

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 12/07/24

SS QUEENSLAND

Location

Bass Strait, 15-16 miles NE of Wllsons Promontory

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S557

Date lost

02/08/1876

Official number

73605

Construction material

Iron

Hull

Six bulkheads, cemented (1875), two decks, three tiers of beams, double bottom. Poop 78', forecastle 66', bridge deck 74'. Vessel built under special survey.

Propulsion

Steam - Screw

Engine specification

2 cylinder inverted compound 46" / 80" / 48" stroke

Number of masts

3

Length/Breadth/Depth

325.30 Feet / 36.70 Feet / 25.00 Feet

Builder

Palmers Co Ltd

Year of construction

1875

Built port

Newcastle

Built country

England

Registration Port

London

Date lost

02/08/1876

Departure

Melbourne

Destination

Foo Chow via Sydney

Cargo

None

Owner

Eastern and Australian Line

Master

Captain Robert Craig

Cause of loss

Collision - struck by SS Barrabool - was badly holed and sank by the stern in 35 - 45 minutes

Passenger comments

6 cabin, 3 steerage

Statement of significance

<p>Just prior to its wrecking in 1876, the 99 metre passenger steamship Queensland was described by The Age as one of the finest steamers to visit Melbourne, indicating colonial Victorian society's view of the ship's high

aesthetic and technical value. At that time the use of steel in ship building was gaining popularity and beginning to replace iron.

As an intact and undisturbed shipwreck, the SS Queensland presents high potential for valuable archaeological information. With the already available archival material on its wrecking, documentation of the wreck using video and photography offers opportunities for the general public to engage in the interpretation of the this mid-nineteenth century shipwreck site.

VHR history

The large iron steamer Queensland, captained by the highly esteemed Robert Craig, sank off Wilsons Promontory after colliding with the steamer Barrabool in the early morning of 3 August 1876. The second mate of the Barrabool mistook the masthead light of the Queensland for the Wilsons Promontory lighthouse and made course for it. The Barrabool was running full speed when it struck the Queensland's starboard side. The Queensland was badly damaged in the starboard side and sank in just 35 minutes. One crewman on the Queensland, second steward James Thomson, was reported missing and presumed drowned, while a number of others from both crews were injured. Although the starboard bow of the Barrabool was badly damaged, it stayed afloat, and managed to keep from taking any water thanks to its sturdy bulkhead. The Barrabool was able to transport the survivors of the Queensland to safety under its own power.

The Queensland, which belonged to the Eastern and Australian Mail Company, was en route to Foo Chow Foo via Sydney, after offloading its cargo of Chinese tea at Melbourne's Sandridge Pier.

The second mate of the Barrabool, Ainsworth, had his certificate cancelled after his actions prior to the accident were found by the Steam Navigation Board to be reckless and the cause of the collision.