

Custodians of the Bay

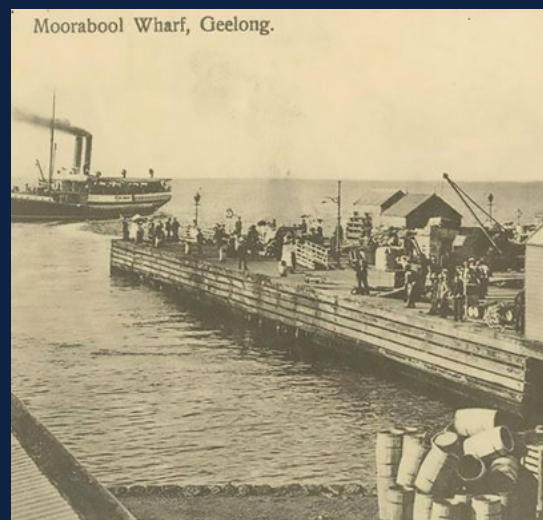
A BRIEF HISTORY OF GEELONG PORT



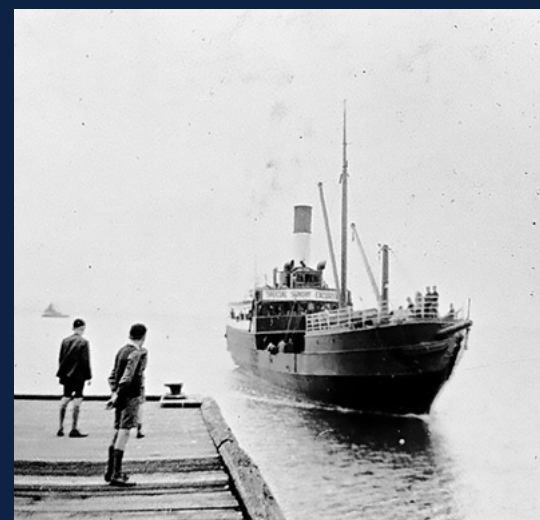
GEEELONG

AUSTRALIA

**VAST
INDUSTRIAL
POTENTIAL!**



Moorabool Wharf, Geelong.



Foreword

Hon. Richard Marles MP

The Port of Geelong has played a crucial role in the development of Geelong and defines our industrial identity. The Port is the literal reason why Geelong is where it is.

Since the creation of the first shipping channel in Corio Bay in 1853, spurred on by our proximity to the Ballarat goldfields, disembarking at the Port of Geelong became a rite of passage for those looking to make their fortune and export new-found wealth to the world.

When Australian prosperity rode on the back of the sheep, the Port of Geelong was the principal gateway through which Australian wool was exported to the world and Geelong earned its reputation for quality.

The Port is the backbone of our city; Geelong's north is driven by the activity of the Port; we have land, an airport, national rail and Highway One all within a few kilometers and the work of GeelongPort means that it is primed for future growth and success.

More than 25 percent of Victoria's overseas exports are currently being handled at the Port and that share is set to grow as the Australian economy further integrates with an increasingly globalised world.

GeelongPort has indicated that 3,100 indirect jobs will be generated in the coming years as it aims to expand to the point where it manages more than 600 vessels docking in the Port every year. Our historic Port is set to be at the centre of Geelong and Australia's industrial future.

This book tells of the hardships and successes in our Port's 150 year history, but also of the City and Bay's resilience and enduring strength. CEO Brett Winter and his team are custodians of the key to Geelong's past and future development.

I am so pleased that GeelongPort have undertaken this endeavour to promote our proud history with passion and I am sure they will bring those qualities to the exciting opportunities ahead.



Hon Richard Marles MP
Federal Member for Corio



Brett Winter

For over 150 years the Port of Geelong has been an integral part of the economic and social fabric of our community and landscape. We have, and continue to provide, trade access for several major industries in the Geelong area and beyond and serve as a base for bulk commodity imports and exports for Victoria.

Without our port, Geelong would not be the great city it is today. The Port provides an economic impact of \$489 million to Victoria's economy and handles over a quarter of our overseas exports.

However, a port like Geelong did not come together overnight. It is the culmination of over a century of vision, focus and dedication. Its story is also the story of Geelong and the region – of proud hard working men and women that saw opportunity for future prosperity and built a port that created a foundation for us to achieve it.

Through the trade that has been handled in our port, produce and products from our region have been sent all around the world and as our future becomes even more globalised, ports will continue to hold an important place in connecting our economy to new and emerging markets.

We recognise the tremendous debt we owe to those that came before us – the hundreds of men and women that have created, over the last century, a port we can all be proud of.

This book sets out to tell the story of how a small channel of only 23ft (7.1 meters) became one of the main ports in Australia and an economic powerhouse for our city.

This story includes the good times and the tough. However, the one theme that is spread throughout is that of modernisation and foresight.

My sincere thanks to everyone that contributed to the book. Many archival photos and stories have been donated over the years, which shows the commitment of many to preserve and maintain our history. We hope this book brings much of that together.

I'm deeply proud to lead an organisation such as ours. We're at an exciting time in our history as our operations continue to expand to cater to future opportunities and growth. Here's to the next one hundred years!

Brett Winter
CEO, GeelongPort
February 2018



Geological and Indigenous History

Corio Bay is part of a sunkland that was once dry land. The sunkland was drained by a river system which formerly cut through the middle of Port Phillip via a deep valley cut in Pleistocene dunes at Port Phillip Head.

18,000 years ago the sea level rose when the polar ice caps and sheets of ice in Tasmania and the Australian Alps melted. The melted ice submerged the system of rivers that originally flowed into Bass Strait, filling the bay floor with a deep layer of mud and sediment, creating the shallow and flat Corio Bay.

When the sea level peaked around 6,000 years ago, the topographical contours of Corio Bay were created. The water level has been receding ever since at the rate of five centimetres per century.

Prior to western settlement, the land was home to the Wadawurrung people. The land extended along the coast from Painkalac Creek at Aireys Inlet east into Port Phillip Bay to the Werribee River. It extended as far north as Fiery and Mt Emu creeks. The Wadawurrung people, Geelong's first residents, called the Bay 'Jillong' and the land surrounding it 'Corayo'.



