



FREMANTLE PORTS

# ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

*50 years*



FREMANTLE  
PORTS

*Celebrating the heritage of an  
enduring landmark on Victoria Quay*

# *Celebrating the heritage of an enduring landmark on Victoria Quay*



**Chris Leatt-Hayter**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Fremantle Ports

Over the past fifty years this handsome landmark on Victoria Quay has served its purpose well. Like the harbour it overlooks, it was designed and built in an intelligent way to meet the needs of the time, with a view to the future.

At the time of its construction, Western Australia was in a period of economic expansion. Shipping technology was changing and port infrastructure with it.

The Administration Building introduced a bold statement of modernity, contrasting in scale and style with the buildings it overlooks, yet contributing in a way that is both aesthetic and practical. The new and different working well with the old.

On a personal note, this building has been my "home from home" for many years and I feel fortunate to experience daily its many features, particularly its superb views of shipping and cargo handling activity.

Important also to me are the people who work here and the journey we share in continuing to build on the heritage of our working port.

The 50th anniversary is an excellent opportunity to celebrate the progress overseen from this building and to look forward to further success.



*The Fremantle Ports Administration Building with its newer neighbour further west on Victoria Quay, the Western Australian Maritime Museum*





Cliff Street entrance circa 1964

Since its opening on 5th March 1964, the Fremantle Ports Administration Building on Victoria Quay has been the operational hub of Western Australia's principal general cargo port.

The features of this Fremantle landmark with its impressive views over the working port have been enjoyed by many hundreds who have worked in the building over the years. The building also has many admirers amongst architects, engineers and others in the community who appreciate the elegance of style, functionality, innovative features and responsiveness to context.

The 11 storey building at 1 Cliff Street is on the site of the original Fremantle Harbour Trust Building which had been in service since the 1890s until being demolished in 1961.

The new tower block was opened by the Premier of Western Australia, the Hon David Brand MLA. Its completion enabled administrative activities to be centralised, with relocation of staff previously housed in eight buildings around the wharf area.

The structures of Victoria Quay reflect phases in Western Australia's economic development. The Administration Building and its contemporary, the Fremantle Passenger Terminal, belong to a period of affluence, benefitting from a mineral boom, large-scale immigration, technological advancement and modernisation.

Over the decades, the Administration Building and its port people have welcomed many visitors, witnessed many events, weathered many storms, overseen great changes and celebrated many achievements. This booklet has been produced to commemorate the building's 50th anniversary.



The old Fremantle Harbour Trust Building 1960



*“Historically, this building stands as a landmark in the development of the Port of Fremantle. It is a fitting symbol for a rapidly-growing, modern port with a great future.”*

*Extract from the Premier's speech*

*The Hon David Brand MLA, Premier of Western Australia, opened the new building on 5 March 1964. The event was held in the auditorium, which had seating for 230 people, with a stage, screen and projection room.*





*Mr Frank Tydeman, General Manager Fremantle Harbour Trust (1950 to 1965) provided the leadership to usher the port into the modern era of mechanisation and containerisation. With him (right) is Mr Hugh Rudderham, Assistant General Manager.*



*The steam tug Wilga, pictured alongside B Shed and nearby Administration Building, was a familiar sight operating in the port until 1973.*

# Architecture, construction and special features

The building design is described as Post War International. Hallmarks of this architectural style are simplification of form, with rectangular footprint, industrial building materials of glass, steel and concrete, curtain walls, windows in horizontal bands and grids, flat roofs and minimal ornamentation. Other examples of this style locally are the Fremantle Passenger Terminal 1960-62 (same design and construction team) and Council House in Perth.

The architects were Hobbs, Winning and Leighton, the building contractor was A.T. Brine and Sons and the Fremantle Port Authority's consulting engineer for the project was C.P. Morgan. When built, at a cost of £650,000, its size exceeded the needs of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, and some areas have been tenanted at times.

The main building has a basement housing services and parking, eight main floors (with an observation deck) and a three-level tower that includes the signal station.

The steel-framed office building topped by the signal station is carried on 120 "franki" piles (pressure injected footings) driven to an average depth of 9 metres.



Main entrance - Cliff Street



At the time of construction the building was considered in many ways to be ahead of its time, both in terms of its "fit for purpose" design features and in its systems.



