Management Plan
Platypus, North Sydney
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The Harbour Trust would also like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which Platypus is located, and pay respects to their Elders both past and present.

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1. Introduction
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Section 1 sets out the requirement for and purpose of this Management Plan and provides an introduction to the land to which this plan applies.

1.1. Requirement for a Management Plan

On 21 August 2003 the Minister for Environment approved a Comprehensive Plan for the harbour sites managed by the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (the Harbour Trust).

The Comprehensive Plan, which was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Sydney Harbour Federation Harbour Trust Act 2001 (SHFT Act), sets out the Harbour Trust’s vision for its various sites.

The former HMAS Platypus site (Platypus) was formally transferred to the Harbour Trust on 23 July 2005 and is classified as Trust land under the SHFT Act. In 2009, the Minister for the Environment approved an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan to include Platypus.

The vision for Platypus is to transform the site into a public park with buildings and facilities adapted for a range of cultural, recreational, community and commercial uses.

The Harbour Trust’s Comprehensive Plan also requires the preparation of more detailed management plans for Harbour Trust sites. This is such a plan.

1.2. Purpose of the Management Plan

The purpose of this Management Plan is to guide and implement the outcomes proposed in the Comprehensive Plan for the rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of Platypus. As with its other sites, the approach taken by the Harbour Trust in the preparation of this Plan is to draw the desired outcomes for the future of the site from its intrinsic characteristics.

This Plan also aims to protect and manage the heritage values of Platypus. Platypus possesses heritage values from its varied history and may have potential Commonwealth Heritage values. Therefore this Plan is consistent with the Commonwealth Heritage management principles set out in Schedule 7B of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

1.3. The Site

Platypus has had a diverse history as Cammeraygal country, a gas works, a Naval torpedo maintenance facility, the HMAS Platypus submarine base and now as an emerging new public park. It is the site’s relationship to the harbour that has contributed to this history and which makes it significant.

Like other Harbour Trust sites, Platypus reflects some of the characteristics that have shaped the development of Sydney as a harbour city, such as the mixed uses along the foreshore and the benching of the sandstone peninsula for maritime and industrial facilities. Sections 4 and 5 discuss the site and its history in greater depth.

1.4. Land to which the Management Plan Applies

This Plan covers land owned by the Harbour Trust (‘Trust land’) and adjoining land (‘Harbour land’). Trust land is located within DP109583 (Lot A), as shown in Figure 1.

Adjoining land includes the Submarine Wharf which is located within DP945479 and is owned by NSW Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) and licensed under an agreement to the Harbour Trust.

1.5. Commencement Date

This Management Plan was adopted by the Harbour Trust on 8 December 2016 and it came into force on that date.
2. Aims of this Plan
2. **Aims of this Plan**

Section 2 outlines the aims of this Management Plan.

2.1. **Aims for Platypus**

To achieve the Harbour Trust’s vision for Platypus this Plan aims to:

- Create a waterfront urban park
- Protect, manage and interpret the site’s heritage values
- Maximise public access to the site
- Revive the site with a mix of new uses that are compatible with the site’s character and constraints
- Protect local environment and amenity

In doing this, it also aims to:

- Be consistent with Commonwealth Heritage management principles
- Establish Platypus as a place of public enjoyment by providing public spaces of high amenity
- Improve pedestrian links between the levels, to public transport and to surrounding areas
- Maximise opportunities for access to the foreshore
- Provide for water-based public access
- Realise the potential for easy access to and within the site including access for people with disabilities
- Increase public open space throughout the site
- Provide visitor facilities and amenities such as lookouts and children’s play facilities
- Facilitate the adaptive re-use of the site and its buildings for a diverse mix of cultural, commercial and community uses
- Encourage uses and activities that are sensitive to local amenity especially with respect to minimising traffic and noise generation
- Apply the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD)
- Provide interpretative opportunities for visitors to understand and appreciate the rich and varied history of Platypus
- Remediate hazardous materials and manage contamination in accordance with a long term Environmental Management Plan.
3. Planning Framework
3. Planning Framework

Section 3 outlines the planning framework that will guide the future use of Platypus.