Corio Bay 1800s



1830's

The post-European settlement history of Geelong and its port began in April 1836. A small vessel, the 'Francis Freeling', discharged a number of sheep belonging to Joseph Sutherland at Point Henry. There was no wharf at Point Henry or Geelong at this point and the cattle and sheep were offloaded from the boat directly. Whatever sheep survived were later moved to the Bannockburn area.

In the 1830's there was a sandbar between Point Henry and Point Lillias which meant only small ships (with drafts less than 3 metres) could go directly into the bay, while bigger ships had to anchor beyond the sandbar and unload cargo via smaller ships known as lighters. At low tide, it was possible to walk across this sandbar from one side of the bay to the other.

In 1838 The first Customs House was built; it was small, wooden and had a thatched roof and was used until 1845, when a permanent stone customs house was erected. The first Customs House is now located in the Botanic Gardens in East Geelong, and is claimed to be the oldest authenticated building still in existence in Victoria.

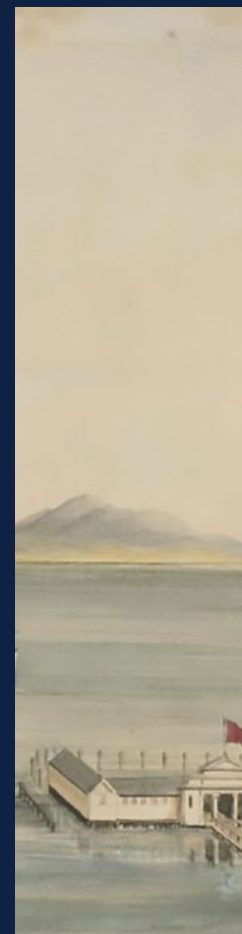
On the 26th of October 1838, the township of Geelong was formed by proclamation of the Governor of New South Wales Sir Edward Deas Thomson. The Township of Geelong therefore pre-dates the establishment of the Colony of Victoria, which was proclaimed in 1851.

1840's

In 1840, construction commenced on the stone approach to the Queen's ('Stony') Jetty. The breakwater was built by 20 convicts sent down from Sydney by Governor Sir. George Gipps. Later that year, bay service between Geelong and Melbourne was established by the schooner Charlotte. The charge was £1 per trip and took two days and two nights.

The construction of Queen's Jetty along with the commencement of Point Henry Jetty in 1842 eventually led to Geelong being declared a free-warehousing port in 1848. The declaration was significant because it meant that imports no longer had to clear customs at Melbourne before sailing to Corio Bay. The jetty was extended by 70ft in 1847 and the wharf extended to 300ft in 1849 as maritime traffic rose.

By 1841, there were 70 houses in Geelong (10 brick and 60 wood) and the population was 454 – 304 males and 150 females. As the population surged, the need for a permanent customs house was apparent. Four years later, the second Customs House was built by Mr Alexander Sutherland from Melbourne. It was a two storey stone building built opposite Stony Jetty.



1850's

At the beginning of the decade, the schooner Clarence, outward bound from Melbourne to Hobart with a cargo of sheep went aground off Indented Head. The sheep and four men from Geelong were landed safely by the crew, but the vessel was a total wreck and was sold for £50.

By 1851, the population of Geelong had grown to 8,291, but the discovery of gold in Ballarat created an exodus inland, and the population of the township fell to 2,850.

In 1852, £32,000 worth of gold was stolen from a ship in Hobson's Bay while travelling between Geelong and Melbourne by a group of 20 armed bush rangers in what became known as the 'Nelson Gold Robbery'.

Such was the hysteria surrounding the gold rush in Ballarat that dozens of ships were deserted by their crews, lured away by stories of fortunes made on the goldfields. A year after gold was discovered, no fewer than 496 sailors had left ships in Corio Bay.

In 1853 the Melbourne–Geelong Railway Company commenced construction of the railway between the two principal towns of the Colony. An inauguration fête was held near the bay which was attended by thousands. It was described as 'an important link in the extensive system connecting the capitals of Australian colonies'.

By 1854, the gold rush had accentuated the need for a better entrance to the port, particularly as Geelong became an official port for the exportation of gold that year. The beginnings of what is now known as the North Channel were surveyed and then later deepened to 13ft (3.9m). Later that year, a telegraph line was laid between Melbourne and Geelong, and the old Customs House was loaned to the Telegraph office.

The Melbourne and Geelong Railway Company completed Railway Pier (later renamed Cunningham Pier) in 1855 at a cost of £96,941 (\$7,388,662 in 2016). The railway siding was used to supply coal to the Geelong train station, and was built at the same time as the original Railway Pier. Two years later, the Geelong to Melbourne Railway opened.



Prior to 1860, the bay wharves were lit with kerosene lamps, but in that year a contract was entered into with the Geelong Gas Company for them to be lit with gas.

In 1862, another cut known as the South Channel was made and Moorabool Wharf was completed at a length of 380ft (115m), a width of 54ft (16m) and a depth of 9ft (2.7m). Boasting four wharves, the Port of Geelong had become the ideal place for gold miners to disembark, as it avoided travel through Melbourne, and was closer to the goldfields at Ballarat.

1870's–1880's

By 1881, the Port of Geelong had become a fully-fledged commercial port and required deeper channels to handle larger ships. Previous attempts (which started as early as 1853) to dredge a channel in Corio Bay had been frustrated by frequent siltation. After a proposal by British engineer, Sir John Coode, construction began on the Hopetoun Channel, which is still in use today.



1890's

On the 20th of December 1893, Geelong celebrated the opening of the new Hopetoun shipping channel in Corio Bay. It was opened by His Excellency the Governor of Victoria, John Hope, Earl of Hopetoun. The channel, with a minimum depth of 23ft (7.1 meters), and navigable width of 130ft (39.6m) was lit day and night leading to far more efficient maritime traffic.

