to broaden the economic benefit and tourism attraction of the vessel.
Proposal

There is a growing research base that demonstrates that caring for places that matter and taking part in cultural heritage activities generate significant environmental, economic and social benefits. The addition of ex-HMAS Tobruk as a regional dive experience creates the opportunity for a new land-based attraction, namely a Tobruk History Museum.

With a proud 35-year history of service to the country, a museum housing elements of HMAS Tobruk removed during the preparation for scuttling could be displayed alongside a chronological tribute to the workhorse of the Royal Australian Navy and the history of her service missions.

Information, imagery and artefacts from the vessel and those that served on her could be included alongside modern interactive displays that would also serve to educate current and future generations about the role of the navy.

This new land-based attraction would attract a broad demographic of tourists and visitors than just the dive experience and would complement existing tourism infrastructure.

Furthermore, it has been a decade-long aspiration of the Wide Bay community to create a Fishing Hall of Fame to honour the significant history, innovation and contribution of the commercial and amateur fishing sector to the regional economy.

The opportunity to construct and combine a complimentary Tobruk Museum and Fishing Hall of Fame would create a new, year-round onshore tourist attraction which is necessary for a region heavily reliant on marine-based tourism and visitor experience for its economic prosperity.

Value-add experience

With the addition of ex-HMAS Tobruk to Wide Bay waters, South-East Queensland will immediately become a world-renowned dive destination for domestic and well-heeled international tourists. With ex-HMAS Brisbane scuttled (2005) as a dive wreck off the Sunshine Coast, just two hours’ highway drive from the site of the proposed site of HMAS Tobruk dive wreck, the pair of military dive experiences will be co-promoted to create a major tourism and economic boost for the region. There is nowhere else in Australia offering this collaborative and unique opportunity.

With other well recognised dives currently operating off Bundaberg, Rainbow Beach and Brisbane, the addition of ex-HMAS Tobruk would be the catalyst for a major dive industry
campaign to lure divers from around the country and internationally to experience Queensland’s new dive trail. This could be marketed as a week-long expedition that would add visitor nights and boost the broader economy.

**Military Tourism Trail**

The Wide Bay boasts a proud military history with numerous significant memorials and museums within the region paying homage to the servicemen and women who served our country in the theatre of war.

Bundaberg has a strong linkage to the history of Tobruk with a strong *Rats of Tobruk Association* and a suburb of the city proudly boasting more than 60 street names named after significant places and battles fought in during the Siege of Tobruk.

The Wide Bay region admires and takes pride in celebrating our large current and retired veteran community, with the Maryborough Military and Colonial Museum regarded as the best regional museum in Australia, with more than 7000 items of military and colonial memorabilia. The $11m museum collection includes an original Victoria Cross medal for Gallipoli and two of the five Australian Cross of Valour medals awarded since the inception of the Honours and Awards system in 1975.

The wider region is home to iconic relics and sites. The recent establishment of the community-driven and funded Duncan Chapman Memorial, commemorating the Maryborough man who was first Anzac ashore on the beaches of Gallipoli, is the focal point for the broader Fraser Coast Military Heritage Trail which will link more than 20 sites to form a rich, unique experience spanning 130 years.
The nationally acclaimed $600,000 life-sized bronzed statue of a Light Horse and rider in full charge was erected by the Hervey Bay RSL Sub-Branch in 2015 at Freedom Park. It is proposed an interpretive light and sound show will be established to tell the story of the Light Horse and the Palestine campaign.

Developed in concert with further stages of the Duncan Chapman Memorial, with the aim of a similar sound and light tribute, it would complete the visitor experience of the three main World War I theatres of war for the Anzacs.

The three guns guarding the Mary River in Maryborough were placed in Queen’s Park when Australia was on alert from the Russian threat in the 1890’s and is also an intriguing story that that complements the building military story trail.

Existing and proposed sites for the military track have been identified and are being collated by the Fraser Coast Regional Council to be packaged into a comprehensive visitor experience for tours and school students.

Further examples are:

- Maryborough: Air raid shelters behind the heritage-listed Court House in Queen’s Park. Both are evidence of the import role Maryborough and its airport played in World War II.

- A monument near Wharf Street commemorates the military ships built by Walkers Ltd.

- Chippie Mark IV sculpture: A tribute to Maryborough-born man and army Chaplin Rev. P/B. “Tubby” Clayton, founder of the Toc H soldiers’ and was a Chaplin to four Sovereigns. Chippie IV was his constant companion and the last in a line given to him from the royal kennels.

- Walk of Achievers – plaques leading to the Military Museum honouring several decorated service men.
• Z Special Unit (Z Force) – Operatives in Z Special Unit secretly trained on Fraser Island before daring raids on Japanese shipping.

• The Cenotaph is a striking sculpture of Winged Victory, raising 22 metres, acknowledging the nurses of World War I as well as soldiers, sailors and airmen.

