

Figure 2.31 Historic photograph captioned ‘Cockatoo Island HMS ‘Galatea’ in Dock, October 8 1870’. Note the engine house on the foreshore, with roadway coming down the incline to the right and the roof line of the convict era structures and Island residences on the cliff top. The HMS *Galatea* was in Sydney as part of her second visit to the region under the command of Prince Alfred, the Duke of Edinburgh. (Source: Mitchell Library)

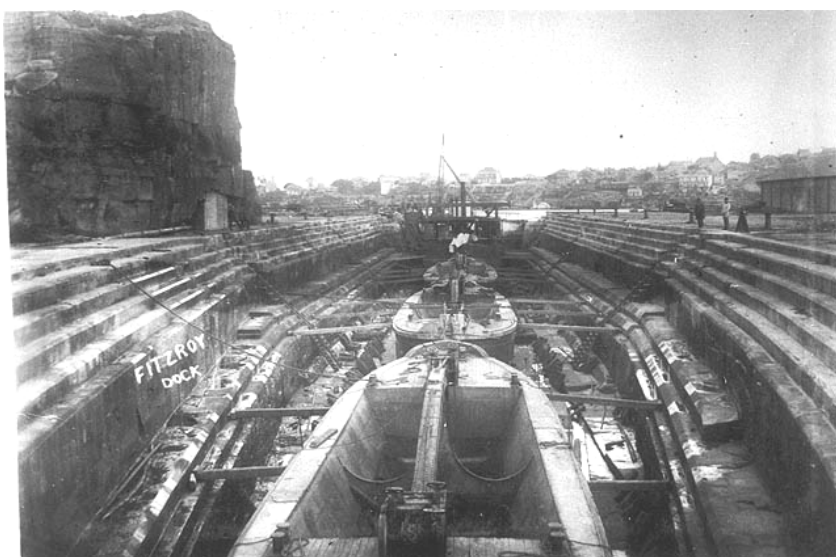


Figure 2.32 Hopper barges in Fitzroy Dock in the 1890s. In this era, Cockatoo Island provided vessels and equipment for the NSW Harbours and Rivers Department’s massive program of dredging and training wall construction at the mouths of many NSW coastal rivers. (Source: Mitchell Library)

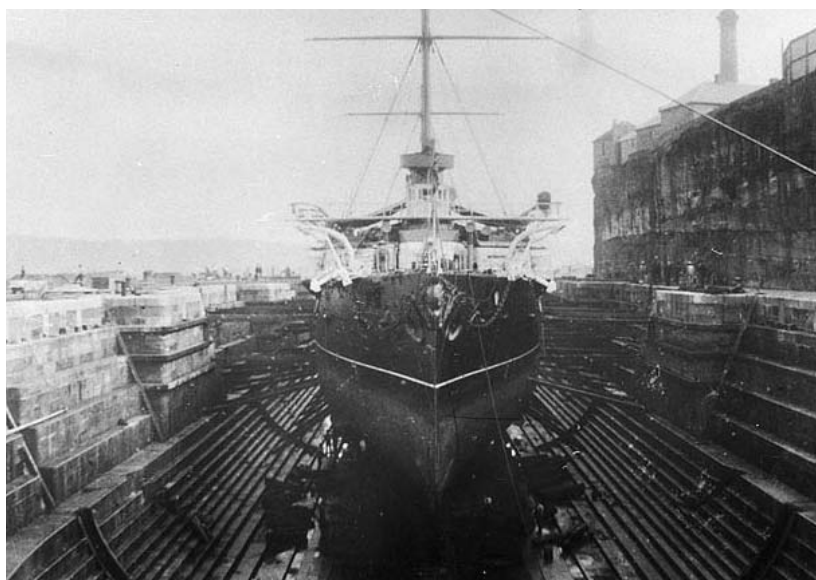


Figure 2.33 HMS *Orlando*, flagship from 1887 to 1897, in the newly completed Sutherland Dock, c1890. Until this dock opened, HMS *Orlando* had been too large to dock at Cockatoo Island and had been forced to use the Calliope Dock in Auckland in 1888. (Source: Mitchell Library).

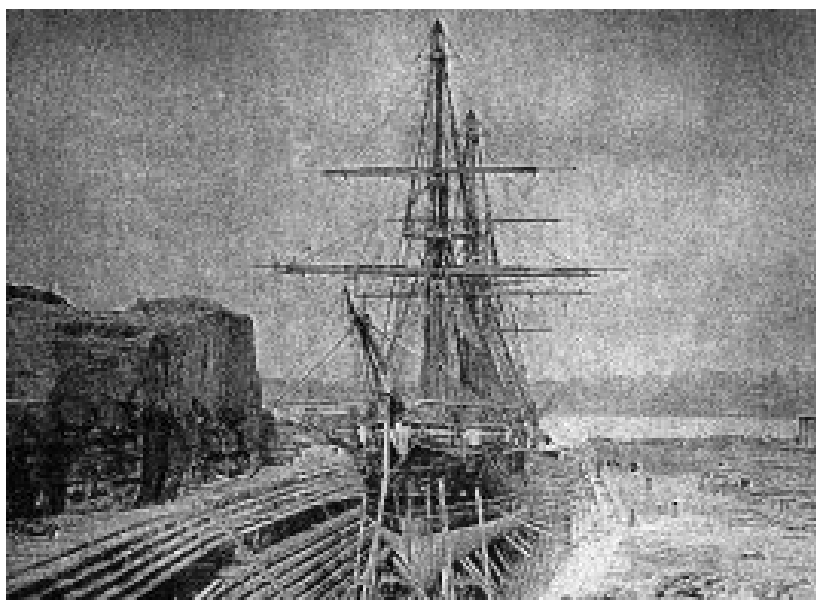


Figure 2.34 HMS *Calliope* in Fitzroy Dock, 1889, repairing damage caused by a hurricane at Apia in the Samoan Islands, which sank six other naval ships from Germany and the United States, plus seven merchant vessels. (Source: Mitchell Library).

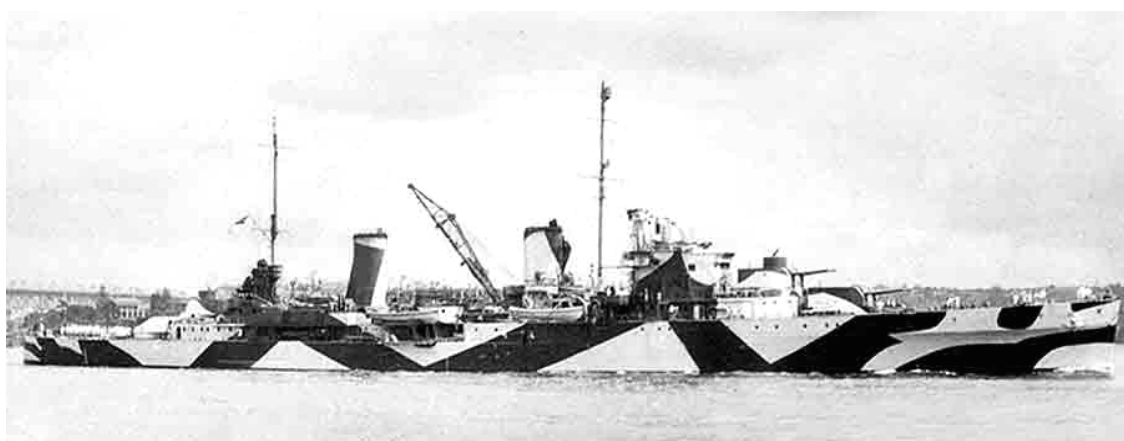


Figure 2.35 HMAS *Perth* leaving Sydney Harbour after repairs undertaken at Cockatoo Island in August and September, 1941. The aircraft crane, prominent in this picture, is the replacement for the original, which remains at the dockyard. (Source: <http://www.spruso.com>)



Figure 2.36 View of Cockatoo Island, c1911, showing the rapid development of the dockyard and workshop sites around the Fitzroy Dock. This view shows the westward extension to Building 143 is complete but Building 138 remains single storey. Buildings 102 and 103 are in their original form (Source: Mitchell Library).



Figure 2.37 Photograph taken in December, 1946 of the Island's dockyards in operation. Taken from within Timber Bay, this view shows an unnamed ship in Fitzroy Dock, with one of the Southern Shipyard Cranes in the foreground. (Source: John Jeremy collection).



