

## WELCOME TO THE PORT HERITAGE TRAIL

### BUILDING A PORT – GROWING A CITY

From the first timber wharves on the banks of the Yarra River to major engineering projects like the construction of the Coode Canal and Swanson Dock, the establishment, development and continuing growth of the Port of Melbourne is integral to the story of the city.

The Port Heritage Trail establishes a link between significant heritage sites and structures located around the port precinct by placing easily identifiable markers at historically significant locations in the shared spaces that surround the port.

Following well-established shared use path routes from Station Pier in Port Melbourne, through West Melbourne and Footscray, to Point Gellibrand in Williamstown, the Port Heritage Trail includes sites which are listed as significant heritage assets on the Victorian Heritage Register.

Each site marker contains information and historical images, enabling visitors to explore the rich history of the Port of Melbourne as they walk or cycle along existing trail networks.

## THE PORT OF MELBOURNE TODAY

For over 150 years the Port of Melbourne has had a longstanding relationship with its surrounding communities in delivering economic benefits to Victoria.

In addition to its role as the custodian of many important maritime heritage assets throughout the port precinct, Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC) is the owner and manager of the Port of Melbourne, Australia's largest general cargo and container port, handling around 36% of the nation's container trade.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

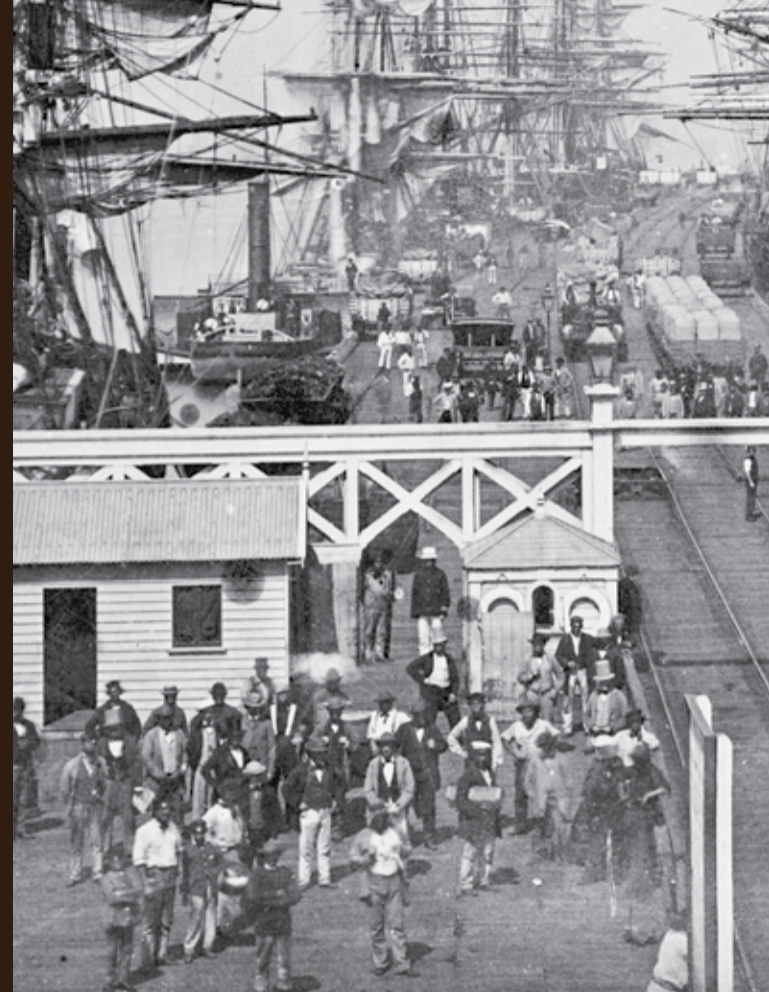
For more information about Australia's largest general cargo and container port please visit [www.portofmelbourne.com](http://www.portofmelbourne.com) or call 1300 857 662.



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# PORT HERITAGE TRAIL

LINKING MELBOURNE'S MARITIME HERITAGE



### 1. POINT GELLIBRAND

In 1843 Melbourne Town Council requested a survey of the Yarra River in the knowledge that 'all the needs of a growing population (then nearing 20,000) had to be brought up that river'. Construction of the Point Gellibrand Railway Pier in 1859 partly met this need, but direct access to Melbourne ports was still required and eventually, in 1879, work began on the Coode Canal.

