

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 12/10/24

CHILDERS (HMAS)

Location

Swan Island, Port Phillip Bay

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S156

Date lost

08/1918

Construction material

Steel

Propulsion

Steam - Screw

Engine specification

Compound surface condensing, cys 14-1/2" & 24-12", 15" stroke (Gillett 1982, 108-114). 700 IHP; 19.12 knots (UID 6)

Number of masts

3

Length/Breadth/Depth

118.20 Feet / 12.20 Feet / 5.70 Feet

Builder

John I. Thornycroft

Year of construction

1883

Built port

Chiswick

Built country

England

Date lost

08/1918

Owner

J.J. Savage & Co., South Yarra

Cause of loss

Sold for scrap, as a hulk ashore at Swan Island. Sold for £20 (Gillett, 1982, 108-114, UID 6)

Statement of significance

<p>Historically significant as Victoria's first true torpedo boat</p>

VHR history

The Childers was ordered by Victorian Colonial Government as part of its naval defence force. It was Victoria's first true torpedo boat (Gillett 1982, 108-114). Armament: 2 launching tubes for 15" Fiume torpedoes. Carried 2 1-pounder 1.5" Hotchkiss guns; 4 sets 14" torpedo gear fitted in 1888, thus able to carry 6, instead of 4, torpedoes. As standard practice, a three-masted sailing rig was fitted for voyage to Australia but, after a series of incidents and rolling badly and taking water in funnels, had to be towed by Victoria from the Red Sea for rest of voyage. Considered unlikely it would be able to operate in open sea but it was believed the torpedo defences of Port Phillip would be well secured. Took part and served well in annual Easter exercises. Generally regarded as a good buy. Was one of only two effective torpedo boats integrated into Commonwealth Navy after federation. During World War I patrolled Port Phillip and acted as a tender at Williamstown. On 5 August 1918, ashore at Swan Island, it was purchased as scrap for twenty pounds. Had been named after H.C E. Childers, a former Victorian politician who had later become First Lord of the Admiralty. Cost 11,157 pounds.