Figure 2.38 The design of the bascule bridge at Coraki is a significant example of the technical prowess of the bridge engineers in the NSW Dept of Public Works. This bridge, the steelwork for which was fabricated at Cockatoo Island, is understood to be the one of the oldest surviving bascule type bridges in NSW (Fraser 1985) and one of five ever built in the state (Source: SL/NSW).

2.5.3 Cockatoo Island After the Dockyard—1992–2005

The Last Years

The lease of Cockatoo Island had been owned by a series of corporate entities associated with the British shipbuilding firm Vickers Limited since 1947, when it bought out by the other shareholders of Cockatoo Docks and Engineering Company Pty Limited. In 1978, at the direction of the parent company, Vickers Limited (whose British shipbuilding and aircraft divisions had been recently nationalised), ownership of the operating company, Vickers Cockatoo Dockyard Pty Ltd, was transferred to Vickers Australia Limited, a listed public company which had previously operated the rest of Vickers' interests in Australia other than Cockatoo Island. In 1984, this company merged with the Commonwealth Steel Company Limited (a subsidiary of Vickers Australia Limited which had been progressively acquired by the BHP company), forming a new entity, Comsteel Vickers Limited, jointly-owned by the two companies plus a small group of other investors. In 1986, Comsteel Vickers Limited was sold to Australian National Industries Limited (ANI), an engineering company which had evolved into a corporate investment group (ANI was itself acquired by Smorgon Steel Limited in 1999).

In April 1987, following a review of Defence requirements, the Minister for Defence, Kim Beazley, announced that the Williamstown Dockyard would be sold and that the lease of Cockatoo Island would not be renewed when it expired on 31 December 1992.⁹ The effect upon business was immediate, with many prospective contracts abandoned. The following five years were largely occupied with the completion of work in hand (primarily the refit of two of the Oberon-class submarines, HMAS *Ovens* and HMAS *Orion*) and the decommissioning and disposal of any assets of value. The refit of HMAS *Orion* proved to be the final contract undertaken by the dockyard—it was completed in June 1991, some 18 months prior to the end of the lease.

As the Department of Defence had indicated that they would require vacant possession at the end of the lease, the company commenced disposal of both company and Commonwealth assets. Stores, machinery, equipment, furniture and building materials were sold at a public auction held on the Island in late 1991, with large quantities of material acquired by scrap and metal merchants. Virtually all machines in the workshops were sold, a small number having been put aside for retention for heritage reasons. A second auction was held in April 1992, after which the buildings of steel framing clad with corrugated iron on the eastern and northern aprons were demolished and removed. In the last days of 1992, the docks were flooded, the power supply, water supply and sewerage service were shut down, and the keys were handed back to the Commonwealth Government on 31 December 1992.¹⁰

Decontamination

The final years of the operation of Cockatoo Island Dockyard had been overseen by the Logistics Division of the Department of Defence. Their management reflected the statement of the Treasurer .

Paul Keating in May 1987 that Cockatoo Island would be sold, with considerable media speculation as to its market value and its potential for hotels and marinas.¹¹

In 1988, the Department of Housing and Construction, the building service provider for the Island, undertook a heritage study of the Island in the light of its listing on the Register of the National Estate.¹² One reason for this survey was to identify what should be retained on the Island for heritage reasons, and what should be removed when the company quit the site. These surveys supported the contentions of a range of external heritage organisations that the Island was an important heritage place and this was further reinforced when, as the plans of the government became known, there was considerable public outcry against the transfer of the Island into private ownership.¹³

After the closure of the dockyard at the termination of the lease, management of the Island was passed to Defence's Major Decontamination Projects unit, a specialist unit nominally operated by the RAAF. The operation of the dockyard had left a legacy of environmental contamination (from the foundries, smitheries and boilers, as well as the cleaning, painting and anti-fouling of ships' hulls in the docks and the shipyards). This contamination was the subject of claims and counter-claims in an arbitration during the 1990s between ANI and the Commonwealth Government, to determine compensation for lost contracts (as claimed by the company) balanced against the cost of the environmental decontamination (as claimed by the Commonwealth). While these matters were being argued, little activity of consequence occurred on the Island itself, apart from stabilising demolition remains and the on-going care and maintenance of buildings by Asset Services (the former Department of Housing and Construction, in corporate form prior to being privatised).

The heritage studies conducted in the late 1980s had added an element of uncertainty to potential sale outcomes, as senior officers within Defence and government became aware of the history and significance of the Island, not only as a Commonwealth Naval Dockyard but also as a colonial prison, British Naval facility, State institution and engineering works. In early 1997, the arbitration was settled and officers of the Department of Defence commissioned Godden Mackay Pty Ltd, Heritage Consultants, to prepare a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Island, in the light of its listing on the Register of the National Estate.¹⁴

This CMP was completed in May 1997 and provided a context for the Island's subsequent management. This document was prepared shortly prior to transfer of the Island to the Sydney Property Disposal Unit, a section of the Defence Property Management which functioned to prepare surplus Defence property for sale or transfer out of Defence ownership. At this time, the proposal to sell the Island remained on the table as part of a larger program to dispose of seven Defence properties located around Sydney Harbour that were all surplus to Defence requirements.

The Sydney Property Disposal Unit immediately commissioned AGC Woodward-Clyde Pty Ltd and CMPS&F Pty Ltd to jointly undertake an extensive Environmental Characterisation Study, to determine the nature and extent of the environmental contamination that was present on the Island.

This study was completed in April 1998 and identified a range of spot contaminations associated with particular activities on the Island, an ambient level of lead paint contamination and a wide range of structural and safety issues present on the Island. In late 1998 and 1999, a works program was instituted to address the most significant of the environmental and safety issues.¹⁵

The Works Program was conducted by the Cockatoo Island Rehabilitation Consortium, with heritage advice from Godden Mackay Logan Pty Ltd, and involved the removal of spot contamination, especially redundant underground fuel storage tanks, chemical residues associated with electroplating and galvanising, asbestos in a wide variety of situations, PCBs in electrical equipment and paint dust. More significant in their effect upon the Island were the structural works, which primarily involved the demolition of unsafe timber wharves around the Island. The Cruiser Wharf, the Destroyer Wharf, the Ruby Wharf and Steps, the Camber Wharf and the Old Plate Wharf were all demolished, as the majority of their timber piles were significantly deteriorated and, in the absence of any proposed re-use, the cost of their repair was seen as unable to be justified. Repairs were made to the reinforced concrete piles and beams of the Bolt Wharf, Sutherland Wharf and Parramatta Wharf.

In each case where a wharf was demolished, the seawall behind the wharf was subsequently rebuilt as a rip-rap seawall using granite sourced from the Central Coast region of New South Wales, laid over 'geo-tech' fabric. This approach matched the seawall already established on the northwestern shoreline, with the difference in colour of stone indicating the extent of the new work. In the case of the Cruiser Wharf, considerable reshaping of the toe of the seawall below the waterline was required and, amongst other things, a high-explosive shell from a World War II US naval gun was dredged up from the harbour floor. All salvageable timber from the wharves was retained on the Island for later re-use. The floating pontoon from the Camber Wharf was sold to a local marine salvage company (it was later reacquired by the SHFT).

One complication arising from the demolition of the wharves was the location of the large relatively new portal crane located on the Destroyer Wharf (Crane 301). This crane had been erected on the wharf in the 1970s utilising the Titan Floating Crane but Titan had been lost at sea in 1992.¹⁶ No other floating crane was available of sufficient height and capacity and, in this circumstance, it was necessary to utilise a large, land-based mobile crane to dismantle Crane 301. To gain physical access to Crane 301, as the open space in the vicinity was extremely limited, it became necessary to demolish Building 117, one of the largest and youngest buildings on the Island.¹⁷

As it had been recommended that, in relation to other contamination, capping be placed over the existing soil and in view of the potential need for fill generally, the brick and concrete building materials of Building 117 were all crushed on-site and stored as mounded embankments along the northern shoreline of the Island for later re-use.