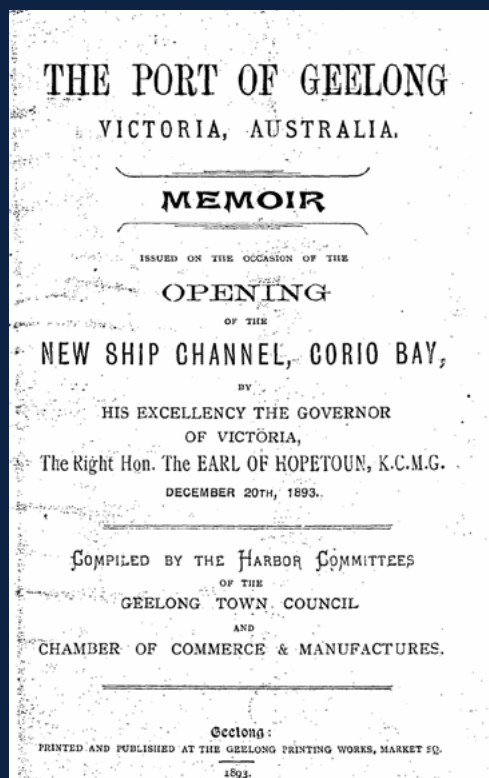
The opening was a major event for Geelong and dominated the front page of the paper with a feature piece on the 'history of the undertaking' for the project to be actualised, as well as stories regarding which dignitaries were present. A toast was proposed to 'Her Majesty's Ministers and Parliament of Victoria' with many responding with eloquent speeches.

The News of the World reported:

'This day had been long looked forward to by the community of the town, as well as by the people of the Western district. Years ago many of those present feared they would never live to see the day when the opening up of direct communication with the port would be an accomplished fact. He (parliamentary representative the Hon. S. Austin M.L.C.) was proud that the work had been completed and the ceremonial opening of the channel had brought together such a large gathering eager to share in its celebration.'

— The News of the World, 20th December, 1893.

Victoria's unpopular 11th Premier, Sir Graham Berry, who had been the former representative for Geelong, received a mixed reception and said he had always desired to bring about the event they were celebrating with much enthusiasm.



1900's

From 1854, endeavours were made by various public committees of Geelong to have a local port authority installed. By the turn of the 20th century, Geelong was a major agricultural trading port for the pastoral runs of Victoria's western district. The increase in maritime traffic and even larger vessels visiting the port meant that the facilities at the old Geelong waterfront were fast becoming inadequate. In a single day in 1904, six vessels entered Corio Bay, creating a record for the Port, and triggering considerable interest for the district.

Meanwhile, Melbourne was growing so rapidly at the time that there were widespread fears in Victoria that regional industries in towns like Geelong were at risk of extinction. The sentiment led to calls for decentralisation by the Government, and the Premier Sir Thomas Bent recognised that Geelong Harbour presented as a good opportunity to inject wealth into the area. In March 1905, the Premier made an official visit to Geelong and in September that year, Parliament authorised the purchase of 196 acres at North Shore.

A bill to establish a port trust was introduced to Parliament on the 4th of October 1905. The Port Authority was installed via proclamation as an Act on 12th December of that year and control of the land was officially handed over to the Geelong Harbour Trust.

The first commissioners Mr. G.E. Holden (Chairman), Mr. E. H. Lascelles, and Mr. A. P. McMillan, were appointed on the 19th of December.

After one year of operation, 193,723 tonne of imports and 204,365 tonne of exports had flowed through the Port of Geelong, creating gross revenue of £13,440 (\$1,942,038 in 2016).

In 1909, an amendment to the initial Trust Act was passed legalising the conduct of farming, slaughtering and freezing by the Trust, as well as the power to collect shipping rates. Construction commenced in February 1909 on the Corio Freezing Works near Corio Quay South. By the end of the year 39,354 carcasses had been treated.





PORT OF GEELONG, 1906.



1910's

Geelong was declared a city on the 8th December 1910 and just prior, the first head office of the Geelong Harbour Trust was purchased at Brougham Place. As trade increased, the Trust purchased more land at North Shore hoping to attract port related industries.

Deepening and widening of the Hopetoun Channel had occurred from 1907 onwards. By 1912, 6,251ft of the required 15,005ft had been deepened to the desired 220ft width and 29ft depth, which was well below the expectations of the Government. A Royal Commission was conducted into the Geelong Harbour Trust later that year.

In their own submissions, the Trust Commissioners made the case for a single Port Phillip Bay Authority, arguing that revenue at Geelong was insufficient to cover the future works required at Corio Bay and that administration could be handled by one body overseeing the consolidated revenue from both Melbourne and Geelong. Alternatively, they proposed that 1/5th of the revenue generated by the Port of Melbourne be redistributed for the continued expansion of the Port of Geelong. The Committee of Public Accounts disagreed with this position because it contradicted the Government's decentralisation policy.

In 1916, the first interstate conference of the Port and Harbour Authorities was held at the office of the Melbourne Harbor Trust. Among the matters discussed was the recommendation to use 'tonnage rates' as a unified term, which would apply to the basic charge for vessels berthed.

In the years of the Great War (1914-1918), expansion of the port continued and the Trust was empowered to borrow £50,000 (\$5 million in 2016) from the State Government to continue this expansion. Prior to the war, the Trust had been importing timber from Vladivostok in Russia. Ships would anchor in the quay and discharge the logs directly into the water where they were then towed into a purpose built log pond. The Great War and the Russian Revolution halted the novel timber trade.

Among the many who enlisted to fight in the Great War, R.T. Williams, who was an engineer and Acting Secretary of the Harbour Trust, enlisted in the 1st Australian Imperial Force in 1916, returning in 1919.







1920's

In 1921, a report by the Committee of Public Accounts ordered by the Victorian Legislative Assembly was released. The Committee were tasked with reviewing the performance of the Geelong Harbour Trust after the Royal Commission of 1912. The report was damning, painting a picture of financial mismanagement, neglect of dredging operations, and 'other unbusinesslike transactions'.

In 1925, The Harbour Trust sold 100 acres of land to the Ford Motor Company at £200 per acre (\$16,000 in 2016), and agreed to provide a public wharf – known as Corio Quay North. 4231 tonnes of car parts in five loads passed through that year. The first Ford Model A cars produced in Geelong were distributed in mid-1928.

Just three years after Ford arrived in Geelong, the Shell Company selected the old Oriental Timber Company site at Corio Quay South for a bulk terminal, which opened on the 24th of January 1930.

Lascelles Wharf was completed at a length of 350ft long and 43ft wide.

The reconstruction of Railway Pier (later renamed Cunningham Pier) was completed in 1929 at a cost of £96,941 (\$7,388,662 in 2016). The new pier was 1,072ft long and 89ft wide. In the same year, Distillers' Corporation opens a whisky distillery in Corio, which by the 1960's would become the largest whisky distillery in the southern hemisphere.