*The steel frame of the building was completed in early 1963.*

One of several interesting architectural features incorporated to take into account the exposed and often harsh environment is a folded roof of pre-stressed concrete panels over the ground floor podium, with tinted glass to control heat, glare and fade.

Significant attention has been given to the orientation of the building for controlled natural lighting, avoiding direct sunlight from the east and west. Windows on the ground floor and north side of the building are protected with fixed vertical and horizontal sun baffles. All windows are in anodised aluminium frames, have anti-glare glazing and are completely reversible for ease of cleaning.



*View from Phillimore Street*

*Architecture, construction  
and special features*



*At the time of building, the folded roof of concrete panels was the only known roof of its type in Australia.*





*Aerial view showing observation deck*



*The ground floor has two garden courts.*



*Staff gather in the eastern courtyard for occasions such as welcomes and farewells.*



*Kerry Sanderson, General Manager (later Chief Executive Officer) from 1991 until 2008, steered Fremantle Ports successfully through a major transformation to an organisation with a more strategic and commercial focus.*



*The Administration Building foyer as it is today.*



*Fremantle Port Authority Hostess in the foyer as it was when the building opened in 1964*

White tiling for the exterior cladding was designed not only “to give a permanent, sparkling effect” but also to protect the building against heat and corrosion. Its durability has proved its worth at the approximate cost of £20,000 for tiling, but significant refurbishment was undertaken 2006 to 2011 with exterior maintenance planned for the ground floor podium in coming years.

Tiling has been used also for the interior walls of the ground floor foyer for reduced maintenance as well as effect, and in this heavily trafficked concourse, the floors are of Western Australian hardwoods (Jarrah and Wandoo), with brass inlay.

FREMANTLE PORT  
ADMINISTRATION  
Foyer

# Signal Station

The signal station and mast above the office tower replaced the Cantonment Hill signal station which was constructed for the port in 1956. The 11th floor has 360 degree views for unobstructed observation of the Inner and Outer Harbours and approaches. The station was fitted out with the latest navigational and communication equipment for its day.

Immediately below on the 10th floor, ship bookings are processed to allocate berths and services according to expected time of arrival, type of ship and cargo handling needs.



*Top left: The earlier signal station on Cantonment Hill is now under the administration of the City of Fremantle.*

*Top right: The signal station and tower today*

*Bottom: Mick Brindal, Head Signalman circa 1965*

# Technology

When constructed, the Administration Building was considered to be ahead of its time not only in terms of its innovative design, but also in some of its operational systems.

The signal station was fitted out with the latest navigational and communication equipment. Newer technology has been introduced since that time, notably the Automatic Identification System (AIS) which improves vessel traffic management by enabling the port to identify and monitor ships, tracking their position, course and speed.

Fremantle Ports retains the knowledge and ability to manage its shipping program manually, in the event that this may be required. In normal day-to-day operations, however, interfacing electronic systems are used. One of these is Dynamic Under Keel Clearance, developed by Australian maritime engineering company OMC International to increase the efficiency and safety of large ships transiting in depth-restricted channels. Required information on waves, currents and tides is transmitted from beacons and buoys in port waters to equipment mounted on the exterior of the Administration Building.

The air conditioning system today still uses water pumped from deep bores adjacent to the harbour.

The automatic telephone exchange installed in the Administration Building was the latest of its type (Pentaconta PABX), with a brochure commemorating the opening of the building noting the absence of cords and plugs in favour of the telephonist's "keysender". As with almost all technology, however, the remarkable becomes standard when replaced with the new.



*Cruise ship Queen Mary 2 is one of the largest ships visiting Fremantle Port's, Inner Harbour.*

*A new communications system installed in the signal tower has modernised the process of contacting ships, agents and other operators for the Vessel Traffic Services Officers who coordinate the shipping.*

*Matt Scott (foreground) and Noel Livett (rear, right) use the new communications equipment, watched by Jay Illingworth.*



*The observation deck above the office tower carries a range of equipment associated with port operations.*



*Captain Allan Gray, who joined Fremantle Ports in July 2006, was appointed Harbour Master in October 2008.*



*Captain Eric Atkinson retired in 2008 after 29 years at Fremantle Ports (initially as a marine pilot) and 20 years as Fremantle Ports' longest serving Harbour Master.*

Top left: VDU (Visual Display Unit) operators June Barbour, Pat Beattie and Sandra Pflugmacher



Right: telex operator, 8th Floor

Bottom left: Mary Trotter, switchboard operator



# Technology

## Artworks

Located opposite the main entrance of the Administration Building is a statue of C.Y. O'Connor, the great civil engineer who designed and built Fremantle Harbour.