3.1. Sydney Harbour Federation Trust Act

The objects of the Harbour Trust are set by the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust Act 2001 (SHFT Act), which are to:

- Ensure that management of Trust land contributes to enhancing the amenity of the Sydney Harbour region
- Protect, conserve and interpret the environmental and heritage values of Trust land
- Maximise public access to Trust land
- Establish and manage suitable Trust land as a park on behalf of the Commonwealth as the national government
- Co-operate with other Commonwealth bodies that have a connection with any harbour land in managing that land
- Co-operate with New South Wales, affected councils and the community in furthering the above objects.

The SHFT Act defines land that is vested in the Harbour Trust as ‘Trust land’ and surrounding land (such as the former submarine wharf) as ‘Harbour Land’. The SHFT Act requires the Harbour Trust to prepare a Plan (the Comprehensive Plan) for Trust land which may also cover Harbour land. The Harbour Trust prepared such a plan in 2003, and a subsequent amendment to include Platypus was approved in 2009. The Comprehensive Plan recognises the strategic value in including Harbour land as it allows the Harbour Trust to take a holistic approach to its planning.

3.2. Harbour Trust Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is a broad strategic plan which sets out a vision for all of the Harbour Trust’s sites and includes a process for preparing more detailed Management Plans for specific places, such as Platypus.

The Comprehensive Plan provides a framework for the remediation, rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of Platypus to provide a sequence of new public waterfront places (Chapter 10a).

The Comprehensive Plan sets out overarching Objectives and Policies for all of its sites (Part 3). Those that are most relevant to this Plan are Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD); transport management; cultural heritage; adaptive re-use of places and buildings; removal of buildings; design approach; working harbour; tourism; contamination; water quality and catchment protection; access, open space and recreation; and education. The ways in which these objectives and policies will be implemented are covered throughout this Plan.

Part 3 also sets out Consultation and Communications Objectives and Policies. This Plan will be prepared in consultation with the Harbour Trust’s Community Advisory Committee (CAC), the broad community, the Local Aboriginal Land Council, special interest groups, and Local, State and Commonwealth Governments.
Fig. 2 Comprehensive Plan Outcomes

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**LEGEND**

- Existing vegetation
- Proposed planting
- Grassed area
- Adjacent vegetation
- Existing building
- Building to be removed
- SHIFT boundary

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- Controlled access to car park
- Provide link if pedestrian access via Adderstone Avenue is provided.
- 'Urban Park' Landscape treatment interprets site heritage
- Opportunity for visiting ships for display (e.g., submarines)
- Repair and re-use wharf, subject to NSW Maritime approval
- Lift and stair
- Re-erect former Retort house
- Link from new lift and stairs to Exhauster House
- Walkway along upper terrace edge
- Landscape to shade and soften carpark
- Former coal store heritage displays
- Access for visiting boats and charter vessels
- Landscaped courtyards linking street and wharf
- Demolish office building & landscape
- Open up Boatswain's store
- Pedestrian link to Kesterton Park subject to NSW Maritime approval.
- Potential Kayak / small boat access
- Alternative link to Kesterton Park
- Increase openings in RANTME facade.
- Set back top floor of RANTME & create verandah & terraces.
- Investigate car parking in service area of lower levels of RANTME building
- Set back & open up RANTME from High Street. Provide entry 'Forecourt' & parking
- Landscape buffer in set back of RANTME building

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**PLATYPUS, NORTH SYDNEY**
3.3. Harbour Trust Management Plan
Harbour Trust Management Plans are site specific plans that refine and detail the site objectives and outcomes established in the Comprehensive Plan. They identify desired outcomes, suitable land uses, and how a site’s environmental and heritage values should be protected and interpreted. This Management Plan is to be read in conjunction with the SHFT Act and Comprehensive Plan, in particular the Outcomes identified in Part 10a (See Figure 2), and the Objectives and Policies in Part 3 of the Comprehensive Plan.

3.4. Related Harbour Trust Policies and Guidelines
The Harbour Trust has a number of general policies and guidelines that guide the revitalisation of Platypus.

Some of the current relevant policies and guidelines are the Harbour Trust’s Corporate Plan; Leasing Policy; Policy for the Community Use of Trust Land and Buildings; Draft Access Guideline; Events Policy; and Heritage Strategy.

This Plan has to be interpreted having regard for these policies.