The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust

Whilst these works were in progress, the New South Wales community vigorously opposed the sell-off of the seven Sydney Harbour Defence sites. A number of community groups were established to lobby for the recognition and long-term protection of the heritage of several of the sites, including the Headland Preservation Group (for Middle Head and Georges Heights), the Defenders of Sydney Harbour (for Defence lands generally), the North Head Alliance (for North Head Barracks), Foreshore 2000—Woolwich (for the Woolwich Army Maritime School) and the Friends of Cockatoo Island.¹⁸

On 19 August 1997, the NSW Premier, Bob Carr, made an historic speech at Woolwich. He dealt with government-owned land, in possession of the Commonwealth, state and local governments, and he spelt out the NSW Government's approach to future redevelopment of industrialised sites on the Harbour. He said:

*The Harbour is too precious to be sold off for the exclusive use of Sydney's silvertails. And the State Government opposes the Commonwealth government's decision to sell defence land to the 'highest bidder' rather than earmarking it for public use.*¹⁹

On 5 September 1998, shortly prior to the 1998 election, the Prime Minister, John Howard, announced the setting up of body to be known as the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, to administer the Defence lands at Georges Heights/Middle Head, North Head, Woolwich and Cockatoo Island for 10 years for public access and enjoyment. The Interim Sydney Harbour Federation Trust was established in 1999 and Cockatoo Island was transferred from Defence to the Interim Trust during 2000. The Trust was formally established when the *Sydney Harbour Federation Trust Act 2001* was passed by Federal Parliament in March 2001.

The Trust undertook a period of examination and investigation to determine the issues and requirements of the Island, especially the level of operating funding required. The various lobby groups were canvassed and submissions taken from interested parties and stakeholders. By 2003, works had been commenced to allow regular public visitation, including the creation of walking paths and the training of tour guides, maintenance programs were established for the buildings and the electrical power and water supply were progressively reinstated.

To introduce the public to Cockatoo Island, the Trust staged a three-day musical festival on Cockatoo Island over the Easter holiday weekend in 2005. Over 20,000 people visited the Island in the three days, large numbers of which camped in tents on the northern apron. The festival was generally judged to be a success and the most notable effect of the festival upon the Island was the spreading of fill and the laying of turf over large expanses of open ground on the northern and eastern aprons.²⁰

In late 2005, the Trust publicly called for public Expressions of Interest in the use, lease or occupation of areas, buildings or components of the Island.



Figure 2.39 View northwest towards Wharf 15, showing the grassed areas where structures once stood.

2.5.4 Aboriginal People at Cockatoo Island Dockyard

Pre-European Settlement

Little is known of the relationship of Cockatoo Island to the local people resident in the Sydney area prior to European settlement. While Aboriginal presence in Australia is accepted as dating from c50,000 years before the present (BP), sea level at the coast did not reach its current height until c6,000 years BP. It is therefore likely that earlier sites are now inundated offshore. The earliest evidence of Aboriginal use of the Sydney region is a c4,500 BP date from a shelter site within Davidson State Recreation Area.

Ethnographic records from the late eighteenth century provide some indication of pre-European Aboriginal society in Sydney. The coastal area between Botany Bay and Broken Bay was occupied by the Guringai (Ku-ring-gai) people (a linguistic group), which was itself divided into a number of family-based sub-groups or clans. The Kamerigal clan (also known as Gamaragal) are reported along the north shore of Port Jackson, to the east, and to the west of the Kamerigal were the Wallumdegal. On the south side of the harbour, the Gadigal lived east of Sydney and the Buramedigal to the west.²¹

Prisoners Of Her Majesty

There are few references to the presence of Australian Aboriginal people working at Cockatoo Island Dockyard at any time because, in employment terms, the ethnicity of the individual employees was rarely, if ever, recorded. However, during the earliest phase, they formed a small but notable component of the colonial prison population. During the mid-nineteenth century up to 1869, with the prisoners working to excavate the dry dock and, later, providing labour for its operation, Aboriginal people took part in the general activities of the prisoners on the Island.

The presence of Aboriginals in the prison population was affected by a legal judgment in the Full Court of the NSW Supreme Court in 1836, in the matter of *R v Murrell*, whereby the Court decided that it had jurisdiction to try an Aborigine for the killing of another Aborigine, where previously there had been a tacit policy to only apply British law to Aborigines insofar as their actions affected the colonists.²² Despite the ruling, the practical contradictions inherent in such policy were well recognised and the legal prerogatives of the Governor and Attorney General of New South Wales meant that the Aborigines were spared some of the more draconian outcomes of British law (in this period, at least).

B Bridges, in a paper on this topic, suggests that:

On the whole, executive review took much of the sting out of major sentences in that a significant proportion of capital sentences imposed on natives were commuted to transportation, which in effect often becomes a term for Cockatoo or Goat Islands (in Sydney Harbour) for instruction in secular and religious matter preparatory to an early release. A review of the cases tried (for the period 1788-1855) leads one to believe that, with the sole exception of Charley, no Aboriginal was executed who would not have qualified for death also under native laws ... Governor Gipps stated explicitly that this was the test applied by the Executive Council in his time.²³

In this context, Aboriginal prisoners were sent to Cockatoo Island, some of whom were probably put to work as convict labourers in the quarries and docks. Governor Bourke had requested in 1835 that a school teacher be made available for the convicts on Cockatoo Island [sic] (meaning, at this date, Goat Island), specifying that any appointee should be prepared to teach the elements of Christianity to the eight Aborigines held there after capture in the Brisbane Water district.²⁴

In the late 1840s, as excavation for the dock was underway, the high mortality rate of the Aboriginal prisoners was of sufficient concern to Governor Fitz Roy have a special health committee enquire as to 'Some alternative ... less destructive ... to ... the Aborigines ... than confinement'; however, little appears to have been done officially to alter the existing practices. The Government Medical Advisor reported in 1851 that 'consideration should be given to their liberation, if at all possible'.²⁵

Annable also cites correspondence in 1856 from a Police Constable, which includes reference to his assigned convict-servant, a 'darkey called Peter'²⁶, although this attribution based on skin colour merely implies an Aboriginal ethnicity—Polynesians, Maoris and Africans, for example, were also present in nineteenth century Sydney.²⁷ It does, however, indicate the use of non-white prisoners as assigned servants in the period, as work in the docks or workshops attracted wages and privileges for which there was some competition amongst the prison population.

The convict prison closed in 1869 and the remaining prisoners were transferred to Darlinghurst.

Aboriginal employment in the dockyard subsequently is obscured by the lack of evidence of the ethnicity of the workforce; however, the probability of Aboriginals working in such a situation is fairly low. Throughout the Public Works phase of operation, the dockyard operated with a small, permanent staff of managers and skilled tradesmen and a large pool of unskilled day labour. It is reasonable to assume that Aboriginals were not highly represented in the permanent staff. Records of the ethnic composition of the day labour force were not taken but some people of Aboriginal ethnicity may have been employed. In general, though, Aboriginals were not typically found in these workplaces and, if so, generally concealed their ethnicity. The most likely circumstance for Aboriginal employment at Cockatoo Island would be as domestic servants in the residences of the more senior staff, although no evidence has yet been found that this occurred.

A similar circumstance might be presumed to apply during the operation of the dockyard during the twentieth century; however, based upon the typically Anglo-Saxon Protestant cultural and ethnic

make-up of most other government engineering workplaces in Australia until the 1960s, there is even lower likelihood of an Aboriginal person gaining employment at the Cockatoo Island Dockyard in this period.

The Aboriginal Tent Embassy at Cockatoo Island

On 20 November 2000, shortly after the completion of the remediation works and while Cockatoo Island remained vacant, a small group of people associated with the Aboriginal rights movement moved onto Cockatoo Island and declared that, as vacant Crown Land, it was now subject to a land claim under the Native Title Act 1993, and that a branch of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy that had been established in 1972 at Parliament House in Canberra would be established at this site. This Tent Embassy succeeded the Victoria Park Olympics Embassy that earlier had been established in central Sydney during the Sydney Olympics in 2000, to bring international attention to the political and social conditions of the Aboriginal community in Australia.

