

Basic Detail Report



ST Wattle

Vessel number

HV000227

Date

1933

Primary Maker

Cockatoo Island Dockyard

Description

ST WATTLE was built during 1932 and '33, and the last ship to be built while the island was under the control of the Commonwealth Shipping Board. It was built 'on spec' by the shipyard apprentices. At this time most dockyard employees were only working one week in four, and apprentices did six weeks out of seven. During construction it was given the name CODECO. The hull was rivetted steel, but electric welding was used experimentally for the first time in an Australian shipyard to build the bulkheads and fuel bunkers. On 27th June, 1933, CODECO was lifted into the water by the giant floating crane TITAN, with steel work complete, wooden deck laid and most of the auxiliaries in place. The lifting weight was 55.8 tonnes (55 tons). The tug was steam-driven using an oil fired Scotch marine furnace, and is understood to have been the first oil-fired steam tug in Australia. The first trials took place in November 1933. A mean speed of 10.6 knots at 133 rpm was reached with the tug in light-ship conditions (118 tons/119.9 tonnes displacement) at the end of the trial. Shortly after trials the tug was handed over to the Navy and given the name WATTLE. The tug remained with the Navy in Sydney for 29 years. After being de-commissioned in 1962 ST WATTLE was purchased in 1971 by a syndicate from the Sydney Heritage Fleet which later donated the vessel to a volunteer-based Victorian company. It then spent many years operating in Port Phillip carrying excursion passengers. It was classified by the National Trust in Victoria as a heritage item. WATTLE retains its original machinery and construction. In 2003 WATTLE lost its commercial survey and was faced with extensive restoration. Various plans were put forward for returning WATTLE to commercial service but these came to nothing until the ship found new benefactors in 2008. A refurbishment of the hull and superstructure was planned with the intention of returning the ship to operation on Port Phillip when work is completed.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 22.86 m x 5.33 m x 2.83 m, 97.32 tonnes (75 ft x 17.5 ft x 9.3 ft, 98.88 tons)