This bronze work, mounted on a pedestal of Western Australian granite, is by Italian-born sculptor Pietro Porcelli, who won the commission in an Australia-wide design competition ahead of 16 other competitors. The popular sculptor was responsible for many sculptures and memorials in Western Australia.

The C.Y. O'Connor Memorial, unveiled on 23 June 1911, was originally located in front of the old Harbour Trust Offices. It was relocated in 1920 near the steps of the Immigration Office further east along Victoria Quay and moved once again in 1973/74 to the front of the Administration Building. The base of the pedestal has plaques depicting O'Connor's greatest achievements: Mundaring Weir, the Goldfields Pipeline Scheme, Fremantle Harbour and the Swan View railway tunnel.

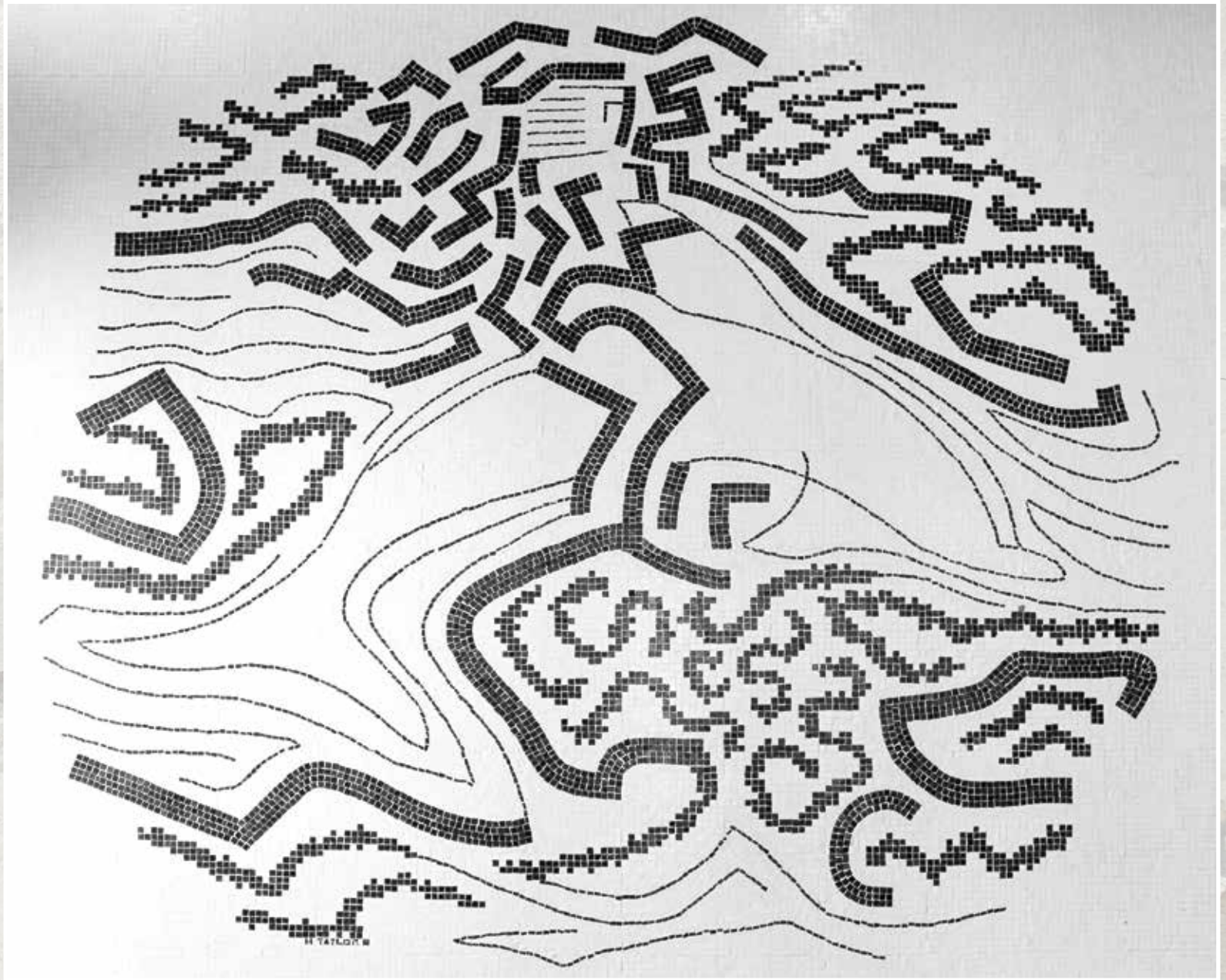


*The C.Y. O'Connor Memorial was cleaned in 2013 under expert guidance to remove a build-up of contaminants.*



*Plaque depiction of Fremantle Harbour entrance*

The Administration Building houses commissioned works by Howard Taylor, regarded today as one of Australia's most significant artists of the 20th century. A mosaic mural on the western wall of the ground floor foyer is entitled Portunas after the Roman god of ports and harbours. Originally, this deity protected keys and doors but his guardian function changed to ensuring a safe return for seafarers. The mural describes the patterns of water movement and depicts the well-known story of the boy who rode a dolphin to guide ships into harbour. The presence of bottlenose dolphins in the Inner Harbour and their often observed habit of escorting ships in and out of port, adds to the appropriateness of theme.



*Artworks*

Portunas mosaic

Also by Howard Taylor is a full mural on the eastern wall of what was originally a meeting room and is now used as a staff lunch room. This work is a sinusoidal projection of the world incorporating 53 images of ships which have a place in the history of Western Australia. The earliest is Dirk Hartog's *D'Eendracht* which visited in 1616.

Other Howard Taylor commissions (friezes of flora and fauna) can be seen in the Fremantle Passenger Terminal.

Artworks

Artist's impression of auditorium





*Howard Taylor mural commissioned for the 1st floor auditorium*

## Changing times

Ports are dynamic operations and since the opening of the Administration Building much has changed.