The Defence Department opposed the land claim and made a formal application to the Supreme Court of NSW for their removal as trespassers. The Supreme Court found for the Defence Department in its judgment handed down in December 2000, which was then appealed. The Appeal was dismissed on 5 March 2001, on the basis that the Island was not unoccupied and that no Aboriginal group could establish a direct connection to the land. The Aboriginal Tent Embassy custodians, led by Isabelle Coe, sought leave to appeal this judgement to the High Court and a stay of eviction was granted. The High Court of Australia refused the application on 13 March 2001, following which the Aboriginal group immediately dismantled the Tent Embassy and quit the Island.²⁸

The Aboriginal Tent Embassy departed the Island without drama and caused little damage (some timber slats from Building 19 were burned in campfires before the staff of the Interim Sydney Harbour Federation Trust requested that this cease). The most notable effect of their four-month presence on the Island was the painting of various objects (such as a set of concrete blocks used to infill the sonar pit in the base of the Sutherland Dock) in the colours of the Aboriginal flag, the painting of a large mural on the wall of the Timber Drying Shed (Building 19) and the encasement of a remnant crane post (Crane 31) in pieces of mirrored glass.

One outcome of these court actions was the information gleaned regarding the Aboriginal use of Cockatoo Island (known as Warinyama, Wa-rea-mah or Warriabah) prior to its occupation by the Europeans. The lack of permanent fresh water meant that it was not a useful place for long term visitation and, in any case, the Aboriginal people were not permanently resident in any one location within their tribal areas. More importantly, though, it appears that the Island was not considered to be exclusively part of the tribal lands of either the Gadigal (or Kadigal) people on the south side of the Harbour or the Cammeragal (or Kameragal) people on the north but, rather, it represented common or neutral land and was, for this reason, used as a meeting and corroboree place by both sides, particularly for events involving both groups.²⁹ It is likely that it was commonly utilised for fishing expeditions. By contrast, Goat Island was claimed in the 1820s by the Aboriginal man

Bennelong (who gave his name to Bennelong Point) to be his personal land.³⁰ This claim may still have reflected a tribal association, though, in the context that most members of his tribe had already died of the smallpox-like disease in the 1790s.

2.5.5 Labour Relations at the Cockatoo Island Dockyard

The NSW Government Dockyard

During the early period when the dockyard operated in conjunction with the prison, the establishment employed a number of skilled tradesmen and overseers, as well as professional engineers and managers. The skilled tradesmen, such as masons and carpenters, were generally members of their trade union or association and employment relationships operated under a combination of British statute law, common law and, where necessary, a degree of trade union co-operation. As industrialisation proceeded to grow and steam technology began to affect the traditional forms of manufacturing, laws were passed in Britain to regulate the conduct of trade unions. In 1824, the operation of such laws was extended into all of its colonies. The British *Masters and Servants Act 1828* was also important in enshrining mutual responsibility in employment. Nevertheless, expansion of industrialisation saw increasing conflict between the owners of capital and the providers of labour over the next century, and Cockatoo Island Dockyard was not immune to these trends.

In the latter nineteenth century, employment in the dockyard, as operated by the Public Works Department, took a number of forms. Senior professionals and managers were on government employment contracts and, below these, skilled tradesmen, middle managers and supervisory staff were on wages. Staff numbers seem to have varied greatly—in 1893, only 110 employees are recorded but in 1900, 603 are listed.³¹ The vast majority of workers were employed as day labour, supplied by labour contractors (who may have been employed by the dockyard directly or as an independent contractor). The use of day labour was the normal practice on the wharves and within the building and construction industry in this era, and the Department of Public Works operated vast numbers of day labourers throughout the state on railway, road, harbour, water supply and sewerage building projects. The public works of the period reflected both the rapid growth in wealth of the colony following the discovery of gold and the subsequent population growth. From 154,205 (45,190 in Sydney) in 1841, the New South Wales population more than doubled to 350,860 (95,789 in Sydney) by 1861, and 30 years later was 1,123,954 (383,283 in Sydney) in 1891.³²

Through this expansion and throughout the late nineteenth century, industrial relations were increasingly regulated. The NSW *Trade Unions Act 1881* provided recognition and basic rights for Trade Unions and the *Factories and Shops Act 1885* set limits on work hours and established compensation for injuries. Trade Unions led a number of strikes during the 1890s, especially in the maritime and mining industries, but the failure of most actions to achieve their intentions, the public rancour at the involvement of the Police (similar things were occurring in other states) and the considerable cost of the disputes to all the parties involved saw the NSW Government legislate for compulsory arbitration. The NSW *Industrial Arbitration Act 1901* was an important change in

approach, as it represented the first real government involvement as a regulator in the labour marketplace. With the creation of the Commonwealth Government in 1901, the Commonwealth *Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904* was passed, creating a similar regime for the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Court's function was to settle industrial disputes extending beyond state boundaries. Disputes that did not extend beyond the jurisdiction of a particular state remained the responsibility of that state's industrial process.

Throughout this period, the dockyard was a relatively quiet workplace that records no major industrial disputes. As other commercial dry docks operated in Sydney Harbour and there was a busy shipping and ship repair industry, most tradesmen and shipwrights had alternative places to work. The Annual Reports of the Managing Committee comment specifically that 'owing to the great fluctuations in the volume of work passing through the dockyard, many good men have had to be put off and, when again required, have not been available'.³³ In 1906, staff numbers were reported to have fallen from 261 to 225, but by 1908, they were proudly expected to reach 400.³⁴

The Commonwealth Government Dockyard

When the Commonwealth Government took control of the dockyard in 1913, it had been greatly expanded since 1908 but was still inadequate for the Commonwealth's vision of a naval dockyard. The Joint Committee of Public Accounts review, published in 1915, states:

*The Dockyard gives employment to 2,500 men, representing some 50 trades and callings. There has been a considerable increase in the number of men engaged since the war.....The industrial conditions are for the most part governed by the Arbitration Court awards of the State of NSW. There are no less than 51 of these awards operative on the island. Difficulties in connection with 'demarcation' have not infrequently arisen.*³⁵

Further in the report, which discusses the problems of demarcation between Unions and the intractability of certain parts of the workforce, it records the complaint of the General Manager that:

*Here I am ... working under 51 awards and a new one crops up every day. How on earth can a man run an establishment of this sort and meet the contending forces of 51 different awards?*³⁶

The Committee also noted evidence from the President of the Boilermakers Society that 'the awards are not difficult to work under. There is little friction at Mort's Dock.....the Cockatoo Management had for the past three years been trying to play one section against another', a charge emphatically denied by the General Manager. The solution recommended by the General Manager was to establish Commonwealth awards (the Commonwealth had no standing in the State Arbitration Court) and the suggestion of a Union representative that a single agreement be formed to cover the dockyard was well-received and became a recommendation. The issue of the creation of Commonwealth awards was one that the Committee noted 'embodies a question of policy such as the Committee cannot take upon itself to determine'³⁷, whilst the President of the Boilermakers Society had reservations, suggesting that any Commonwealth award should apply to all states and all employees in the relevant trade.³⁸ In the event, it appears that an agreement of sorts was achieved and the dockyard

continued to operate. By 1919, staff numbers had risen to 4,085 but the Commonwealth Government was now questioning the value of its operations, particularly in the light of the postwar slump in Australia's naval ambitions. During 1921, it was decided that the dockyard was to be transferred away from the Navy to the Prime Minister's Department (to concentrate on commercial shipbuilding) and work in hand was suspended pending reviews and a final decision. By 9 March 1921, available funding had been exhausted and the majority of the workforce was immediately dismissed. Many were re-employed after 18 July, when operations resumed, but two of the Royal Commissioners appointed to enquire into the suspension of the dockyard's operation commented that 'the manner of the dismissal of the workmen ... seems to have been heartless and unjustifiable'.³⁹ The dockyard completed the work in hand, both naval and commercial, and pursued other non-shipping contracts to supplement its operations.

These events reflect also the growing awareness that the nineteenth century approach to employment was no longer appropriate and that the State Award system did not adequately address Commonwealth issues. The Ship Painters and Dockers Unions of NSW, Queensland and Victoria formed a Federal Union (first mooted by the NSW Union in 1904) in 1916 and, by 1918, the Commonwealth Arbitration Court had made a national award on pay and conditions for all three ports. Amongst other things, this National Award contained a special award in relation to Cockatoo Island and Garden Island, to allow for shift work 'when required'.

