

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice

Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio

Budget Estimates, May 2011

Program: Division or Agency: 5: SHFT

Question No: 132

Topic: North Fort complex at North
Head

Proof Hansard Page and Date 14 (24/5/11)
or Written Question:

Senator Birmingham asked:

Mr Bailey: It has very grand views back to the city. It is a slightly sloping site that slopes away from the road, and it has a number of rather prosaic unattractive sheds and developments from Defence use. The plans are to do a general tidy-up, remove some of the more unsympathetic additions that are there, re-landscape the area and improve the availability of car parking and basic human services—toilets and those sorts of things. But beyond that there is no major plans other than to have it open as it is now to the public at all times.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Do you have any estimate in terms of the built footprint of the site as to how much that will be reduced by in terms of getting rid of those unattractive sheds?

Mr Bailey: I do not have an estimate, although I can get back to you on that.

Answer:

The Trust's Management Plan for the site states that the intrusive recent additions "may be altered or removed to fit more sympathetically with the heritage values of North Fort, take advantage of views, make the site more welcoming and provide uses that encourage greater public access and appreciation of the site". The Trust proposes to address this in the following manner:

Demolish the front wall of the largest and most visible shed directly in the line of sight from the main entry. The building will have a new glazed front, a verandah and landscaping with locally sourced native vegetation.

The other five sheds will have verandahs, pergolas, landscaping and large openings.

Recently added internal partition walls and blocked-in windows of the brick heritage buildings will be demolished.

There would be no net loss of area. The visual and physical access between inside and outside will be improved, the visual impact of intrusive elements will be reduced and space will be available for workshops, teaching, exhibition and demonstration areas associated with the site's natural and military heritage.

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Question No: 133

Topic: Trust website

Proof Hansard Page and Date 15 (24/5/11)
or Written Question:

Senator Cameron asked:

CHAIR: Thanks. Mr Bailey, I am just having a look at your website trying to find what you say about the industrial heritage of Cockatoo Island and, certainly, the role of the trade union movement at Cockatoo Island, which was very influential and very important. I cannot see any of that in the sheets that go out to teachers and stuff. Or am I not just finding it?

Mr Bailey: I confess that it has been a while since I have looked at that aspect of our website, so I will need to check. ...

CHAIR: 'Interesting' is an understatement for Cockatoo Island. It was a key area of industrial activity in improving workers' rights—not only at Cockatoo but throughout the Sydney area. You can take this on notice: could you pool together a sort of mud map of how the industrial and trade union history of the island is remembered, and let me know why you cannot find it quickly when you go on the website, because it is a key part of Cockatoo Island. Thanks, Mr Bailey.

Answer:

The industrial and trade union history of Cockatoo Island is recognised in a number of the Trust's programs and publications.

Tours

- The Trust's general guided tour of the island covers both its convict and industrial history; the shipbuilding/engineering tour focuses on the machinery and equipment used in industrial workshops such as the turbine shop and the powerhouse.
- The audio tour of the island has a section on the many unions that worked on Cockatoo Island and excerpts from oral history interviews.

Publications

- *The Story of Cockatoo Island* is an illustrated summary history of the island including the history of shipbuilding and repair.
- *The Boys from Cockatoo: the paintings and drawings of Bill Nix* is a book of reproductions of paintings by former Cockatoo Island worker, Bill Nix, who worked on the island for ten years from the mid 1960s. This book is in pre-production.

Industrial Restoration

- The Trust's volunteer restoration team has refurbished a number of industrial artefacts including a nineteenth century steam crane, a gantry crane and ship's launch.

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Oral History

- The Trust has interviewed some 70 former Cockatoo Island workers including union officials. The interviews touch on subjects as diverse as apprentice training, the many trades on the island, industrial disputes, demarcation issues, ships built and working conditions.

Education

- The industrial life of Cockatoo Island is covered in the Trust's education program for schools, specifically the senior history site study program which is aligned to the NSW history syllabus. Resource material is provided to schools when they book excursions.

Websites

- The Trust's websites (Harbour Trust and Cockatoo Island) promote Cockatoo Island tours and educational excursions. The Cockatoo Island site (www.cockatooisland.gov.au) also contains a number of oral histories as audio files.
- The websites do not explicitly signpost the trade union history of the island.

Plans

- The Trust's comprehensive plan and management plan acknowledge the industrial history of the island and the importance of this heritage in interpretive programs and products

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Question No: 134

Topic: Trust volunteers

Proof Hansard Page and Date 15 and 16 (24/5/11)
or Written Question:

Senator Birmingham asked:

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Mr Bailey, you rely a lot on volunteers to assist with the tours in the different sites where you offer those tour services—is that right?

Mr Bailey: Yes.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Are they almost exclusively volunteers?

Mr Bailey: Almost exclusively. We have a small number of paid guides, but that dates from a period in the trust's life when we wanted to get the sites open. For occupational health and safety reasons, we could not just open the gates, so in places like Cockatoo we needed guides who could do cardiac massage and whatever else was necessary, given that it is an island. Now, whilst we still have some guides, we do rely almost exclusively on volunteers, many of whom have a historical connection with the site. You asked about North Fort. The majority of the Army volunteers who were working and giving tours at North Fort have now transferred to the trust and have become, officially, trust volunteers and they work in our volunteer program.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Do you have an estimate as to how many volunteers are involved?

Mr Bailey: All together we have—I can give you an exact number when I go back to the office—around 230 or 240 at moment.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Please provide that on notice. ...