Just one month after the building was opened, MV *Kooringa*, the world's first fully cellular purpose built container ship, berthed at Fremantle, marking the introduction of containerisation and a more efficient way to handle general cargo.

As well as changes in shipping and how cargo is handled, there have been physical changes to port layout, new elements added to the business of the port, the introduction of stricter security requirements and more stringent environmental regulations to meet.

Fremantle Ports' overall role has changed, shifting the emphasis from largely operational to one of trade facilitation and many of the operational and maintenance services once undertaken by Fremantle Ports are now undertaken by the private sector. The Fremantle Harbour Trust became the Fremantle Port Authority in November 1964, the organisation was commercialised in 1996 as a Western Australian Government trading enterprise, and its trading name changed to Fremantle Ports in 2002.

*A picture of concentration as he sorts the mail while deftly holding a granny smith apple in his mouth. This photo of Tony Whittleton making deliveries on Victoria Quay was taken in 1962, with construction of the Administration Building then underway.*



Such changes have resulted in changes in focus and the nature of the work undertaken in the Administration Building. Some branches such as Handling and Custody of Cargo have been renamed or no longer exist. Other branches such as Logistics, Technical Computing, Corporate Information Services, Environment, Business Improvement Planning and Strategic Asset Management have come into being on the organisational chart. With the western end of Victoria Quay less required today for operational purposes, a Fremantle Waterfront branch has been established to manage the planned revitalisation of this area.

Working together within the building are, among others: marine operations, logistics information technology and safety specialists, vessel traffic services officers, engineers, planners, economists, trade development and property managers, environmental scientists, accountants, human resources and procurement personnel, public relations advisers, records management staff and administrative support people.

The marine pilots servicing the port originally operated from the Administration Building, but this activity was privatised in 1994 and the pilot company, Fremantle Pilots, operating under contract to Fremantle Ports, is now located nearby in separate premises.