This National Award continued to be renewed, with improving work conditions and wages for the workers. By the mid-1920s, however, the management of the Melbourne Harbor (sic) Trust, Mort's Dock, Walsh Island and Cockatoo Island were applying to the Court for two rates: one for permanents and one for casuals, which the Unions protested would result in employees being moved to casual status. Whilst it appeared that, using Williamstown Dockyard as the example, casual employees were employed at four times the number of permanent staff, the Award of 1926 included differential rates of pay for permanent and casual staff.⁴⁰

The High Court Judgement handed down on 1 November 1927 that the Commonwealth Dockyard could not legally undertake commercial contracts was a serious blow to operations and the dockyard was offered for lease in 1928. At that time, 1,290 men were employed but, by 1933, when a lease was finally given, staff numbers had declined to 560 (and the new company retained only 306⁴¹).

The Company

Under private management, Cockatoo Island Dockyard joined the ranks of private employers, subject to award directions from the Arbitration Courts, and able to request Court orders to enforce agreements. Even so, it remained a prominent and often 'special case' employer at the Arbitration Court award hearings, partly owing to its government and military associations but also because it represented one of the largest single industrial workplaces in the nation, with staff numbers around 3,000, all highly unionised. Other prominent unions on the Island in the mid-twentieth century, in addition to the Ship Painters and Dockers Union, included the Federated Ironworkers Association,

the Boilermakers' Society, the Blacksmiths Union, the Plumbers and Gasfitters Union, Electrical Trades Union, the Australian Workers Union, Federated Shipwrights & Ship Constructors Association of Australia, Amalgamated Engineering Union, Federated Moulders (Metals) Union of Australia, the Sheet Metal Working Industrial Union of Australia and the Australian Timber Workers Union.

During World War II, a special Wartime Agreement between the company and the government included provision that no wages would be varied without Commonwealth agreement (a source of friction, where wartime prices for staple goods had risen sharply and other non-government workplaces were not so restricted). Under wartime legislation, workers in these industries were able to be directed to undertake work and were not free to resign without approval. Whilst these conditions were largely accepted by the unions, especially in the early part of the war, the non-payment of penalty rates for compulsory overtime was a matter of on-going tensions and disputes. In 1941, the New South Wales branches of the Ironworkers and the Boilermakers Unions attempted to ban more than 16 hours compulsory overtime (on a 48 hour week) but were overruled by the Federal executive of the unions, who supported the Labour Government's wartime economic controls. The wartime economy nevertheless provided opportunities to improve conditions and thus, for example, new toilet blocks appeared around the dockyard in 1942 and 1943.

Cockatoo Island Dockyard and Mort's Dock were also central to a significant political battle played out during the course of the war between the various political philosophies that were prominent in labour relations in the era. Communist, Fascist, Trotskyist and Imperialist labels defined factions and allegiances but one fundamental political battle related to the basic organisation of the union electorate. The Federal executives of the unions supported the war effort and the emergency working regulations but the Balmain rank and file of these unions, upon whom the policies were exercised and who represented the largest concentrations of union members in the country, were less convinced, especially by 1944, that the circumstances warranted their continued use. In March 1944, the Federated Ironworkers Association (FIA) Executive Committee was deploring the development of a 'breakaway movement' at Cockatoo Island and Morts Dockyards.⁴² However, the executive's attempt, in March 1945, to replace local FIA delegates with appointees from head office caused a six-week strike at both workplaces, a rare case of a workforce striking in protest against the actions of its own union.⁴³

In general, though, the industrial relations history at Cockatoo Island reflected the conditions elsewhere in comparable industry, whether government or private-owned; a consistency which was itself one of the objectives of unionisation. As ex-Chief Executive John Jeremy states, in relation to Cockatoo Island's reputation for disputes:

*In reality, of course, the Yard was working normally most of the time, as the unions and management worked out their problems on a day-to-day basis. Disputation was, however, common ... Disputes over demarcation, wages and conditions continued throughout the 1950s and 1960s...*⁴⁴

Throughout the rest of the twentieth century, unions argued for improved pay and conditions whilst employers argued for improved productivity and flexibility, each with varying degrees of success.

The 1970s to 1990s

In 1968, the *Port of Sydney Shipbuilding and Ship Repairing Industry Industrial Agreement* provided for common wages and conditions throughout the signatory waterfront industries. In 1976, this agreement became a Federal Award, known as the *Waterfront Agreement*, and was considered to be reasonably successful at stabilising what had traditionally been a highly disputatious industry.

However, Cockatoo Island Dockyard foresaw continuing problems with the traditional industrial relations system and, as it introduced new technologies, found the statutory constraints of the award system too inflexible for the changing ship-building industry. In 1984, Cockatoo Island Dockyard negotiated an agreement with the unions on the Island to discard traditional trade definitions and role demarcations and to retrain workers to address the technical requirements of the dockyard. This agreement had little actual effect on the dockyard in the event, as the decision to close the dockyard announced in 1987 cut across and negated the on-going changes being organised between the union groups and other stakeholders. It did, however, provide a model for significant changes to the organisation of the metal trades, which were subsequently implemented at other workplaces.⁴⁵

The proposed closure of the dockyard did have some direct industrial consequences, the first being a dispute in 1987 for increased redundancy pay for the workers being laid off. The second was an attempt to influence the government in its decision regarding the placement of the final submarine refits (ie not to place them elsewhere than at Cockatoo Island) and to draw attention to the upcoming redundancy of the Island's workforce. The 14 week strike and sit-in occupation of the Island had few positive results though, as the action had little political support within either the Australian Council of Trade Unions or the Labor Party government. The government offered an improved redundancy package and cash bonuses for completion of the submarine refits, which was eventually accepted.⁴⁶

Soon after the dockyard shut down, the *Industrial Relations Reform Bill 1993* was passed by this same government, the intention and effect of which was to abolish centralised wage fixing based on individual trades and unions and to establish workplace agreements that related to the particular needs of the individual workplace.⁴⁷ This new system basically enacted the types of changes commenced a decade earlier between the unions and management at Cockatoo Island Dockyard.

In this context and with hindsight, the history of industrial disputation of Cockatoo Island Dockyard appears to be not so much a reflection of a fractious workplace but, rather, it represents the tensions and disputes naturally occurring in a workplace which is at the 'front-line' of the nation's industrial development. Cockatoo Island Dockyard was disputatious in proportion with its relative importance in the overall work/employment history of Australia.

2.5.6 Apprentices at Cockatoo Island

The strength of Cockatoo Island lay in the people who worked there. This was particularly true of the apprentices, thousands of who passed through the Island's training schemes during its working life. While most would leave at the end of their training, the opportunity was there to stay on at the Island, with some staying for their entire working life.

Apprenticeship training was a common practice in the Australian workplace in the nineteenth century when the dockyard was first established, having been imported from Britain where forms of apprenticeships had been employed since the Middle Ages. The use of apprentice training was part of the working life of Sydney from the earliest days of the colony. Even with the numbers of convict labourers available, the need for skilled trade and crafts workers in the fledgling colony was recognised. Advertisements for apprentices were to be commonly found in the pages of the colonial papers such as the Sydney Gazette. The early need for apprentices was displayed in August 1805 when the editorial column of the Sydney Gazette commented on the lack of apprentices in Sydney despite the best effort of tradesmen to offer the opportunity of a trade to the young men of the town.⁴⁸

The opening of the dockyard provided a new workplace for apprentice training in Sydney. Despite the use of convict labour in the docks, skilled artisans were still required for ship repair and construction. The maintenance of the required skill levels was therefore important to allow for the continued successful operation of the ship yards, particularly after 1870 when the NSW Harbours and Rivers Department was administering the site. Large numbers of mechanics, iron workers, carpenters, shipwrights and other related trades were employed on the Island from this time, with each trade having its own apprentice training attached to it.