Answer:

The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (SHFT) has a total of 204 volunteers. Roles undertaken by the volunteers include:

- The provision of visitor services providing information and assistance to visitors to SHFT Visitor Centres at North Head and Cockatoo Island
- Heritage Restoration on Cockatoo Island and North Fort
- Guides for tours at Headland Park, North Head and Macquarie Lighthouse
- Gardening
- Speakers (eg Rotary groups)
- North Head Sanctuary Nursery
- Oral History
- Administration
- Events (all volunteers are invited to participate as events occur)

Many volunteers cover several roles.

In regard to North Fort volunteers specifically, 37 have joined the SHFT volunteer program as Heritage restoration volunteers, North Fort and/or guides, North Fort.

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Question No: 135

Topic: Volunteers and Aboriginal values of Trust lands

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written
or Written Question:

Senator Brown asked:

1. Given much of the work by the Trust is delivered by volunteers, including regeneration, propagation and replanting of native vegetation on iconic sites such as North Head:
 - a) How does the Trust report on the outcomes of such volunteer efforts, and in particular what value is being attributed to those outcomes?
 - b) How is the Trust showing appreciation for such efforts in long term partnership arrangements and cooperative planning approaches for their properties?
2. How much investment is the Trust making in improving appreciation and understanding of Aboriginal cultural and natural values of the Trust lands?

Answer:

- 1a) The Trust reports on the outcomes of volunteer efforts in the following manner:
 - Volunteer projects and achievements are reported in the Harbour Trust Annual Report and regular reports to the Harbour Trust board.
 - Major volunteer achievements, the completion of projects etc are reported to all Trust staff often with a celebration of the achievement, for example the recent completion by volunteers of a heritage steam crane project.
 - The entire volunteer group is kept informed of their colleagues' achievements even if they are not in that particular group by means of email and newsletters.
 - The value of the volunteer achievements cannot be over stated. Without them the Trust could not run visitor centres, restore heritage equipment, reinstate gardens or native flora, or hold various events all of which takes place at both Cockatoo Island & North Head. The Trust could not run tours at Macquarie Lighthouse, North Head (including North Fort) or Headland Park. Volunteer speakers reach over 5000 direct audience members per year, which often results in direct visits to Trust sites and of course word of mouth about the Harbour Trust to others which is invaluable.
- 1b) The Trust shows appreciation to the Volunteer group in many ways. These include:
 - Volunteers have personal contact with the Volunteer Manager as well as support from the Trust executive.

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- All volunteers are invited to information sessions about the latest Trust projects and plans held on a monthly basis. The Volunteer Manager or relevant Trust staff present information and volunteers are given the opportunity for input. As the result of a recent volunteer suggestion at one such session, the historic 3rd Cemetery at North Head was opened up to the public and has recently been restored.
- Volunteers are also included in the annual Trust Christmas celebration and two social functions a year. Various sessions also give the volunteers the opportunity to bring a friend or partner so they too can also be involved.
- Volunteers are provided with “rewards” such as the opportunity to complete training courses and a discount on Trust accommodation on Cockatoo Island and Headland Park.
- In 2010 a Trust volunteer survey was conducted with 91 per cent of respondents having a very good or excellent job satisfaction, suggesting that the program is rewarding for the vast majority of participants.
- In addition to general suggestions, volunteers in various groups are instrumental in forming their own work plans. This is particularly relevant to the heriatge restoration programs at both Cockatoo Island & North Head and the gardening programs at both Cockatoo Island & North Head. This is also the case with the Nursery at the North Head Sanctuary which, in partnership with the Trust, is working towards the native flora regeneration at North Head Sanctuary. The volunteers have the experience and knowledge in both of these areas, their input is greatly valued by the Trust.
- 2012 marks the 10 year anniversary of the Volunteer program. Twenty five per cent of volunteers having been with the Trust for 5-10 years. A celebration will be held to mark this significant occasion.

2. The Trust has undertaken the following initiatives to expand on the community's appreciation of the Aboriginal heritage values of its sites:

- Aboriginal heritage and archaeological study of the Mosman peninsula with the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Metropolitan Land Council and Mosman Council in 2004 and 2006. This study was undertaken by the Australian Museum Business Services .
- Exhibition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island service in the armed forces (NAIDOC event): Headland Park and North Head Sanctuary.
- Contemporary Aboriginal art exhibition (NAIDOC event): Headland Park.
- Published *The Story of Bungaree*, an illustrated history of a Bungaree, a prominent Aborigine in the early years of Sydney.
- Exhibition on the life of Bungaree (NAIDOC event): Headland Park.
- Exhibition of Photographs of Herbert Basedow: Cockatoo Island from 4 June to 31 July 2011 in association with the National Museum of Australia.
- *Sitelines*, a book of essays on Sydney Harbour, by Aboriginal historian Gordon Briscoe.
- Additional NAIDOC activities: performances and aboriginal heritage tours.

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Question No: 136

Topic: Trust Board

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written
or Written Question:

Senator Fisher asked:

How many Trust Board members have been appointed? Please list the members who have been appointed and when each appointment was made.

Answer:

Six Trust Board members were appointed on 24 May 2011. They were:

- Mr John Conde AO
- Ms Anthea Tinney
- Cr Eugenia McCaffery
- Dr Elsie Heiss
- Mr Rohan Jeffs
- The Hon Leo McLeay