### 2. RIVERSIDE PARK

The timber wharves of the Melbourne Harbor Trust were located upstream on the opposite bank of the Yarra River. Slightly downstream from this location is the former main steam ferry route, an important link between Melbourne and Williamstown.

From this location, Webb Dock, the key mainland terminal for Tasmanian trade, is clearly visible across the river.

### 3. SPOTSWOOD

Continue along the Heritage Trail to discover more about the history, development and current operations of the Port of Melbourne.

### 4. STONY CREEK

The Stony Creek Backwash came under Melbourne Harbor Trust control in 1878. Many changes to the site followed, including the construction of retaining walls and 26 acres of land reclamation. The remnant timber and concrete structures visible in this area may have served as rudimentary wharves where ships were loaded with bluestone from quarries along Stony Creek.

### 5. FRANCIS STREET

By 1875 a number of factories had been erected on this stretch of the Yarra River, which was used extensively to deliver supplies. Many factories had their own wharves until the 1880s, when the Melbourne Harbor Trust assumed responsibility for all port berthing facilities and constructed a single wharf extending from Francis Street to Somerville Road.

### 6. WHITEHALL STREET

Between 1870 and 2000, this site on the riverfront at Yarraville was occupied by chemical manufacturing plants and extensively redeveloped over several decades. The timber used for Port Heritage Trail markers were salvaged from one of the larger sheds at this site.

### 7. FOOTSCRAY WHARF

After assuming responsibility for all port berthing facilities in the 1880s, the Melbourne Harbor Trust replaced existing wharves in this area with a continuous wharf structure. This new wharf serviced waterfront factories but was also used for unloading general cargo. In 1917 a railway line was installed parallel to the river and the tracks remain alongside the road.

### 8. CONFLUENCE OF RIVERS

This is the point where the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers once met prior to the construction of the Coode Canal.

The Yarra River was relatively shallow and difficult for large ships to navigate. In 1879, the Melbourne Harbor Trust appointed English engineer John Coode to devise a plan to create a shorter, straighter canal directly linking Melbourne's docks by altering the natural course of the Yarra River.

A major civil engineering project of its time, the Coode Canal – 800 metres long, 100 metres wide and 25 metres deep – opened in 1886, creating a new water way which curved away to the east and vastly improved river access to Melbourne.

### 9. MOONEE PONDS CREEK

In 1889, the Melbourne Harbor Trust approved the construction of the Railway Coal Canal which linked Moonee Ponds Creek with Coode Canal, enabling coal to be delivered to the Victorian Railway coal depot by barges. The current course of the creek is adjacent to Victoria Dock, which opened in 1893 as the largest single dock in the world.

### 10. ROTTEN ROW

The potential fire hazard associated with the stockpiling of timber for wharves and piles saw the Melbourne Harbor Trust commission the construction of six jetties and 335 metres of wharf frontage at this site in 1889.

The timber industry collapsed a short time later and this area became known as "Rotten Row" or "Siberia"; a mooring place for derelict ships. Today, remnant timber piles are all that remain.

### 11. WESTGATE PARK

In the early 1850s, a car ferry service was established between Port Melbourne and Williamstown to avoid the lengthy overland journey between the two settlements.

The western end of Williamstown Road, on the Port Melbourne side of the river, marks the location of the last ferry service, operated by the City of Williamstown between 1873 and 1974. The completion of the Westgate Bridge in 1978 made the service obsolete.

### 12. STATION PIER

In 1852 the Melbourne and Hobsons Bay Railway Co. proposed to build a pier at Sandridge (Port Melbourne) connected by railway line to a terminus in Melbourne. Known as Railway Pier, the structure was opened on 12 September 1854.

The rail company was sold to the Victorian Railways in 1978 and management of the pier passed to the Melbourne Harbor Trust in 1913.



# PORT HERITAGE TRAIL

LINKING MELBOURNE'S MARITIME HERITAGE



Yarraville

Spotswood



Newport



Williamstown

500m



**ROAD**  
—

**TRAIL**  
—

**UNMARKED TRAIL**  
|||||

1. POINT GELLIBRAND
2. RIVERSIDE PARK
3. SPOTSWOOD
4. STONY CREEK
5. FRANCIS STREET
6. WHITEHALL STREET
7. FOOTSCRAY WHARF
8. CONFLUENCE OF RIVERS
9. MOONEE PONDS CREEK
10. ROTTEN ROW
11. WESTGATE PARK
12. STATION PIER