The steamboat Edina leaving Geelong on its final journey on 21 June 1938.



1930's

In 1933, a ministerial inquiry into the Geelong Harbour Trust was conducted by the Minister for Public Works and the Minister for Water Supply to look at the rehabilitation of the Trust. At the time, the Trust was under considerable financial stress and there were strong accusations of mismanagement against the appointed commissioners. The inquiry eventually led to the dismissal of the Geelong Harbour Trust Commissioners and the appointment of long term Chairman of Commissioners, J. Spencer Nall.

The following year, all berths were provisioned with telephone installations, which vastly improved port communication.

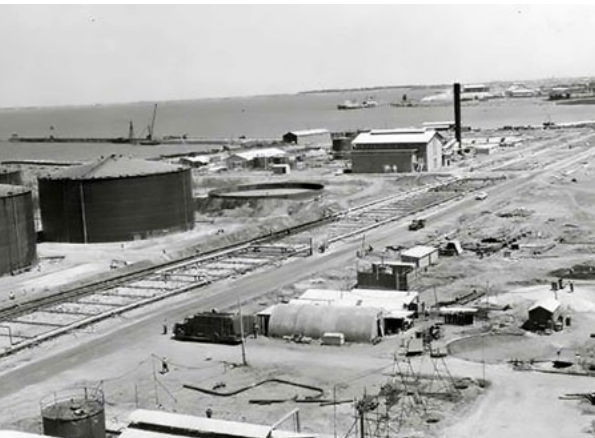
Progress with the new commissioners at the helm was significant. In 1936, the Grain Elevators Board terminal opened and a year later, the deepening of the approaches was all but complete. The desired depth of 29ft (8.8m) and a minimum width of 300ft (91.4m) was reached, with the exception of parts of the Hopetoun Channel, which would reach this target in 1939. The Port's approaches officially opened on the 18th of May 1939 after four years of intensive operations. The Harbour Trust's dredge, Thomas Bent, completed the work having been operational since 1907.

As World War II broke out in 1939, plans for the reconstruction of Yarra Pier were discarded pending clarification of financial affairs, however Corio Quay North No. 2 neared completion.

The Bulk Wheat Pier and grain elevator were also completed and the agreement as to shipping control by the Trust was ready to come into operation. Unfortunately, because of the war, little use was made of the pier for some years, despite it being ready for the 1940 export season.

Trade activity in the Port naturally slowed down during this time, and the Trust sold 45 acres of land to the International Harvester Company, which by the early 1950's employed approximately 2,500 people.





1940's

In the late 1930's, deeper channels allowed for far larger vessels to enter the port, which necessitated a one-way traffic system. The Trust established a signal station at the end of Portarlington Pier with a control station at Moorabool Pier.

However, Point Henry Peninsula and the distances involved prevented constant observation of vessels through the channels, and a decision was made to establish a single control station at Point Henry, approximately halfway along the route, which was completed in 1940.

In 1942 the Freezing Works for storing meat at Corio, which at that point was controlled by the Trust, was expanded. The Trust also sold a number of their water vessels to the government to assist with the war effort.

As the war neared its end in 1944, the Parliamentary Public Works Committee recommended to the Victorian Cabinet that £1,441,800 (\$10,000,109 in 2016) be allocated for repairs and upgrades as part of a post-war programme for the Port of Geelong.

For years, Geelong had been known as 'The Bradford of Australia' for its prolific woollen industry. By the mid 1940's, wool was the second largest export commodity out of the port and in 1946, the Commonwealth Government established the CSIRO Division of Textile Industry in Geelong to carry out wool textile research. Along with the established Australian Textile College (associated with the Gordon Institute of Technology) and the town's seven woollen mills, the Trust commissioners claimed in the 1946 annual report that the Commonwealth investment would make

Geelong 'the undoubted centre of the Commonwealth for wool and wool trade generally'. The population of greater Geelong at this point was 58,400.

As ships entering the port became larger, there was a greater need for tugs to help them enter Corio Bay. In 1947, the Harbour Trust commenced building up its own fleet of tugs, as up until then they were all privately-owned and Melbourne tug owners had become reluctant to provide the service. At the time, the Geelong Harbour Trust owned only two tugs; Sprightly and Greyhound, so they purchased two damaged tugs from the French Colonial Government that had acquired them during the war. They were picked up from Noumea and Manus Island and transported to Geelong. In the same year, arrangements were made for the institution of a 40 hour work week, which came into effect immediately after the end of 1947.

1948 was a significant year for the future of the port as the Shell Company of Australia began negotiations to purchase 120 acres that had previously been acquired from the State Government. Shell also purchased another 140 acres of private land from the Geelong Harbour Trust. The decision to establish at Geelong was helped by the fact the port now had a depth of 32ft (9.7 meters).





1950's

As the port expanded, the Trust undertook a number of spending measures to keep pace with freight demands. A fourth mobile crane (Morris – three tonne) was purchased in 1951, two years after a five tonne crane was added. In the same year, dredging in the Channel to give the port 32ft depth throughout commenced. A year after that, 136 dock workers were sent from Melbourne to Geelong due to a shortage of available work in Melbourne, and not enough manpower in Geelong. It was the largest contingent of dock workers ever sent to a regional centre.

In 1954, the Shell oil refinery was officially opened and crude oil was transported via Refinery Pier. In the early days, Refinery Pier was capable of handling 3,000,000 tonnes of crude oil per year and work commenced to widen King's Wharf to handle the increased volume.

On the 12th of December 1955, a celebratory dinner was held to commemorate 50 years since the establishment of the Trust, with most of the employees and their families attending the event. In the same year, the wharfage rate doubled to £10 per tonne (\$330 in 2016), the first cargo shed at Corio Quay North was officially opened on the 2nd of December, and the Port expanded its tug fleet, as the 'Spencer Nall' and 'Geelong' leave England and make their way to the Port of Geelong.

After 50 years of operation, the amount of cargo handled by the Port had risen from 409,292 tonnes in 1906 to 4,334,306 tonnes in 1956. Shell requested a further deepening of the channel to 34ft in order to

use tankers of 32,000 deadweight tonnes and the Trust obliged, deepening the Channel to 36ft the following year. The deepening included rock removal by blasting near the junction of the Pt. Richards western extension and Wilson Spit Channels. During the same year, both Corio Quay wharves were rebuilt and a railway connection was extended to Corio Quay.