3.5. Commonwealth Legislation – EPBC Act 1999
All ‘actions’ on Harbour Trust land are controlled by the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

Section 26 of the EPBC Act protects Commonwealth land from actions taken on or outside it that may have a significant impact on the environment. Section 28 protects the environment from actions taken by the Commonwealth or a Commonwealth agency that may have a significant impact.

The environment is defined to include:

a) ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities  
b) natural and physical resources  
c) the qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas;  
d) heritage values of places  
e) the social, economic and cultural aspects of a thing mentioned in paragraph (a), (b), (c) or (d) above.

3.6. Assessment of Actions
The Harbour Trust is the approval authority for actions on its lands and assesses actions in accordance with the SHFT Act, Comprehensive Plan and EPBC Act.

The Harbour Trust will consult with the community about significant proposals. In some exceptional circumstances, proposed actions that are likely to have a significant impact on the environment or heritage values will also be referred to the Minister for further assessment and approval under the EPBC Act.

3.7. State Legislation
The SHFT Act specifically excludes any land owned by the Harbour Trust from the operations of state planning law. This includes State Policies (SEPPs) and Regional Environmental Plans (REPs) prepared by the State Government and Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) prepared by councils.

Notwithstanding this the Harbour Trust aims to follow State legislation in order to ensure consistency and best practice. This Plan has been prepared so that it is consistent with both State and local plans.

Although NSW planning legislation does not apply to Platypus, the impact of development outside Platypus must have regard to any potential impacts on the site (and vice versa).
The key State planning policies and plans that are relevant to Platypus include:

**NSW Planning and Environment**

- **Sydney Regional Environmental Plan (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005**
  This Plan (now deemed a State Environmental Planning Policy or SEPP) applies to the whole of Sydney Harbour’s waterways, the foreshores and entire harbour catchment. This includes Platypus. It provides a framework for future planning, development and management of the waterway, heritage items, islands, wetland protection areas and foreshores of Sydney Harbour.

  The planning principles of the SEPP relevant to Platypus include the:
  - Appreciation of the role of Sydney Harbour in the history of the Aboriginal and European settlement
  - Recognition and conservation of the heritage significance of particular heritage items in and around Sydney Harbour
  - Conservation of the significant fabric, settings, relics and views associated with the heritage significance of heritage items
  - Conservation of archaeological sites and places of Aboriginal heritage significance.

- **A Plan for Growing Sydney 2014**
  This is a plan for the future of the Sydney Metropolitan Area over the next 20 years. The Plan provides key directions and actions to guide Sydney’s productivity, environmental management, and liveability – including the delivery of housing, employment, infrastructure and open space.

  North Sydney, including Platypus, is located within an identified ‘Global Economic Corridor’ in the Plan, which is an “area of concentrated employment, economic activity and other uses in centres, transport gateways and industrial zoned land extending from Port Botany and Sydney Airport, through Sydney CBD, north-west through Macquarie Park, and towards Norwest, Parramatta and Sydney Olympic Park”.

The Plan predicts that by 2030, there will be demand for around 190,000 new stand-alone office jobs in Sydney, many of which will be situated along this Corridor. It is an overarching priority of the Plan to work with North Sydney Council to “provide capacity for additional mixed-use development in the precinct that make up Global Sydney for offices, retail, tourism, arts, culture, services and housing”.

**NSW Roads and Maritime Service**

*NSW Roads and Maritime Services (RMS)* is an arm of Transport for NSW and is responsible for the development, management and use of waterways in NSW’s major ports, including Sydney Harbour.

The wharf at Platypus is located on land that is owned by RMS and licensed to the Harbour Trust. Approval from RMS is therefore required prior to carrying out any works to the wharf or other structures that extend beyond the boundary of the Harbour Trust land.

RMS has prepared policies and guidelines that it considers for development on property under its jurisdiction. These include:

- Obtaining permission to lodge a development application
- Engineering Standards and Guidelines for Maritime Structures (2005)
- Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) Water Policy
**NSW Environment Protection Authority**

*NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA)* policies and guidelines for the protection of the environment will guide the development and operation of Platypus. This includes the following:

- Interim Construction Noise Guideline (2009)
- NSW Industrial Noise Policy (2000)
- Environmental Action for Marinas, Boatsheds and Slipways (2007)
- Waste Classification Guidelines (2014)

**NSW Liquor and Gaming**

Liquor & Gaming NSW is part of the Department of Justice and is responsible for the regulation of liquor in NSW. The *NSW Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing Noise Criteria* was developed to assess licensed premises that may generate noise impacts affecting surrounding residential areas.

