

# Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 19/10/24

---

## FORMOSA



shipNo264 2015 05 11  
1431303498287 HV staff  
Peter Harvey inspecting  
Formosa



shipNo264 2015 05 11  
1431303559887 erosion of  
beach at Point Nepean



shipNo264 2015 05 11  
1431303615751 exposed  
counterstern of formosa



shipNo264 2015 05 11  
1431303673948 Examining  
counterstern of Formosa



shipNo264 2015 05 11  
1431303752597 devil  
planking

---

### Location

Portsea Back Beach, 3 miles east of Point Nepean

### Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S264

### Date lost

05 Feb 1869

### Official number

603809

### Construction material

Iron

## **Hull**

Iron. Carrying capacity: 300 tons on 8'3" of water

## **Propulsion**

Steam - Screw

## **Engine specification**

Twin steam engines, 2 x 2 cylinder 40nhp, twin screw (clydesite.co.uk)

## **Engine builder**

Campbell and Son, Glasgow

## **Number of masts**

3

## **Length/Breadth/Depth**

137.70 Feet / 22.20 Feet / 8.40 Feet

## **Builder**

Seath & Co

## **Year of construction**

1868

## **Built port**

Rutherglen

## **Built country**

Scotland

## **Registration Port**

Glasgow

## **Date lost**

05 Feb 1869

## **Departure**

Glasgow

## **Destination**

Melbourne

## Cargo

Stout, ale, iron, tobacco pipes (see The Argus, 6 Feb. 1869 for full listing)

## Owner

Clyde Shipping Company, sent to australia by A.J. Kidstone & Co.

## Master

Captain Ballardie

## Weather conditions

Cloudy and squally night

## Cause of loss

Ran ashore

## Number of crew

10

## Statement of significance

Formosa is historically significant as a rare Australian example of the technical innovation of Thomas B. Seath's shipbuilding. The vessel has interpretive significance as an example of Rutherglen shipbuilding techniques and an historic shipwreck site. The archaeological significance still needs to be determined, however there is potential for significant wreck remains to reveal further aspects of Seath's technical innovations and social life aboard vessels such as these.

**SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA**

**CRITERION 1: HISTORIC**

Formosa is historically significant as one of Thomas B. Seath's small iron-hulled merchant vessels, famous for their longevity and shallow drafts.

**CRITERION 2: TECHNICAL**

The remains of Formosa have potential to reveal technical details of the development and building of these types of iron-hulled, small drafted merchant ships.

**CRITERION 3: SOCIAL**

Formosa has a low level of social significance as the wreck site is not easily accessible or known and the counter stern section has not been exposed for long and may already be covered over.

**CRITERION FOUR: ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

The archaeological significance of Formosa still needs to be determined. Due the highly volatile nature of the environment around Point Nepean, the wreck is likely to be scattered and there are anecdotal reports that this is the case (marinelife.org.au). However diving in the area requires ideal conditions which means there may well be archaeological artefacts remaining on site. Depending on what survives there is high archaeological potential for this wreck to reveal information about Thomas Seath's shipbuilding techniques.

**CRITERON 5: SCIENTIFIC**

Formosa is not currently the focus of any scientific studies.

**CRITERION 6: INTERPRETIVE**

Formosa has interpretive potential, not only as part of the Point Nepean wreck resource, but also as a representation of Seath's small iron trading vessels that were well known during the later half of the nineteenth century. Formosa also has potential as an interpretive dive site.

**CRITERION 7: RARE**

Formosa is a rare example of a ship built by Thomas B Seath in Rutherglen and is the only example of one of his ships amongst Victoria's shipwrecks.

**CRITERION 8: REPRESENTATIVE**

Formosa is representative of technical shipbuilding innovation during the nineteenth century.

## VHR history

The Formosa was on its maiden voyage from Glasgow when it was wrecked at Port Phillip Heads. The captain and pilots were both found to be at fault by a Board of Inquiry.