Kevin Edward, Manager Port Operations



Wharf Department circa 1967



Wharf labour allocations 1968



Accounts staff circa 1982



Pilots' lounge 1981



8th floor receptionist 1968



There have been cultural changes too. The seventh floor no longer houses a staff cafeteria and executive dining room (with ante room) and though fondly remembered by long-serving staff, the popular institution of the tea trolley disappeared many years ago. So too did the typing pool and the role of port chauffeur.

The staff canteen, which moved to the annex adjacent to the Administration Building and later to the foyer of the Administration Building, closed in 2013.

*Top left: Cafeteria crew and customer circa 1969*

*Top right: Port chauffeur, Ian Kay (1970)*

*Bottom left: circa 1965, 7th floor Cafeteria*

*Bottom right: Engineering clerk George Garman with tea lady Violet Pitmann*



*Top left: Hostess in foyer (circa 1965)*

*Top right: Wharf Department 1988*

*Bottom left: One of the items of interest in the ground floor foyer is a model of the vessel Orford. This ship, built by Vickers Armstrongs Ltd in 1928 for the Orient Steam Navigation Company, made 48 trips to Fremantle.*

*The Orford model was donated to Fremantle Ports in the early 1980s and was refurbished in 2002 by model maker Lee Mills.*

# Events and Visitors

*Sailors on the yardarms of the Mexican sail training ship Cuauhtémoc which visited Fremantle Port June 2006*







Top left: Fremantle Ports' Administration Building was used for briefings during the America's Cup defence in 1987.

Top right: Achille Lauro was one of several passenger ships used for visitor accommodation during the America's Cup defence.

Bottom left: The Boxing Kangaroo, epitomising the Australian fighting spirit, was flown at the entrance to the Administration Building during the America's Cup defence.

Bottom right: Celebrating another great sporting event, the Melbourne Cup in 2011, from left to right: Sam Rauf, Jennifer Hall, Sophie Gillespie, Jay Illingworth, Eugenie Ong and Nigel Saunders



*1977 visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as part of an extended tour of Australia for her Silver Jubilee.*



*Her Royal Highness Princess Anne was a special guest at the time of the America's Cup defence in February 1987.*



*His Royal Highness Prince Charles toured the signal station when visiting Western Australia in 1979.*



*His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, last Emperor of Ethiopia, visited Fremantle Port in 1968.*



*Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother boarding the Fremantle Port Authority vessel Challenger I in 1966.*



*The sister ports of Fremantle and Nagoya celebrated the 30th anniversary of their close relationship in November 2013 when officials from Nagoya visited Fremantle. Pictured with Fremantle Ports' Chairman Dr Jim Limerick are Mr Setuo Kurokawa, Vice Chairman of Nagoya Port Assembly and Mr Shinji Morita, Manager, Construction Department, Nagoya Port Authority.*



*USS Midway, November 1989*



*A number of tall ships had Fremantle stopovers in late 1987 on their way to participate in the Australian Bicentennial celebrations in Sydney.*



*HM Bark Endeavour Replica, the Fremantle-built replica of Lieutenant James Cook's ship, pictured in Fremantle Harbour in 1994.*

# Heritage Status

The heritage significance of the Fremantle Ports Administration Building is recognised on Western Australia's State Register of Heritage Places as part of the listing of the western end of Victoria Quay.