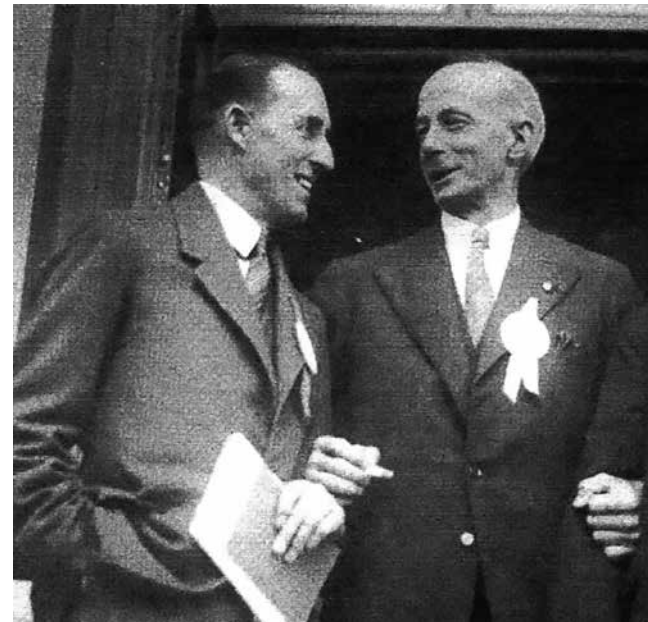
In the Easter holidays of 1956, the South Australian Harbour Board sent cricket and table tennis teams to play against Geelong Harbour Trust. This is the first of many inter-authority sports fixtures, with a reverse fixture arranged in Adelaide over Easter 1957.

The freighter Tasmania Star ran aground on the edge of Wilson's Spit Channel on May 9th 1956. She had just left Geelong on her way to Melbourne to discharge more cargo, and as a ship of 11,950 tonnes, three tugs tirelessly worked to release her. Her 2,500 tonnes of cargo and fuel oil supply were unloaded but the crew of 73 remained aboard. She was eventually refloated three days later.

In 1958 at King's Wharf, a widening project was commenced to expand the wharf to 98 ft (29.8m). The deepening of the channel from Pt. Richards to Refinery Pier was completed to a width of 300ft (91.4m) and a depth of 36ft (10.9m).

On the 12th of August, the first 32,000 tonne tanker, the SS Velutina, entered the port with the help of the entire tug fleet. The Chairman, Harbour Master and press were in attendance to mark the occasion.

A new head office was completed and occupied from the 26th of May 1959 with the official opening taking place on the 30th of May.



Chairman J. Spencer Nall (middle) retired in 1958 after 25 years in his role. Nall was largely responsible for the reorganisation of the Trust after the Ministerial inquiry of 1933.

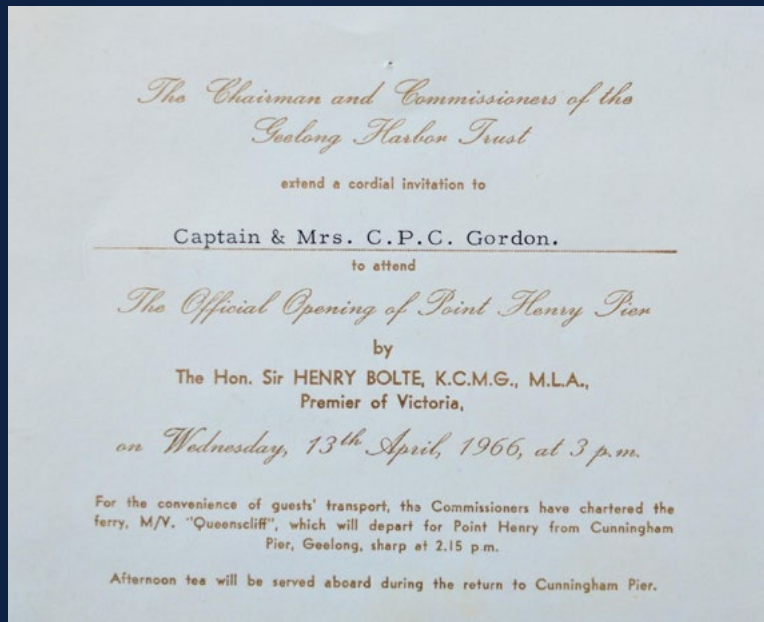


1960's

At the start of the decade, the population of Geelong had reached 89,000 and gross revenue for the Port exceeded £1,000,000 (\$28,509,803 in 2016) for the first time since incorporation. 551 vessels entered the port that year and trade exceeded that of 1959 by over 750,000 tonnes to 5,470,466 tonnes. The Port of Geelong was now the fourth busiest shipping outlet in the country.



Sir Roy Fidge



A new tug 'Moorabool' is launched from South Australia and is put into service at Geelong in 1965.



1961 was an eventful year for the Port. After extensive negotiations successfully concluded, the Western Mining Corporation decided to establish an aluminium smelter run by Alcoa of Australia.

A decision was made to increase the width of the 15 miles of approach channels from 300 to 400ft (121.9m).



A fourth crane was installed at Corio Quay to cope with the increased coal and dry bulk cargo. An extension to Refinery Pier was completed in December 1961.

Finally, the Point Wilson Explosives Pier was constructed by the Commonwealth for defence purposes as well as commercial explosives. The Trust arranged to have the deepening done on the Commonwealth's behalf.

In 1962, the Port of Geelong broke all records again as trade increased. In the four years from 1958, port trade went up 53% while the number of vessels increased by 25%, as bulk carriers became more prominent. 1962 was also the year that plans were made for the first in a series of wharves to built at Corio Quay South.

In staffing matters, Mr. S.C. Wilson, who was first employed by the Trust in 1912 as a messenger, retired after 50 years working at Geelong Harbour Trust. The Commissioners presented Mr. Wilson with a gold watch to mark the occasion.

In 1963, the Port's grain storage capability was doubled bringing the total capacity to 7,800,000 bushels and in April Alcoa's new smelter produces Aluminium for the first time.

In 1964, cargo handled for the year was 4,493,252 tonne for imports and 3,140,388 tonne for exports. Despite facilitating less than a quarter of the number of vessels as the Port of Melbourne, the Port of Geelong handled 65% of the total trade volume of the Port of Melbourne including 118,000 tonnes more in exports. Provision was made for four 7.5 tonne kangaroo pouch cranes for use on a new dry bulk berth to replace the out-modelled Lascelles Wharf.

