

Basic Detail Report



Waiben

Vessel number

HV000231

Date

1949

Primary Maker

Norman R Wright and Sons

Description

WAIBEN is 14 metres long, carvel planked with a typical raised deck and cabin house arrangement. It is of sturdy construction, well suited to coastal operations. It was commissioned by the Queensland Harbours and Marine department and arrived in Thursday Island on 31 October 1949, along with a new Harbour Master and staff, restoring the pilot service which had been taken over by the armed services when the island was evacuated during the war. Norman Wright and Sons shipped it to Cairns in north Queensland where it was launched before proceeding to Thursday Island. The name WAIBEN is the Indigenous title for Thursday Island. WAIBEN was built to replace the previous pilot launch SYLVIA, which had been taken over by the armed forces in World War II, and kept by the army after the war. When WAIBEN arrived at Thursday Island the first job it did was to replace a number of missing navigation aids, removed during War when the Japanese forces were advancing south. For many years WAIBEN served the area in more ways than just being the pilot vessel; it did whatever was asked of it, becoming an official launch, taxi, prisoner transport and small cargo vessel operating in an area from the mainland to Thursday Island and north into the strait. In 1977 WAIBEN was transferred south to Mackay, QLD, where it operated as the pilot vessel from Hay Point. In 1982 it was relieved by the newer vessel EMBLEY, and later that year sold in unusual circumstances. It was considered uneconomical to repair. WAIBEN was slipped with the shipwrights Ray and Val Goldston and the Queensland Marine Board instructed the Goldstons to burn the craft. Horrified at this suggestion, the Goldstons offered to buy it for \$100.00 as is. They explained that this was a good deal as they would otherwise charge \$500.00 to remove the burnt remains from their property. Not surprisingly Goldstons became owners of the craft. They repaired it and kept it in operation as a charter boat, working from Brampton Island on the Great Barrier Reef. Working up until 2005, WAIBEN took out guests on champagne cruises, fishing charters and diving tours. In 2007 it was purchased by the current owner for use as a private recreational launch for fishing trips. In 2008 it retained the appearance of its original pilot vessel days with a fitout suited to its current use.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 14.02 m x 12.8 m x 3.96 m x 1.37 m, 22.64 tonnes (46 ft x 42 ft x 13 ft x 4.5 ft, 23 tons)