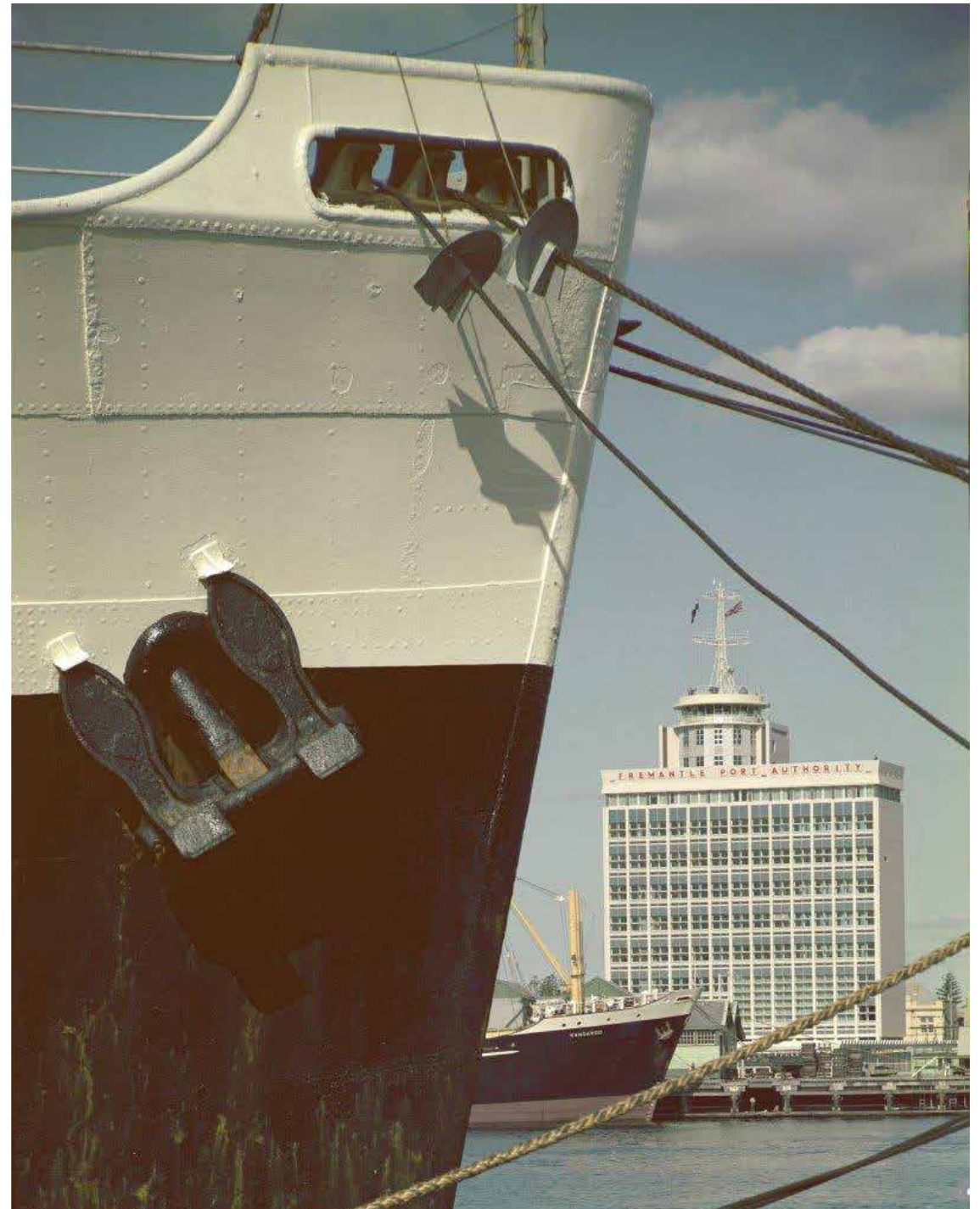
Its cultural heritage significance is also identified on the City of Fremantle's Municipal Inventory.

As well as being recognised in architectural terms as a building that is truly representative of its period, the building is appreciated for its historic, scientific and social values. From its vantage position overlooking the busy Fremantle Harbour it has seen much and has stood the test of time as part of the ongoing story of Fremantle's working port.

A conservation plan for the Administration Building is included as part of the *Conservation Plan for the West End of Victoria Quay* prepared in 2005 for Fremantle Ports by architect Ron Bodycoat.



*Fremantle Port Authority hostesses in 1965 with Annual Reports.  
From left to right: Vanda Ligovich, Penelope (Penny) Zuppar, Sophia Raar*





*Arthur (Tubby) Beck joined the port in October 1962 as a Fitters Assistant then moved on to other roles including Information Officer and Building Watchman. Part of his function as an Information Officer in the foyer was to provide shipping movements and general information to the public. Tubby retired in March 1990.*