Newly appointed Chairman of Commissioners, H.R. (Roy) Fidge was also re-elected Mayor of Geelong in September 1964 by the Council of the City of Geelong. Renowned as one of Geelong's favourite sons, Roy Fidge was the Solicitor to the Shire of Corio from 1932 until 1964, served in the Royal Australian Navy in WWII, and served on Geelong City Council in 1939 and then again between 1946 to his death in 1981. He was a Commissioner on the Harbour Trust for 21 years (1956 – 1977) including 14 years as Chairman.

The Point Henry Pier was opened by the Premier Sir Henry Bolte on the 13th of April 1966. The first shipment of alumina over the new pier took place on the same day. In 1966, the population of Geelong reached 108,000 people.

In 1967 Lascelles Wharf (now Lascelles No 1 Berth), which has been in service since 1928 was demolished to make way for a new berth designed to handle dry bulk cargoes. The following year, severe drought in Victoria had detrimental effects on total trade figures dropping by 927,330 tonnes. In 1968, the 'Sir Roy Fidge' diesel tug, named after the newly knighted Chairman of Commissioners, arrived from Adelaide. She was berthed at Rippleside with the commissioners, parliamentarians, builders, Trust staff and the public present.

On the 19th of December 1969, the Minister for State Development, the Hon. J. M. Manson, officially opened the boat launching facilities at Limeburners Point. The construction cost was \$55,000 (\$634,682 in 2016).

1970's

After the drought of the late 1960's, the Port achieved record figures with 570 vessels entering and trading 8,452,143 tonnes of cargo, showing an increase of 1,803,129 tonnes from 1969. The new dry berth at Lascelles Wharf No.1 continued construction and the first ship M.V. 'Mundooro' discharged at it later in the year.

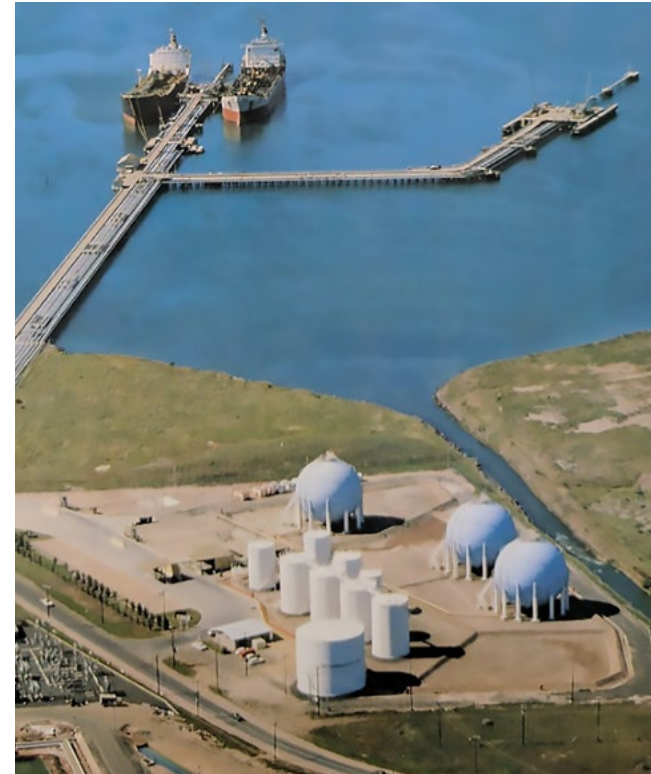
In 1972, the opening of the pipeline from the Gippsland offshore oil fields to the Shell Refinery in Corio resulted in a fall of 1,300,000 tonnes in oil import tonnage. Previously, tankers had brought oil from Westernport to Geelong. In the same year, the Commissioners reported that the millionth tonne of alumina to Point Henry was received from Alcoa's bauxite refinery in Western Australia.

Cattle shipments were also re-introduced in 1972. This had not occurred since the early operation of the Port. The following year, 19,215 heads of cattle, sheep and pigs were shipped to countries as far removed as Peru, South Korea and Japan.

By 1975, the population of Geelong swelled to 131,000. The inflationary spiral created by an ongoing shortage of oil supply generated by the cartel behaviour of the Arab petroleum exporting countries (OAPEC), coupled with unprecedented industrial action by the maritime union sector (which effectively closed the Port for three months) lead to significant financial loss at the Port. The Port Trust also played host to the inaugural Harbour Masters Meeting under the auspices of the Association of Australian Port & Marine Authorities over three days in November 1975.

By the late 1970's, China had become the Port's largest export destination, with 472,300 tonnes of bulk grain exported in 1977. New Zealand was a close second, with 469,000 tonnes of exports, most of which was made up of petroleum products.

The mid-1970's were testing years for the Port of Geelong and following five years of deficit, the Port returned to surplus in 1978. It was a year of major review for the Trust as long term plans were put in place to secure the Port's finances. 1978 was also the year that the Trust decided to divest from its tugboat fleet.



Also in 1988, Terminals Pty Ltd. confirms its future in Geelong with the addition of a fourth pressurised sphere to its Wharf Road, Corio site, increasing the company's liquid gas storage capacity by almost 50%.



1980's



On the 12th of December 1980, the Port commemorated its 75th anniversary since incorporation. The following year, the Port of Geelong Authority entered the container business for the first time – a 40 tonne container crane was added to the wharf in the first phase of a new container complex at Lascelles Wharf. 1981 was also the year the Port of Geelong Authority was formed, controlling all waters of Corio Bay and the Geelong Outer Harbour, port lands and facilities; the outer ports of Queenscliff, Barwon Heads, Lorne, Apollo Bay and foreshore assets.

In 1983 the Port of Geelong Authority released a Development Plan for Corio Bay through to 2010. The Plan projected rapid expansion but sought to move beyond the customers it had relied heavily on – Shell, Alcoa and the Grain Elevators Board, recognising that a downturn in their businesses posed significant risk to the Port. The Authority aspired to see Geelong develop as the multi-mode transport centre for South-Eastern Australia. Included in those plans was a bid to expand operations to Point Lillias to create one of the world's first fully integrated air-sea freight facilities in partnership with the nearby Avalon Airport. Unfortunately, the ambitious plan would never eventuate.

