



Hillarys Boat Harbour

About the harbour

The Western Australian coastline offers few natural harbours to shelter yachts and small boats either when moored or in use. Those near the Perth metropolitan area are fully utilised and quite crowded.

Man-made harbours are therefore needed to shelter the growing number of boats and to provide essential services.

History

Hillarys Boat Harbour was the first such major marina in the north metropolitan region.

For the Hillarys development, the then Department of Marine and Harbours selected a site which opens into the partly sheltered waters of the Marmion lagoon, and is well connected to the regional road system. Some four and a half years of coastal research showed that the Harbour would have a low impact on the adjacent shoreline.

Cost economy was a significant factor favouring the site, but safety of use (particularly in deteriorating weather) and limited environmental impact were also of prime importance.

Construction of the new Harbour commenced in September 1985. Boat launching facilities were completed in October 1986 and boats started moving into pen moorings two months later, just before the start of the America's Cup Challenge Series.

Located 13 nautical miles north of Fremantle, Hillarys Boat Harbour provides a convenient departure point for visitors to Rottnest. Although primarily a Boat Harbour, the Harbour complex incorporates many community and recreational features to cater for beach goers, tourists and local residents. Its breakwaters are popular for recreational fishing and diving trails are located on the adjoining reefs. Boat launching ramps have been provided, along with parking for more than 2000 cars, convenient cycle paths, walkways and park lands for public use.

The Hillarys Boat Harbour was officially opened by the then Premier of Western Australia the Honourable Brian Burke on 15 January, 1988.

Where did the name Hillarys come from?

- Hillarys was named after one of its early settlers.
- A Gallipoli war veteran, Bertram John Hillarys, built the first shack on the beach just north of where Hillarys Boat Harbour now stands.
- Bert, who lost the sight of his right eye fighting on the beaches of Turkey during World War 1, came to the area during the Depression while fishing for a living with his brother Harry.
- Bert built a boatshed on the beach in 1930. A dormitory was added to accommodate his growing family for weekends and holidays. Before roads were built, Bert drove his 1929 Chevrolet through the bush carting his wife and four children, with their cockatoo, cat and tame kookaburra. The nearest store at North Beach was a 3 mile walk away. Bert Hillarys died in 1957. His shack and the 14 or so others surrounding it were destroyed during a fierce storm in 1964.

Hillarys Boat Harbour enhancement program

Hillarys Boat Harbour has recently completed a major program of capital works improvements.

Economic and social impact study by Edith Cowan University

Harbour Manager, the Department of Transport (DoT) has recently undertaken a comprehensive study to provide up-to-date information about the value of harbour activities from commercial fishing, to retailing, tourism and hospitality and also recreational activities such as swimming and boating.

The aim of the research, undertaken by Dr Helen Cripps from Edith Cowan University, ascertained the impact the harbour has on the economy as well as the community. The information will be used in decision making about the future development of the harbour and other proposed maritime infrastructure throughout the State.

The research was conducted in three stages over the past several months. The final stage of the study was the Picture This Hillarys Photo Competition.

Amateur and professional photographers entered photographs of their favourite place or moment at Hillarys Boat Harbour and were asked to describe the value of the facility as part of their entry. A variety of great prizes in several categories were donated by sponsors from Hillarys Boat Harbour. The top 50 entries were also in the draw for the Peoples' Choice Award.

The winning entries were announced at an awards ceremony on Saturday 19 November, which was coordinated by Colliers International – Retail Marketing.