**NSW Fisheries**

NSW Fisheries provides the following guidance material for the assessment of fish habitat impacts on the site - Policy and Guidelines for Fish Habitat Conservation and Management 2013, which will be considered by the Harbour Trust in its assessment of any proposals that pose a potential impact on fish habitats. Port Authority of NSW

The Port Authority of NSW is responsible for Sydney Harbour. Any disturbance of the seabed will require Harbour Master approval under the *Management of Waters and Waterslide Lands Regulations (NSW).*

**Local Government – North Sydney Council**

Platypus is located in the municipality of North Sydney. While North Sydney Council has no jurisdiction over Platypus, the following Council plans and strategies are relevant to this plan:

- **Development Control Plan (DCP), 2013**
  Council’s DCP highlights the potential of Platypus for a mix of uses, open space, linkages to existing open space areas, continued foreshore pedestrian access and water access. The objectives include “Continuous pedestrian access is to be provided along the entire foreshore frontage” and “Pedestrian links are to be provided to Kesterton Park and High Street” (Section 7.2.4).

- **Local Environmental Plan (LEP), 2013**
  Council’s LEP zones Platypus as Infrastructure (SP2 Commonwealth Government) and lists the site as a local heritage item. The objectives of this zone are “to provide for infrastructure and related use” and “to prevent development that is not compatible with or that may detract from the provision of infrastructure”.

- **North Sydney Integrated Cycling Strategy, 2014**
  Council’s Cycling Strategy proposes an upgraded cycle route along Clarke Road and Broughton Street (identified as Route 2 – Sydney Harbour Bridge to Neutral Bay). This route crosses High Street which provides direct connection to Platypus.

- **Draft Careening Cove Planning Study, 2015**
  North Sydney Council’s Draft Careening Cove Study identifies recommendations to improve access between Platypus and the surrounding area; including improved pedestrian amenity, a link to Platypus from Kesterton Park, improved way-finding, and public domain upgrades.
4. Site Description and History
4. Site Description and History

Section 4 describes the history and environment of Platypus and its surrounds.

4.1. Local Context

The north shore of Sydney Harbour was thinly populated at the end of the 18th Century when Neutral Bay, the home of the former HMAS Platypus site, was designated by Governor Phillip in 1789 as a ‘neutral’ anchorage for visiting French scientific expeditions and other foreign vessels.

Today Neutral Bay is a prime inner-city waterfront residential area. When substantial waterfront industry left the bay, the area gradually became more gentrified. The bay is in active use today with several ferry wharves, private boat shed activity and several waterfront parks.

Kesterton Park is located on the foreshore to the immediate south of Platypus. Other nearby parks include Anderson Park and Milson Park, and across the bay Kurruba Point Reserve.

There is a diversity of building types ranging from traditional waterfront housing, high rise units set back from the foreshore, stepped blocks of waterfront units, neighbouring waterfront activities in the form of marinas, wharves and the Platypus site which extends over a large portion of the waterfront.

Platypus directly adjoins residential areas, including the Iora Apartment complex which is in an elevated position to the west, built upon part of the former gas works site.

4.2. The Site

Platypus has an area of approximately 1.83 hectares and currently includes 10 buildings with a total floor area of approximately 14,391m$^2$. The built area adjoins Neutral Bay via a broad 14 metre wide concrete wharf leased from RMS (See Figure 1).

The topography of the site has been modified as a result of its industrial past. The largest exposed rock face runs parallel to Neutral Bay and stands approximately 17 metres to 18 metres in height. The original sandstone cliffs have been cut to create terraced platforms to make them capable of supporting large working areas. This modified cliff line expresses the industrial processes of the former gas works. The excavated sandstone rockfaces are also strong visual elements on the west side of Neutral Bay.

Platypus is physically divided into three discrete and disconnected areas:

- **High Street level** - With direct street frontage to High Street, this level contains the former Gatehouse and a large factory building that runs the length of the southern boundary of the site, and overlooks Neutral Bay.