In 1984, record harvests following a drought in 1983 saw grain exports jump 500% to the highest level ever recorded in a single year.

Tragedy struck with the freezer storage at the port consumed by fire on the 7th of May, 1984, ending the meatworks that had been in operation on Corio Quay South since 1909.

In 1985, the Port acquired a dry bulk loader, to be located at Corio Quay North.

In an organisational move towards greater integration with the local community, the Port Authority began stage one of the city foreshore beautification in partnership with the City of Geelong Council and the Geelong Regional Commission. The plan included landscaping the Corio Bay Crescent between Rippleside and Limeburners Point.

In 1986, as part of the foreshore beautification, the development of Bay City Marina near Rippleside – a \$2,300,000 joint venture between the Royal Geelong Yacht Club and the Port of Geelong Authority was announced. That year the population of Geelong reached 146,000.

In 1988, as Australia celebrated its bicentenary, the Port took part in a travelling exhibition that showcased 150 years of shipping history and the changing face of the Geelong waterfront from Aboriginal times to the modern day. The exhibition was viewed by more than 30,000 people.

At that point, the Port employed 388 people including tug operators, waterside workers and 230 workers directly, which included employing its own stevedores, in conjunction with the Geelong branch of the Waterside Workers Federation.

That year, the Port also took delivery of a \$100,000 helicopter, on loan from the Federal Government to protect the coastline from potential oil slick damage.

Disaster hit again in 1988 as a faulty navigation marker was thought to have started the fire that destroyed the historic cargo shed on Yarra Street Pier. High tides prevented firefighters from stopping the spread of the fire. The pier, which was by then no longer in use, was damaged beyond repair. The pier's cargo shed had originally been built in 1908.

The 1980's drew to a close with talk of an amalgamation with the Melbourne Port Authority. However the idea was hosed down by the Port of Geelong Chairman Peter Morgan who revealed a plan to directly compete and attract smaller multi-purpose shipping lines – a move that would also help reduce congestion at the Port of Melbourne.

Further deepening took place at Corio Quay berths 1 and 2, as well as maintenance deepening in Corio Bay.

1990's

In 1990, a new Bass Strait service, the 'Bass Reefer' linking Geelong's new refrigerated and general cargo service to Tasmania's north-west coast was launched by the Victorian Government.

During 1991–1992, continuing its work with the community, the Port of Geelong Authority contributed more than \$350,000 in direct community sponsorship. Among the initiatives, \$10,000 was given to the Scout Association to enable six young victims of the Chernobyl incident to enjoy a four week holiday in Geelong as a measure of goodwill to the many Russian vessels that regularly used the port.

The Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre Pty Ltd (AMOSOC) was set up in Geelong to operate the Australian oil industry's major oil spill response facility.

1992 was a difficult year for the Port of Geelong. The Port Authority's financial results were severely affected by the continuing recession, which particularly hit the rural sector hard. Despite the difficult economic climate, construction by the Port Authority commenced at Lascelles Wharf, Oyster Cove and was shortly followed by two newcomers to the area, chemical company Incitec and manufacturers Omya Southern. In a highly innovative move, the Port moved to a no-wharfage-fee model, shifting the cost of freight away from shipping companies to users.

In a sign of the times, a draft plan to corporatise the Authority was released, aiming to turn the Port of Geelong into a state-owned company competing in the international market without the heavy subsidies it had received from Government throughout its history. The Authority also introduced a Workplace Education Certificate in conjunction with Gordon Technical College and major internal reform took place dealing with Equal Employment Opportunity, Occupational Health & Safety and Human Relations.

Despite the continuing recession, the Port of Geelong recorded a record net profit of \$8.5 million in 1993 as trade increased by 33%. The Port Authority moved several steps closer to securing its future as Victoria's principal bulk and specialist cargo port, with the launch of the \$8.6 million first stage of its Lascelles Wharf redevelopment on March 26. In a major coup for the Port, North Geelong was included on the plans for the National Standard Gauge Rail Network, running from Melbourne to South Australia. The 1993-1994 financial year registered the highest cargo tonnage for 23 years and the highest number of vessels for 20 years.

The total cost of the project in the end was close to \$21 million and was the Authority's biggest onshore investment in many years. The combination of two 20 tonne luffing cranes, an integrated hopper/conveyor system and a 50,000 tonne undercover bulk storage facility boosted performance for a port already known for fast turnaround times.

The cranes alone cost \$8,000,000 (\$14,000,000 in 2016) and were designed in the Netherlands and built by Australian companies.

Following a comprehensive \$1,000,000 environmental effects study, approval was given in 1994 to deepen the port by another meter to 12.3 meters overall, costing \$30,000,000 to complete. In the same year, the Port Authority sold its land in the south of Corio Bay to the City of Greater Geelong as well as its holdings in the Bay City Marina.

In July 1996, the Kennett government privatised the Geelong and Portland ports. The Port of Geelong Authority then transferred operations to TNT under the name GeelongPort. Cunningham Pier was sold in the same year and was indirectly returned for public use.

After 12 months of new management, ship unloading turnaround time improved by 8%. Throughput at Geelong was about half of that of the Port of Melbourne and represented 26% of all the State's ports. A major deepening of the shipping channels in Geelong was conducted, taking depth to 12.2 metres.

In 1999, Freight VIC agreed to a \$36,000,000 investment in the V/Line and locomotive fleet into the Port of Geelong, which included the standardisation of tracks. Construction also began on a new \$9,000,000 wharf-side handling and storage facility for phosphate rock.



Installing the Authority's new hi-tech grabbing cranes as part of the 1993 - 1994 Lascelles Wharf redevelopment



2000's

The Victorian Regional Channels Authority (VRCA) was created in 2004 to manage commercial navigation in the channels of the Port of Geelong waters. Tighter security measures were brought into the Port to address the rise of global terrorism following the attacks of September 11, 2001.

In 2004, the VRCA launched the 'Keep Clear of Big Ships' campaign in response to the thousands of diverse vessels now utilising the port.

