

MEDIA RELEASE



COMMONWEALTH LIGHTHOUSE SERVICE CENTENARY 1 JULY 1915 TO 1 JULY 2015

The Commonwealth Lighthouse Service commenced operation on 1 July 1915 assuming responsibility for about 163 lights, buoys and beacons from the various State administrations. These were aids to navigation that marked the ocean shipping routes, the States remained responsible for harbours, rivers and inland waterways.

Over the years the number of aids provided has grown to around 400 including lights, radar responders, Global Position System facilities and all systems are now automatic operation.

At different times large scale systems were constructed and operated including Decca Navigation Chains on the North West Coast of Western Australia and the controversial OMEGA long range navigation system in Gippsland Victoria.

The Service was always a small organisation with much of its work not known by the general public. Apart from the lighthouse keepers and the towers that seem to have considerable mystique in the public mind, the work of the engineers, lighthouse mechanics and ship's crews is largely out of public view.

During its time the Service was moved between several Federal Government Departments in accordance with the direction of the political party governing at the time. The aids to navigation system is presently administered by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) with the day to day working activities undertaken by an Australian company, Australian Maritime Systems based in Brisbane.

AMSA has arranged the production of a commemorative coin by the Australian Mint, a stamp pack through Australia Post for issue in June and they will be

opening a number of lighthouses to visitors during the year, the details will be on AMSA's Facebook pages.

With annual reunions of past and present lighthouse staff held in Brisbane for some 25 years, planning is proceeding for the main Centenary Year celebration function to be held at the Queensland Maritime Museum on Saturday 4 July from 10 am onwards.

The Australian Society of Marine Artists will be holding their annual exhibition, with the theme "Lighting the Darkness" at the Queensland Maritime Museum to be opened on 4 July as part of the Celebration day and to run until 27 September.

We are trying to reach as many former lighthouse service staff and their families as possible to give them the chance to be part of this once in a century opportunity.

Thanks and regards.

Jack Duvoisin

CLS Reunions Committee

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