- **Waterfront level** – A flat area fronting the foreshore located at the base of a modified cliff line. This level contains the majority of the site’s buildings, the former Submarine Wharf and the newly created open space. A roadway cutting from High Street provides access to this level.

- **Upper level** – A narrow strip of land along the top of the cliff that contains a storage building, the former Coal Stores and the main car park for the site. Access to the upper level car park is through Kiara Close and a pedestrian bridge over the roadway cutting.
4.3. How the Place Evolved

**Natural Forces**

The underlying geology of the peninsula is Hawkesbury sandstone which was laid down millions of years ago. About 6,000 years ago the sea reached its current level to form the flooded river valley of Sydney Harbour.

The climate of the area is typical of the Sydney region, which can generally be described as temperate. Average rainfall is 1,215mm per annum (BOM 2016).

The site’s natural topography is steep rock faces with benches, cracks and intermittent crags (Ecological 2010). Little of the original land profile remains today and there are no apparent creek lines, although water seepage does occur through the layers of rock.

The site has been significantly modified by the construction of the gas works since the late 1880s. Much of the site is land that has been reclaimed from Neutral Bay. The remainder of the site has been formed by cutting benches in the sandstone cliff face with the spoil used for reclamation.

**Aboriginal Settlement**

The Cammeraygal (also referred to as Camaragal) clan occupied part of the north shore of Port Jackson. Their territory extended to the west of Bradleys Head and to the east of the Lane Cove district including the former HMAS Platypus site. Aboriginal people would have camped in sandstone caves on the harbour foreshore and fished in its waters. Roots and berries were obtained from native plants and possums and kangaroos were hunted.

In the early 19th century two Aboriginal names recorded for areas around HMAS Platypus were *Wurru-birri* for the western side of Kurraba Point and *Wéyé Wéyé* for the head of Careening Cove. Either of these names may have extended to include Platypus, though the actual areas covered by these names were not recorded. *Wurru-birri* is probably the same name that is currently written *Wirra-birra*.

Aboriginal cultural sites providing evidence of the earliest owners and occupiers exist on the North Shore in areas such as Balls Head, Berry Island and at Cammeray, however due to industrial use and land disturbance no evidence has been found of Aboriginal habitation on or in the immediate vicinity of Platypus.

**Early European Settlement**

In 1789, Governor Phillip established Neutral Bay as a ‘neutral’ anchorage for foreign ships visiting Sydney Harbour. Careening Cove, to the south of Neutral Bay, was a shallow cove used for careening, a method of landing a ship far up a bay so that its hull could be cleaned when the tide ran out.

**Whaling Industry**

By 1828, whaling had become an important industry in Sydney and Surveyor-General Major Thomas Mitchell suggested the foreshore between Careening Cove and Sirius Cove as a suitable place for the industry. High Street was formed and the land either side subdivided into 6 four acre whaling allotments. However the whaling industry collapsed in 1840 and no whaling activity took place at the site.

**Establishment of the Gas Works, 1876**

In 1875 an Act of the NSW Parliament authorised the manufacture and supply of gas to residents of the North Shore. James Walter Fell and Charles Watt, both former employees of the Australian Gas Light Company (AGL), went into partnership and purchased land from Wood and Younger fronting Neutral Bay. The process of making gas involved the carbonisation of coal in ovens called retorts. These excluded air and caused the gas to condense. It was then...
purified in a lime solution before being stored under pressure in a holder or reticulated to customers. Coal was delivered by boat to a small wharf in the north-west of the site.

At this time the gas plant consisted of the first Retort House, built on reclaimed land at the northwest corner of the property and a small Gas Holder located west of this. Excavation of the site created a flat area at the waterfront and another on the ridge, creating the distinct level changes still evident today.

**Gas Works Expansion, 1890-1912**

After James Fell died in 1882 the partnership was liquidated and the North Shore Gas Company Ltd was established. The land reclamation was extended eastwards and the company embarked on a period of major expansion which saw the construction of a new Retort house, a Gas holder, Exhauster House, Boiler House and Coke Plant.