As a state and then federal employer, Cockatoo Island was in the forefront of apprenticeship training and also regulation, through the sheer weight of numbers of apprentices that the Island employed. During peak times the Island employed up to 400 apprentices, with the number sometimes being up to half of the number of qualified tradespeople. On the Island, as elsewhere, the apprentices were indentured into their particular field, such as plumbing, joinery, painting or draughting amongst others.⁴⁹

With a high number of workers operating in a variety of fields, covered by a collection of different unions, it was also the case that many test case scenarios and developments in apprenticeship training were handled on Cockatoo Island before being generally accepted in the workplace. Reforms such as the NSW Apprentices Act of 1894 and the consolidated NSW Apprentices Act 1901, which established the ground rules for employing apprentices such as a minimum age of 14 years, binding apprentices by indenture, a maximum apprenticeship period of seven years (later reduced to four) and procedures for the settlement of disputes and differences, were readily incorporated into the operating systems of Cockatoo dockyard. Further, the 1908 NSW Industrial Disputes Act gave the first mention of apprentices in industrial legislation, ensuring their place in industrial relations matters from then onwards.⁵⁰

As with other workplaces, once apprentices finished their training, many left the dockyard either through choice or due to insufficient work to employ them full time. On average, Cockatoo Island retained around twenty percent of each apprentice intake at the end of their training.⁵¹ However, the wide range of skills that were taught also meant that the opportunity existed for promotion from the trades into overseer or management positions. Examples included men like HG Ross, general manager from 1955 to 1960, who started as an apprentice fitter in 1912, and Ron Joselin, who followed Ross as general manager between 1960 and 1975, and started as an apprentice boilermaker in 1938. The last Managing Director of the Island dockyard before its closure, John Jeremy, started as an apprentice in the drawing office in January, 1960. Many of the workers presented with awards for long service (over 35 years of continual service) in 1982 had started on the Island as apprentices.⁵²

The size and variety of the workplace that was Cockatoo island provided a unique opportunity to apprentices on the Island. While for many apprentices off the Island their apprenticeship was often spent with a limited number of tradesmen, those on Cockatoo were exposed to a variety of trades and skills. One result of this was that during its working life, the Island gained a reputation for producing the best tradespeople, because of their high level of training and the wide variety of skills that the apprentices learned and were expected to know. Many of the apprentices were moved around the Island as a way of experiencing different aspects of the shipbuilding trade. This also contributed to a 'family' atmosphere on the Island, by indicating the reliance of each section on the others. The deep skill base of the older tradesmen also rubbed off on the new workers.

Recognising the importance of good training, Cockatoo Island established a special apprentice training school from 1945. At first the school was for fitters and turners, boilermakers and joiners, who were given extensive tuition in the use of manual tools before proceeding on to machine tools. The apprentices were kept segregated from the main workforce for two years to allow good practices and routines to be established in their work (from the 1980s the training centre was located on top of the Island). The schools were supervised by experienced tradesmen or foremen, who could pass on the required knowledge and direct the students towards a practical goal.⁵³ Cockatoo Island was one of the first workplaces in Australia to institute such a training school.

Training was intense and closely supervised. Jobs were set for the apprentices to complete, the next job not being started until the previous one was completed to the accepted standard of the foreman in charge. On leaving the Training Centre, apprentices would be assigned to jobs in the yard as demand required, with an average of six months in each section. A second training scheme for engineering apprentices was established at the Island in 1952, in a converted upper level (former brass fitters shop) of Building 138, within the sandstone workshops close to Fitzroy Dock.

The establishment of the training centres in the 1940s and 1950s came at a time when numbers of employees at Cockatoo Island were at some of the highest levels, coming off the work program of the Second World War. They were also established during a wider period of complacency over apprenticeship training in the general working community beyond the Island. Steady economic

growth and a high level of job security in the general community had brought with it an acceptance of the old system of apprenticeship training, where young workers were indentured to either a single tradesman or employer and taught on the job, with no other trade or apprentice education. As a reasonable supply of skilled labour had entered Australia after World War II through immigration policies, little was being done domestically to ensure the continuation of a skilled workforce.⁵⁴

During this period it was widely felt that in terms of apprenticeships the governments were third parties, after employers and unions who dealt most closely with apprenticeships. The fear of unnecessary industrial disputes through too much interference led to much talking but little action in regard to government regulation for training. The training centres at Cockatoo Island were in a unique position of being able to overcome this problem, in that both the employers and the unions on the Island recognised the benefits of training skilled workers and the close involvement with the federal government, meant all three parties could work together to obtain the best training results.

Apprentices were distinguished by the colour of their overalls; draughtsman wore white overalls, joiners wore khaki and those on the tools in the yard wore blue. The rigor of the selection process was also recognised outside Cockatoo dockyard. An apprentice accepted at the Island was recognised as being at the top of the field. The naval yards at Garden Island, as an example, considered acceptance at Cockatoo Island by prospective apprentices as being sufficient qualification for work at Garden Island as well.⁵⁵ Further, when at TAFE, the trainees of Cockatoo Island often stood out over the other apprentices, with some remembering explaining to apprentices from other workplaces the fundamentals of the trade, and of being in front of the class in terms of practical experience.⁵⁶

One of the benefits was the wide range of available jobs to do. Apprentices would have the opportunity to work on projects as diverse as the submarine refit program, fitting out a new ship, working on power station turbines or other specialised apprentice projects. Unlike in other workplaces, the apprentices at Cockatoo Island were indentured to the place rather than a single tradesman. Through this system each apprentice, over the time of their training, was able to gather a wide range of experience in a variety of jobs and skills.

By the 1970s the training system for apprentices outside Cockatoo Island was also being reformed. In the early 1970s, the Commonwealth government began to take a more active role in apprenticeship training, firstly with the introduction in 1973 of the National Apprenticeship Assistance Scheme (NAAS) which provided financial assistance to encourage employers to take on first year apprentices and in 1974, following the report of the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education (ACOTFE), to provide financial assistance to TAFE. Combined; both decisions were critical to the overall development of trade training. During this same period 68% of apprentices in Australia were employed in workplaces where only one or two apprentices were working. In terms of skill development the reforms were viewed as necessary for the ongoing development of skills training.

Another of the advantages of the Cockatoo Island apprenticeship system was the number of specialised projects that were carried out at Cockatoo Island to expose apprentices to a variety of maritime work. George McGoogan, who had started as an apprentice on the Island in 1942, spent much of his last years at the Island organising and running special apprentice projects that were designed to broaden the skills of the apprentices and continue the traditional boatbuilding skills that were a part of the Island's heritage. Projects such as the construction of a replica 'jolly' boat to re-enact the voyage of Lieutenant Ralph Clark up the Parramatta River in 1790 were amongst the more unusual. The boat was commissioned by the Lane Cove Council and was built from scratch using only hand tools, some of which actually dated from the 1790s and had been in the family of a worker at the Island. The boat was used to re-enact a number of Clark's voyages, using the apprentices as oarsmen on the journeys.⁵⁷

McGoogan also supervised the restoration of the 18-foot yacht *Yendys*. The yacht had been a regular winner in harbour races throughout the 1930s and 1940s, but had been neglected and left to rot. Again the apprentice program was used to fully restore the craft to sailing condition and it was sailed by the apprentices upon its completion. Both *Yendys* and the jolly boat are now in the National Maritime Museum in Sydney.⁵⁸ Other projects included the restoration in 1983 of a triple expansion reciprocating steam engine from the steamer *Pheasant*, built in 1879, now housed in the Powerhouse Museum, and the restoration of part of two of the Japanese midget submarines that were involved in the attack on Sydney Harbour in May 1942.

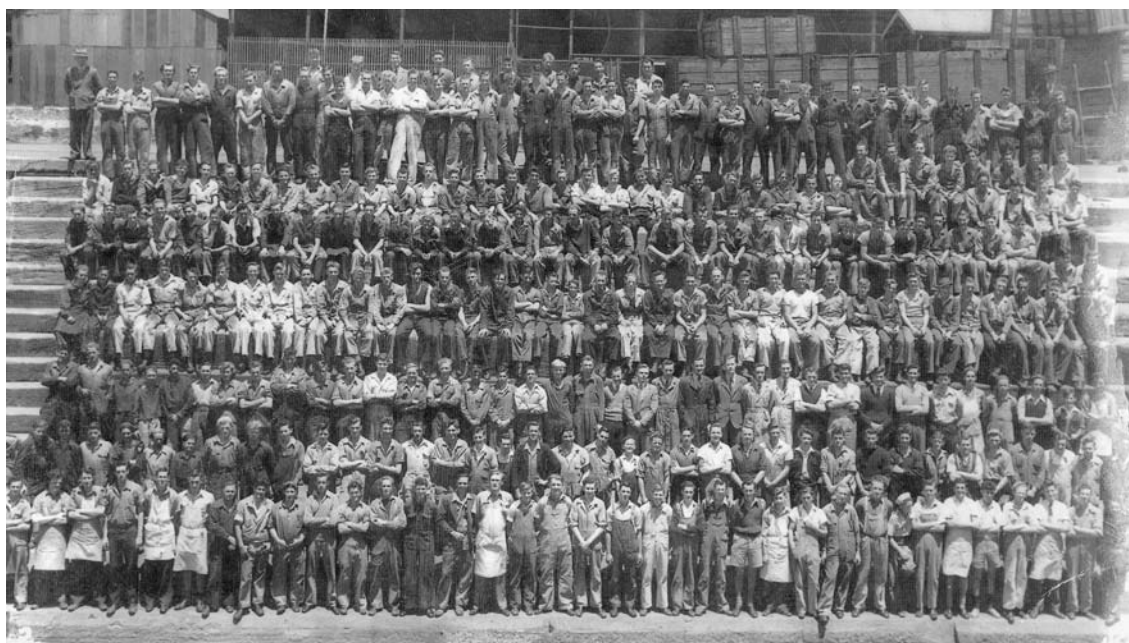


Figure 2.40 Cockatoo Island's strength lay in its workers. At its peak the dockyard employed up to 400 apprentices across a range of trades. Approximately 240 dockyard apprentices photographed in the Fitzroy Dock in 1947 are shown above (Source: Jeremy, Cockatoo Island: Sydney's Historic Dockyard, UNSW Press, Sydney).



