

EEP14/9/11



Cape Nelson Lightstation

125th Anniversary

June 2009

Cape Nelson was named by Lieutenant James Grant during a coastal survey of Western Victoria in 1800. It is named after his vessel the *Lady Nelson*.

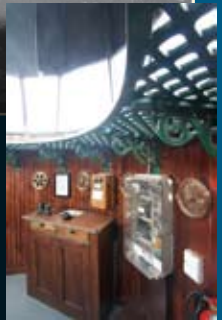


The lighthouse provides navigational guidance for East bound shipping entering Bass Strait.



In May 1882 tenders were called for the construction of the lighthouse. The successful tender being *J Horne & Co* for 11,552 pounds.

The work was to have been completed within a year but difficulties were experienced in procuring stone of the prescribed size and the date for completion was extended several times.



Work commenced with stone quarried from a farm at the head of Nelson Bay but stone of good quality was quickly exhausted. This failure resulted in negotiations between the contractor and government. Eventually an agreement was concluded with the Trustees at Wattle Hill to supply stone.

The new quarry was about 11 kilometres from the Cape, but there was no direct road, the stone had to be carted through Portland making the distance 21 kilometres in total.



The blocks of stone were cut and dressed at the quarry. Some 20 hands and 25 cutters were employed at the quarry with 15 teams engaged in the cartage.



The Memorial Stone was laid by the Mayor of Portland on 19th April 1883 and was witnessed by the men employed on the works, the contractors and councillors.



The tower and other buildings are built of locally quarried basalt. The foundations are bluestone blocks of no less than 2.6 cubic metres each. The outside wall thickness tapers from 2.1 metres at ground level to 0.8 metres near the top.



The tower is 32.5 metres high to the top of the windvane, the height of the focal plane is 76.2 metres above water level. This light was first exhibited on 7th July 1884 and converted to electric operation in 1934.



The lantern room and lens were manufactured by Chance Brothers of Birmingham, England with the current lens being a 250mm focal radius catadioptric type and the lantern being 12 feet in diameter.



The internal spiral staircase, balcony rails and catwalks are all made of cast iron. An interesting and unusual feature can be seen fitted to the slit windows of the tower with the original tubular ventilators with draught dampers still in place.

Today

Like twelve other Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) lighthouses the Cape Nelson lighthouse is currently open to public tours.

The Concession Licence is between AMSA and the Minister for Conservation and Environment of the State of Victoria (National Parks) and was signed in December 1995 for a period of 21 years. The licence was signed subject to a number of tower alterations being made in line with a Building Code of Australia report made in 1995.



These alterations were necessary to ensure safe public access to the site. You will notice that some of these alterations have included warning signs, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and balcony balustrading protection.

About AMSA

In 1915 the Commonwealth Government took over the responsibility for all coastal lighthouses and Cape Nelson transferred to the Commonwealth.

Cape Nelson Lighthouse is maintained by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA).

AMSA has responsibility for a wide range of maritime activities including management of the Commonwealth aids to navigation network.

AMSA manages some 470 aids to navigation, which cover all of Australia's coastline, assisting mariners to make safe and efficient passage.

Produced by the
Australian Maritime Safety Authority
to celebrate 125 years of operation of the
Cape Nelson lighthouse, June 2009.



Australian Government

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