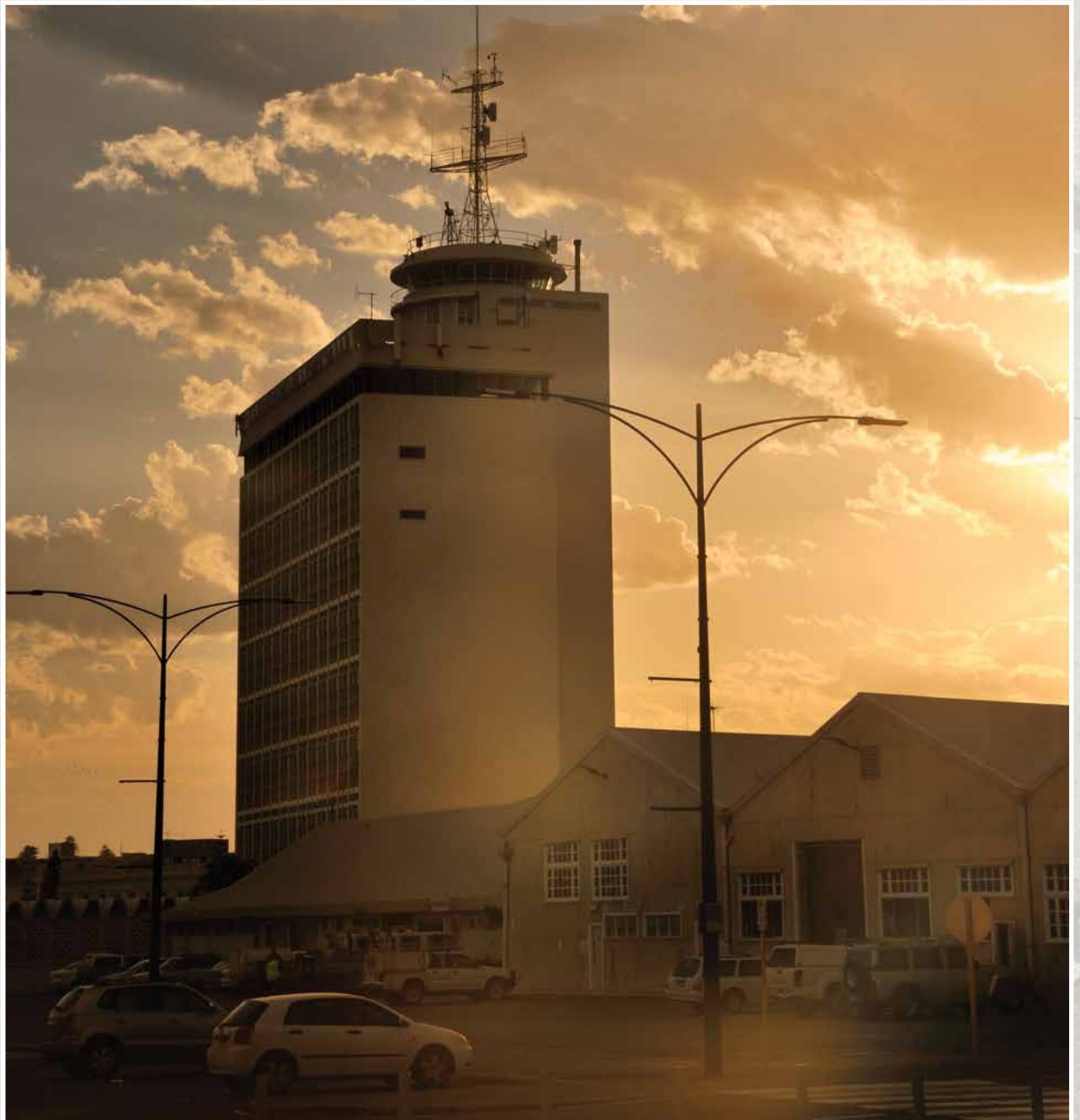
Fremantle Ports, with the Administration Building on Victoria Quay as its headquarters, strategically manages Western Australia's principal general cargo port. Containerised trade, motor vehicle imports, other break bulk trade, livestock exports and cruise ships are handled in the Inner Harbour at Fremantle. Bulk trade is handled in the Outer Harbour at Kwinana.

Over 32 million tonnes of trade were handled in 2012/13, with a value of over \$30 billion dollars.

Every hour of every day on average, \$3.4 million in trade passes through this busy and successful port.



*Cruise ship Celebrity Solstice February 2013*





FREMANTLE  
PORTS

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**Reference sources:**

*Register of Heritage Places Assessment Documentation - Heritage Council of Western Australia*  
*West End of Victoria Quay Conservation Plan - Ronald Bodycoat*  
*Fremantle Ports records*