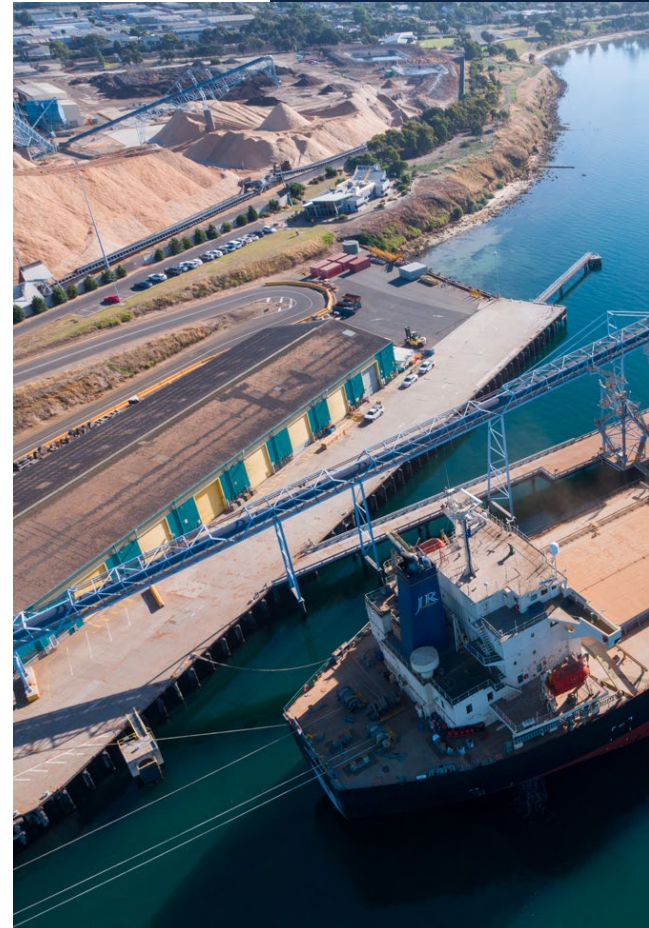
In 2005, the Port of Geelong celebrated its 100th birthday. 546 vessels visited the port that year and 12,000,000 tonnes of cargo moved through Corio Bay. The estimated value of the Port's exports reached \$5,600,000,000 annually. The navigation gauges at the port were upgraded, which also included a beacon replacement project providing the port with one of the most advanced lighting systems in the world.

2007 was another bumper year for the Port as it handled 504 ships and 11,400,000 tonnes of cargo. 4,100,000 were exports and 7,300,000 were imports. The Department of Infrastructure released the long-awaited Land Use Strategy that would guide the Port's future growth and development. It recommended additional berthing facilities at Corio Quay and Lascelles Wharf and enhancing transport links, including rail.

The following year, a \$25,000,000 project got underway to double the length of Corio Quay North No 4 (CQN4) to meet projected growth in trade and shipping. The plan lengthened the Quay to 675 metres. It was eventually completed in 2010, accommodating ships of up to 230 metres in length.

In February 2008, the 15,619 tonne Chinese bulk carrier, Jin Hui, arrived in the Port of Geelong with a suspected fire on board in the cargo hold. The salvageable cargo was unloaded, but not before the local fire fighting crew were on hand to deal with the smouldering goods as the ship sailed into Corio Quay.

The Ocean Patriot drill rig was dragged from Bass Strait to the Port of Geelong for routine repairs in November 2009. The rig, 104 metres long and 73 metres wide, with a drilling depth capacity of 6,096 metres, cut an imposing figure on the Corio Bay foreshore.





2010's

On the 18th of June 2010, GeelongPort opened its new offices at Corio Quay North. In the same month, the new wood chip conveyor and shiploader at Corio Quay North was completed. The ship loader increased product throughput from Midway from 800,000 tonnes to 1,500,000 tonnes per year.

During the 2011/12 financial year, 16 million tonnes was handled as throughput through the port increased by 12.7 percent. That year, Premier Denis Napthine stated that 'The Port of Geelong supports more than 1250 jobs and adds more than \$400 million to the local economy'.

In 2013, 31,200,000 tonnes valued at about \$7,600,000,000 passed through Geelong. Premier Denis Napthine and Minister for Ports, David Hodgett announced a multi-million dollar investment to improve channel access. The investment secured the port's future as an important Victorian trade facility.

In 2014, the Victorian Regional Channels Authority commenced another round of deepening works at Corio Quay North No 4 (CQN4) and approaches to 12.3 meters. This was followed by a \$9 million upgrade centred on shipping lanes in Corio Bay. The dredging program ensured that the Port of Geelong kept its competitive edge and strong focus on safe navigation.

In 2016, oil tanker Phoenix Advance broke Geelong's shipping depth record thanks to benefits from the multi million-dollar channel clearance monitoring system DUKC (Dynamic Under Keel Clearance) that had been recently introduced.





Today

More than a quarter of Victoria's overseas exports are handled at the port.

There are now almost 700 ships that visit Geelong per year. Every additional ship visit to Geelong generates approximately \$560,000 in economic output and every hundred ship visits generates approximately 170 jobs for Geelong.

As this book went to print, GrainCorp exported the most grain ever in a month with more than 393,560 tonnes. It also achieved its biggest single shipment of wheat fully loaded in Geelong, with the Tomahawk departing carrying almost 61,800 tonnes.





The Future

With increased infrastructure, the *Geelong Port – City 2050* report found that ships through the port could increase by as much as 155%.

This could add approximately an additional \$100 million to household incomes for the Geelong community, or approximately \$500 per person.

The Port of Geelong will become the viable alternative to the Port of Melbourne as it reaches capacity in coming years. The report states:

Embarking on these projects in a timely fashion, under commercial demand driven arrangements, offers Geelong the opportunity to pursue a dominant role as a regional bulk port.

— *Geelong Port – City 2050*, pg 25)

The *Geelong Port – City 2050* report states ‘the analysis of market potential for the Port of Geelong indicated that if all of the nominally identified trades were captured and retained in Geelong then the tonnage through the Port of Geelong would grow from 12.5 million tonnes in 2011-12 to approximately 50-60 million tonnes by 2050, becoming south-east Australia’s dominant bulk commodity port’.

The City of Greater Geelong and its wider region are home to around 180,000 people. Geelong in the coming years will face some particularly hard economic challenges due to the changing landscape of the Australian labour market.

Geelong’s port will be a positive part of Geelong’s economy in this coming time of change. Throughout its history, the port has been a continuing source of employment and prosperity for the people and city of Geelong.

Therefore the Port of Geelong is a lead sector in the future generation of the city’s jobs and wealth.





