

Victorian Heritage Database Report

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SYDNEY COVE LONGBOAT

Location

Ninety Mile Beach, west of Cape Everard

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S652

Construction material

Wood

Hull

decked longboat

Propulsion

Sail

Number of masts

1

Length/Breadth/Depth

0.00 / 0.00 / 0.00

Departure

Preservation Island

Destination

Sydney

Owner

Campbell and Clark

Master

Hugh Thompson

Weather conditions

heavy seas and winds

Cause of loss

anchors cut and driven onto shore

Number of crew

16

Crew comments

William Clark, supercargo, ship s carpenter, two European seamen, twelve of the healthiest Lascars

Statement of significance

<p>The wrecks of the Sydney Cove longboat is highly historically and archaeologically significant as the first recorded wreck of a European vessel along Victoria's coastline, and for its association with the wreck of the Sydney Cove (1797) and subsequent exploration of Bass Strait.</p>

VHR history

Following the wreck of the Sydney Cove at Preservation Island, Furneaux Group in Tasmania, a ship's longboat was repaired and had a mast installed to prepare it for a sea journey. The Sydney Cove's first mate Hugh Thompson and 16 of the surviving crew set out on a dangerous 800 mile journey to reach Port Jackson (Sydney) to seek help.
 After leaving on 27 February 1797 after a 300 mile journey across Bass Strait the crew saw land at the northern end of Ninety Mile beach on 1 March, however heavy seas and winds prevented them from landing. They set their anchors overnight however the next morning at risk of foundering at sea they were forced to cut their cables and run the longboat ashore through the surf.
 After salvaging some stores, rice, guns and ammunition they abandoned the longboat and began an 800 mile trek for survival to Sydney along the Victorian and NSW coasts. After two days of crossing sand dunes they made their first of many river crossings at Cape Everard (Point Hicks) (Nash: 26, 29).