• The Maryborough Airport was chosen as a base for a Wireless Air Gunner School and an Air Navigation School under the World War II Empire Air Training Scheme.

• Afghanistan Memorial - Consideration is being given to honour the service of those veterans who served in Australia’s longest single combat engagement, and now call Hervey Bay home.

• Hervey Bay RSL - Has a well presented military museum that can interchanged items and changing focus. As well as a precinct outside the RSL building which pays honour to the sacrifices of Australian nurses working in theatres of war. The memorial has the names of all the Australian nurses who dies in military conflicts.

• Toogoom RSL – Are focusing on a Vietnam theme portraying the Vietnam conflict from a soldiers’ point of view.

• Maheno Shipwreck - The story of the Maheno and the role it played in World War I after it was converted to a hospital ship and stationed off Gallipoli before running aground on Fraser Island.

• The Tinana U.S. Army Base - was the foundation camp expected to be occupied in late 1943 by about 25,000 US troops of the 27th Division.

• St Paul’s Warriors Chapel – the Church was the Regimental Chapel of the Wide Bay Regiment in World War I and was also the Garrison Church of the 47th Infantry Battalion formed in Maryborough in 1861.

• World War Drill Hall – Is one of only six surviving World War I drill halls in Queensland.

• Wooloonga War Memorial Bridge - Is unique as it is the only brigade erected privately as a war memorial in Australia, possibly the world.

• The Tinana War Memorial, one of the first raised in Australia

• The Indigenous contributions to the wartime service.

Wide Bay Fishing Hall of Fame
The Wide Bay region has been a pioneer of the commercial fishing sector for the past 150 years. From Tin Can Bay to Bundaberg, the abundance, diversity and quality of wild catch seafood has forged the development of a multi-million dollar industry employing hundreds of locals. Generational fishermen and their families are the custodians of a wealth of information about their craft and the way it is plied and processed in local waters.

The first inhabitants of the region have skilfully fished local waters for thousands of years and remain the caretakers to the pristine marine environment we all enjoy today.

From the extensive seagrass beds of the Great Sandy Strait and Hervey Bay, and flows from the creeks of Fraser Island, and on the mainland from the systems of regional rivers like the Mary, Burrum and Isis, we have the perfect environment to support a diverse range of fish, crabs, prawns and marine mammals.

Seafood from the region is caught, processed and sold across the country and internationally recognised as some of the healthiest catch in the world.

For the past decade there has been support to honour this proud history through construction of a Fishing Hall of Fame, paying tribute to the pioneers of the industry as well as educating locals and tourists of the importance of a viable commercial fishing sector and the unique environment of the east coast fishery.

It is time to make this dream a reality and establish the Fishing Hall of Fame in conjunction with the Tobruk Military Museum.

The industry is supportive and willing to contribute historic artefacts and information that will continue to serve generations to come.

With an active trawler and line fishing industry still active, alongside modern seafood processing facilities, this Fishing Hall of Fame would not only embrace the proud history but include tours of the modern facilities that grace the Urangan Marina.

From touring a working trawler and meeting commercial fishermen to helping repair nets and shuck famous Hervey Bay scallops, this would be a unique experience sure to captivate tourists.

The Fishing Hall of Fame could also play a prominent role during the annual Hervey Bay Seafood Festival which draws thousands of visitors to the region to feast on the best wild catch seafood.

**Economic benefit**

With more than 20 military sites in the Wide Bay region, military tourism is well established and growing in popularity as a new generation of Australians crave greater knowledge of their past.

With the preferred location for the museum the Hervey Bay Marina precinct, it would be ideally located nearby the existing Fisherman’s Park which is home to the annual Hervey Bay Seafood Festival which also celebrates the industry, its wild catch and contribution.
The expected revenue to be raised within the first year of operation, based on 25,000 visitors per annum on admission fees alone would generate revenue of $212,000 per annum.

With visitor numbers set to increase in the second year by 3750 (28,750), an increase of 15%, will boost the revenue by $37,411. Generating $249,411 per annum in the second year.

Along with the additional opportunities to sell of tour commissions and merchandise it is estimated, based on visitor numbers that an additional $150,000 per annum will be generated in revenue. This will be an expected increase of $10,000 in the second year.

The direct economic impact for the proposed Tobruk Museum and Fishing Hall of Fame would be $362,000. In the second year of operation it is expected to increase by $47,411 totalling $771,411.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Details *breakdown % of visitors</th>
<th>Estimated Year 1 Value</th>
<th>Estimated Year 2 Value</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>General Administration and School Group Ticket Sales</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>School Groups</td>
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<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Additional Revenue</th>
<th>Merchandise</th>
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<td>Commissions from sales of tour and dives Estimated at 10% per sale. • Based on 5000 divers in the first year at $250 pp per dive. (have not included tours other than dives).</td>
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**Total:** $362,000 $409,411

This economic return could be doubled or trebled as the military trail expands and is marketed, making the Wide Bay an identified military tourism region.

