

Historic lighthouse receives restoration after birds eat stonework

December 21, 2023



Australian Government
Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Media release

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) has completed a major capital works project to restore the historic Cape Northumberland Lighthouse, located near Port MacDonnell in South Australia.

AMSA invested \$2 million to restore the lighthouse in response to unique circumstances, after local birds, attracted by the high salt content of the stonework, excavated and consumed parts of the historic structure, necessitating a comprehensive refurbishment.

The works included a refurbishment of the stone structure and replacement of the decayed limestone, a repaint of all internal and external surfaces of the lighthouse and ancillary building, a refurbishment of the balcony and lantern room, and an electrical system upgrade.

AMSA engaged McElligotts VIC Pty Ltd as the primary contractor to undertake these critical restoration works.

AMSA Executive Director Response Mark Morrow highlighted the significance of the Cape Northumberland Lighthouse to the local community.

“At South Australia’s southern-most point, Cape Northumberland Lighthouse forms an iconic part of the Port MacDonnell coastline,” he said.

Addressing the unusual cause for refurbishment, Mr. Morrow expressed confidence in the effectiveness of the newly applied paint coatings to deter future bird-related damage ensuring the longevity of the historical landmark.

“This stunning piece of South Australian history is now bird-proof and ready to be enjoyed by future generations.”

“AMSA would like to thank McElligotts VIC Pty Ltd for their hard work restoring Cape Northumberland Lighthouse, in time for Christmas.”

Mr Morrow also emphasised AMSA’s commitment to maintaining the safety of Australia’s aids to navigation network through in-house technical expertise and specialist contractors.

“Australia’s aids to navigation network has stood for over a century, evolving and expanding with the economic development of Australia and in response to advances in technological innovation, and growth in maritime trade and activity,” he said.

“AMSA has been the custodian of this network for the last 33 years, safeguarding the lives of seafarers and our precious seas and coastlines.

“Together with our state and territory partners, we have ensured the maintenance, modernisation, and growth of this network through our work – today, it stands at more than 22,000 aids to navigation, of which about 450 are directly managed by AMSA.”

Works on Cape Northumberland Lighthouse began in February 2023 and were completed this month.

Photos of Cape Northumberland Lighthouse are available at: <https://spaces.hightail.com/space/pGwMCIkwFZ/files>

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