Figure 2.41 Apprentice learning the trade with an experienced tradesman at Cockatoo Island in 1965. The establishment of the Apprentice Training Centre after the Second World War entrenched a system of quality apprenticeship training at Cockatoo Island that set it as a benchmark for apprentice training in New South Wales. This photo shows the interior of the upper level of Building 138 where the Engineering Apprentice Training was conducted (Source: National Archives of Australia).



Figure 2.42 The 18-foot racing yacht *Yendys*, restored by the apprentices in 1983, sailing past the dockyards. *Yendys* had once raced on Sydney Harbour in the 1920s and 1930s. Her name is Sydney spelt backwards (Australian Sea Heritage No. 3, August 1984).

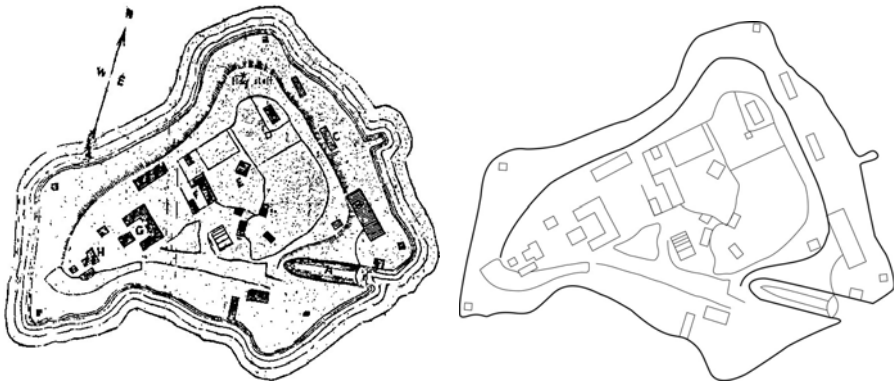
2.5.7 Endnotes

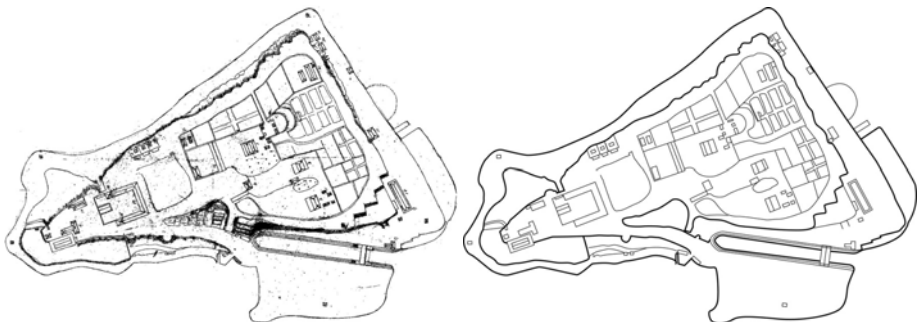
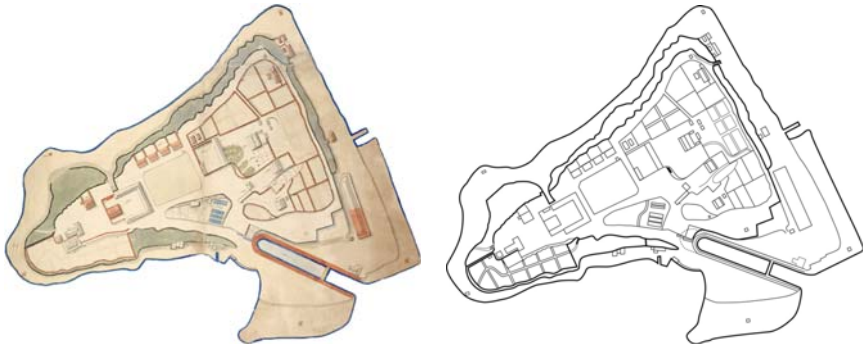
- ¹ *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council* 1841 pp77 & 113. No 34 Wednesday 29 December 1841.
- ² Cited in Frame, TR, *The Garden Island*, Kangaroo Press, Sydney 1990, p33.
- ³ Ibid, p87.
- ⁴ Evans, V. *Shipbuilding in Sydney Harbour*, unpublished manuscript, 1980.
- ⁵ Cited in Frame TR, op cit, p152.
- ⁶ Minutes of the Executive Council, in *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council*, 1870, Vol 1, pp681–687
- ⁷ EW O'Sullivan, Minister for Public Works, 1899–1904 was an Irish Catholic and Trade Unionist and former President of the NSW Labour Council. The inquiry was established by the new Progressive Party government with opposing political philosophies. See also Sheldon, Peter, *Job Control for Workers' Health: The 1908 Sydney Rockchoppers' Strike*, paper presented to Workers Control Conference, 10–12 October 2003, University of Technology, Sydney, reprinted in OzLeft Forum: <http://members.optushome.com.au/spainter/Choppers.html>
- ⁸ Jeremy, J 1998, *Cockatoo Island—Sydney's Historic Dockyard*, UNSW Press, p38.
- ⁹ Ibid, p52.
- ¹⁰ Ibidem, pp48–54, 69.
- ¹¹ Ibid, p50.
- ¹² Registered (14/05/1991) Place ID: 1827 Place File No: 1/12/022/0089;
- ¹³ Refer also Clark, M S and J, *The Islands of Sydney Harbour*, Kangaroo Press, 2000, pp36–71.
- ¹⁴ The author of this section of the history, Tony Brassil, was the principal consultant representative for Godden Mackay Logan Pty Ltd during this period.
- ¹⁵ Cockatoo Island Rehabilitation Consortium, *Draft Environmental Characterisation Report*, Report for the Department of Defence, April 1998.
- ¹⁶ Jeremy op cit, pp 187–191; also Clark, M S and J, op cit, pp63–65.
- ¹⁷ Godden Mackay Logan Pty Ltd, Draft Section 30 Referral, Report to the Department of Defence, 1997
- ¹⁸ Refer also Clark, MS and J, *The Islands of Sydney Harbour*, Kangaroo Press, 2000, pp65–69.
- ¹⁹ Bob Carr Speech, 19 August 1977, cited in Evatt Foundation News, 09 December 1997 article: *Tom Uren Honoured by Sydney University*, <http://evatt.org.au/news/154.html>
- ²⁰ Media release, Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator the Hon Ian Campbell, 29 March 2005.
- ²¹ Haglund, L, 1988, Mosman Heritage Study: Analysis of Aboriginal Occupation, report for Travis Partners, Pty Ltd for Mosman Council.
- ²² Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) *The Recognition Of Aboriginal Customary Laws*, Report for the Attorney General of Australia, 1 December 1985.
- ²³ Bridges, B, *The Aborigines and the Law: New South Wales 1788–1855* (1970) 4 Teaching History 40
- ²⁴ Correspondence—Bourke to Secretary of State, HRNSW, 1 May 1835, cited in *These Are My People This Is My Land*, NSW Department of School Education, Sydney <http://www.rumbalara-e.schools.nsw.edu.au/publications - mypeople1.pdf> and [mypeople2.pdf](http://www.rumbalara-e.schools.nsw.edu.au/publications - mypeople2.pdf)
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ Correspondence and Reports, 1849–1851, State Records of NSW, cited in Annable, R, *Cockatoo Island Convict-era Remains, Contextual History*, NSW Dept of Commerce, 2005.
- ²⁷ Most famously, Billy Blue, of Blues Point and Customs Officer for Sydney Harbour under Governor Macquarie, was of African descent and arrived in NSW from Jamaica via England.
- ²⁸ The major events of this action are recorded in a series of articles by David Rose and printed in the IndyMedia website: http://www.sydney.indymedia.org.au/front.php3?article_id=2604