The potential for the museum to house a visitor information centre would also be a practical addition to the venue. In addition, it would be a viable option to establish a Friend of the Museum volunteer group consisting of ex-service men and women who served on HMAS Tobruk as well as ex-service personnel from the navy and retired commercial fishermen to conduct tours of the museum and marina showcasing the history within the venue and marina.
Ticketing Fee Cost Comparison

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*(Australian full time student card, ISIC - International Student Card, Australian or New Zealand Senior, Australian Pensioner)*

Estimated cost

There have been commercial in confidence conversations with a generous benefactor who would consider donating a parcel of prime land in the marina precinct for such a museum.

It is estimated that the cost to construct and fit out a 600-700sqm facility would be around $4 million complete with interactive displays.

The commercial fishing industry has indicated its support through donation of memorabilia and historic information to also be included.

More detailed architectural designs and costings will be confirmed in time as momentum and awareness for the proposal builds.

Initial conversations and support has been sort from local, state and federal government politicians and the commercial fishing industry on the Fraser Coast.

For further information please contact Regional Development Australia Wide Bay Burnett Executive Officer Scott Rowe on 0429 881 697.
The most grievous loss suffered by the Royal Australian Navy occurred on 19 November 1941, when the cruiser HMAS Sydney was lost in action with the German auxiliary cruiser Kormoran off the Western Australian coast. None of the Sydney's complement of 645 men survived. The Kormoran was also sunk in the action.

On 17 March 2008 the Australian Government announced that the wreckage of both HMAS Sydney and the German raider Kormoran had been found, approximately 112 nautical miles off Steep Point, Western Australia. Kormoran is lying at a depth of 2,560 metres; Sydney, approximately 12 nautical miles away, is at 2,470 metres.

The magnificent HMAS Sydney II memorial, completed in 2001, has become the country's premier site for honouring the 645 Australian sailors who were lost off the Western Australian coast during a World War II battle with German raider HSK Kormoran. The location of both wrecks remained a mystery for over 66 years until they were located in March 2008 by the Finding Sydney Foundation.
Dedication
The Memorial was dedicated on the 18th November 2001 and the Eternal Flame was lit on the 19th November 2001, 60 years to the day after the tragic loss.

Declared a National Memorial
On the 21st May 2009, The Australian Government announced that the HMAS Sydney II Memorial in Geraldton, Western Australia, had been recognised as a National Memorial.

Tour Guides
The Geraldton Voluntary Tour Guide Association (GVTGA) has been operating since 2005 and started with a small band of volunteers, who began guided tours of the HMAS Sydney II Memorial twice per week. The organisation has now grown to 25 voluntary tour guides who operate daily tours of the Memorial commencing at 10.30am from the Memorial site. Entry is free and open to the public 24/7. A gold coin donation is welcomed.
The Australian National Maritime Museum

What we Do

The Australian National Maritime Museum is Australia’s national centre for maritime collections, exhibitions, research and archaeology. As Sydney’s most visible national cultural institution, we are committed to connecting audiences right across Australia in both urban and regional areas.

From our base, the museum presents a changing program of stimulating exhibitions and events to share Australia’s maritime history and connect the stories, objects, people and places that are part of our country’s narrative. We welcome over 520,000 visitors annually including families and interstate and international tourists. Over 10,000 members support the museum and regularly interact with special events and activities designed to connect our audiences in meaningful and thought-provoking ways.

Custodians of Floating Historical Vessels

The museum has one of the largest floating historical vessel collections in the world, featuring the renowned replica of Captain Cook’s HMB Endeavour, the former Navy destroyer HMAS Vampire, the former Navy patrol boat HMAS Advance and former Navy submarine HMAS Onslow. Docked at our wharves, visitors can climb aboard to explore life at sea.
Exhibitions and Permanent Galleries

Our permanent and temporary exhibitions and our National Maritime Collection explore and represent Australia’s close links to the sea covering Indigenous Australian’s deep connection to ocean, early exploration, immigration, commerce, defence, adventure, sport, play and identity. From fascinating artefacts, thought-provoking exhibitions and fun activities for kids (and big kids), the museum gives local and international visitors a chance to connect to Australia’s maritime past and present in an innovative way.

Educating School and University Students

The museum offers over 30 workshops and tours across a number of curriculum areas. Run by qualified and experienced teacher guides, sessions are imaginative and hands-on and suitable for students from year one to university level. Remote and regional schools can attend via the latest digital technology. See schools & educators.

Cost

- Adult $32
- Child (under 4) FREE
- Child (4–15) $20
- Family $79 (includes 2 adults and up to 3 children aged 4-15)
- Concession, $20 (Australian full time student card, ISIC - International Student Card, Australian or New Zealand Senior, Australian Pensioner)