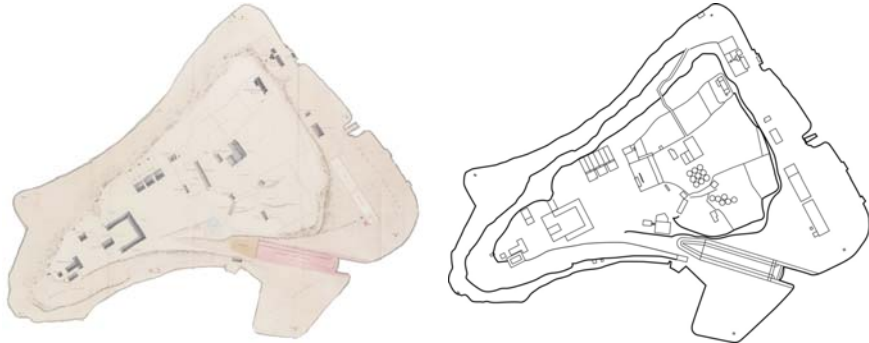
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- ²⁹ This information is, naturally, unsubstantiated, as it is based upon interpretation of the texts of the journals of early European settlers in the colony, plus the verbal traditions of the members of the local Aboriginal groups. There is also confusion in some early texts as to the name 'Cockatoo Island', which is applied to the present Goat Island on some early maps.
- ³⁰ Gollan, V, *The Significance of Goat Island to Aborigines in the Early Years of NSW*, nd, NPWS manuscript, cited in Clark, MS and J, *The Islands of Sydney Harbour*, Kangaroo Press, 2000.
- ³¹ Jeremy, op cit, p 21
- ³² NSW Census figures cited in Kelly, M and Crocker, R, *Sydney Takes Shape*, Doak Press, Sydney 1978.
- ³³ Annual Report of the Managing Committee, Government Dockyard, Biloela, NSW Government, 1906, p83.
- ³⁴ Annual Report of the Managing Committee, Government Dockyard, Biloela, NSW Government, 1908.
- ³⁵ Commonwealth of Australia, Report from the Joint Committee of Public Accounts upon the Commonwealth Naval Dockyard, Cockatoo Island, NSW, 1914–1915.
- ³⁶ Ibid, p15.
- ³⁷ Ibid, p21.
- ³⁸ A proposal now adopted as policy by the Liberal Government and currently subject to a legal constitutional challenge.
- ³⁹ Jeremy op cit p34
- ⁴⁰ Wyner, I 2003, *My Union Right or Wrong—A history of the Ship Painters and Dockers Union, 1900–1932*, Takver, Sydney.
- ⁴¹ McGooghan, G, *Changes in a Working Lifetime at Cockatoo*, Transcript of Speech given 27 July 1987 at Cockatoo Dockyard 1985 Foremen's Conference.
- ⁴² Gollan, Daphne; 'The Balmain Ironworkers' Strike of 1945', paper published in *Labour History*, November, 1972.
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ Jeremy, op cit, pp200–202.
- ⁴⁵ Jeremy, op cit, p51,
- ⁴⁶ Kelly, Lindy 1990, *No surrender : the story of the 1989 Cockatoo Island Dockyard dispute*, Sydney, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History (Sydney Branch).
- ⁴⁷ 'Keating Responds To IR Changes', interview on ABC Radio; PM Program, 19 July 2005, 18:20:00; reporter: Karen Percy; transcript: www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2005/s1417833.htm
- ⁴⁸ *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 18 August 1805, p2
- ⁴⁹ Jeremy, J 1998 (2005 edition), *Cockatoo Island: Sydney's Historic Dockyard*, UNSW Press, Sydney, p200.
- ⁵⁰ Ray, J 2001 *Apprenticeship in Australia: An historical snapshot* (web edition), National Centre for Vocational Education Research, p7.
- ⁵¹ Jeremy, op cit, p199.
- ⁵² See Godden Mackay Logan, Cockatoo Island Oral History prepared for Sydney Property Disposal Unit December 1999.
- ⁵³ Parker, op cit, p65.
- ⁵⁴ Ray, op cit, p12.
- ⁵⁵ Interview with Steve Matthews undertaken for Godden Mackay Logan, Cockatoo Island Oral History prepared for Sydney Property Disposal Unit December 1999
- ⁵⁶ Interview with John Corrie, op cit undertaken for Godden Mackay Logan, Cockatoo Island Oral History prepared for Sydney Property Disposal Unit December 1999.
- ⁵⁷ Jeremy, op cit, p200.
- ⁵⁸ Interview with George McGoogan, undertaken for Godden Mackay Logan, Cockatoo Island Oral History prepared for Sydney Property Disposal Unit December 1999.

2.6 History of Cockatoo Island Dockyard: Chronological Development

2.6.1 Chronology

Phase	Event
Phase 1 1845–1869	The Early Dockyard
1841	September: Governor Gipps proposed 'to confine at Cockatoo Island the great majority of the class of Prisoners formerly sent to Norfolk Island'.
Early 1840s	Excavation and construction of 17 grain silos in the bedrock of Cockatoo Island as food stores.
1845	NSW Legislative Council approached Governor Gipps to ask Her Majesty's Government for funds for the construction of a dry dock facility. Cockatoo Island was recommended as the most suitable place.
1847	Work was approved for dry dock construction.
1848	Excavation work for Fitzroy Dock began, using convict labour.
1854	<p>July: Governor Fitz Roy laid the keystone for the new dry dock.</p>  <p>1854—Construction of the Dockyard JW Thomas, Resident Engineer, 1854, <i>Sketch Plan—Cockatoo Island</i>, published in <i>Illustrated Sydney News</i>, 17 June 1854.</p>

Phase	Event
1857	<p>Fitzroy Dock was completed, and accepted its first vessel on 1 December 1857. The dock was used for servicing only Navy vessels until the 1860s.</p> <p>Until the closure of the prison in 1869, the dockyard operated as a basic utility with few skilled employees, with convicts providing labour.</p>  <p>1857—Opening of Fitzroy Dock GK Mann, 1857, <i>Plan to Illustrate Return of Buildings</i>, Report of Board of Inquiry into Cockatoo Island, SRNSW 4/723 No. 58/92.</p>  <p>1857—Opening of Fitzroy Dock Unknown Source, <i>Plan of Cockatoo Island, 1857</i>, Taken from Survey of 1845 showing Improvements, Mitchell Library, Z M3 811.15/Cockatoo Island/1857/1.</p>
1858	89 free people were living on Cockatoo Island, including 14 married women and 44 children.
1859	Site on Cockatoo Island was considered for the site of the Royal Navy Depot.
1860	<p>September: GK Mann assumed control of the Island as Chief Engineer and Superintendent of the Prison, reporting to the Under Secretary for Public Works.</p> <p>Mann appreciated tensions between the functions of the Island as a working dockyard and penal colony, and moved towards abandoning prison structures in place of a 'properly fitted up Prison Hulk'.</p> <p>258 prisoners lived on Cockatoo Island at this time.</p>

Phase	Event
1860s	<p>John Cuthbert hired Fitzroy Dock to perform repairs to the HMS <i>Galatea</i> and the HMS <i>Charybdis</i>, and his firm maintained exclusive rights to work on ships of the French Navy, such as HMS <i>Dorada</i>, repaired at Fitzroy Dock in 1868.</p>  <p>1861—Completion of Engineering Workshop Building and New Pumphouse GK Mann, <i>Plan of Cockatoo Island, Sydney Harbour, 1861</i>, Papers of the Select Committee on Public Prisons in Sydney and Cumberland, V & PLA `861, Vol. 1, Mitchell Library, MDQ 328.9106/4.</p>