The new Retort House was a demountable construction with cast iron columns, wrought iron roof girders and clad in corrugated iron. In 1889 a coal miners strike created difficulty in supply of coal and this led to the construction of a Coal Stores on the northern side of the Retort House.

The completion of the North Shore rail line in 1893 and extension of the tramline to Crows Nest encouraged continued population growth on the North Shore and increased demand for gas. In 1890 adjoining property on the southern boundary of the gas works site was purchased, doubling the original landholding. The original 1877 Retort and Gas Holder near the foreshore were demolished and replaced.

In 1902 a new access road was built through the cutting to the waterfront, along what was then the southern boundary of the site. Further excavation of the cliffs made room for a new Coal Store, 260 feet in length. It was constructed of stone from the excavation and built above the Retort House, allowing gravity feed of coal through its tunnels to the retorts.

Additional land was acquired in a piecemeal fashion and an Office and Stores building was erected on the south corner of High Street. A new Exhauster House was built into the cliff excavation and new Condensers, Purifiers and a new Governor House were also constructed.

**Gas Works Closure, 1932**

Increased consumer demand for gas led to the North Shore Gas Company establishing a larger more modern and economical gas works at Oyster Cove, Waverton in 1917. With the onset of the Great Depression, production of gas at Neutral Bay ceased in 1932. A main was laid connecting the two plants and the three gas holders at Neutral Bay were used for storage and supply of gas manufactured at Oyster Cove to reservoirs in Cremorne and Mosman.

One holder was removed in 1943 as it was leaking excessively and another was dismantled in the 1970s. During this period the introduction of natural gas led to the closure of many coal powered gas works including Oyster Cove, which ceased gas manufacture in 1976.

The North Shore Gas Company and AGL merged in 1980 and the third gas holder remaining on the Neutral Bay site was modified to store natural gas for emergencies. AGL retained part of the site until 1983 when it was sold and redeveloped for the ‘Iora’ residential development.
**Torpedo Factory, 1942**

After the bombing of Pearl Harbour the Australian Government equipped Australian forces to retaliate in the event of an attack upon Australia.

The gas works site, situated on the harbour and in proximity to the existing Navy Torpedo Depot at Garden Island, was considered an ideal location for the establishment of a torpedo factory. In March 1942, the Commonwealth resumed part of the site for this purpose. Initially it was planned to reuse the existing factory buildings, however in order to meet the production program most were demolished. The only buildings retained were the Retort House, Gatehouse on High Street, Exhauster House and part of the Coal Stores.

Two Torpedo Maintenance Workshops were erected on the lower level of Platypus. The Royal Australian Navy Torpedo Maintenance Establishment Building (RANTME Factory) was built on the southern side of the access cutting. It was constructed to house offices and facilities for naval staff with a large factory space for torpedo manufacture and maintenance on the top floor at the level of the High Street entrance. The Torpedo Factory employed about 200 civilian workers, 25% of whom were women.

The tunnels within the Coal Store were bricked in and this building was converted to an air raid shelter. The building at the entrance of the site on High Street was converted from residential flats to serve as a gatehouse and office.

The complex of buildings constructed after the resumption was developed as the main torpedo workshops for Australian, British and US Navies in the South Pacific during WWII. The swiftness of the demolition and reconstruction on the site reflected the urgency of works undertaken during war time emergency.

**HMAS Platypus, 1967**

After the war ended the torpedo workshops continued to service the British Navy submarine fleet based at HMAS Penguin and the Australian Navy's destroyer fleet. The sheds on the waterfront were converted to submarine workshops and torpedo maintenance was transferred to the RANTME Factory.

Moored submarines, up to six at a time, provided an identifying feature of Neutral Bay between the 1960s and 1990s. In 1964 the Royal Australian Navy's Submarine Service was established. After the purchase of six ‘Oberon’ class submarines from the UK, HMAS Platypus was officially commissioned in 1967 as a shore support depot. HMAS Platypus was the base for the six ‘Oberon’ class submarines as well as other visiting submarines, and provided the operational headquarters and communications base for the Australian Submarine Squadron. Off duty personnel were accommodated at HMAS Penguin in Balmoral.

Cockatoo Island Dockyard played a role in refitting the ‘Oberon’ class submarines in specially equipped purpose built buildings. The first refit of HMAS Oxley began in March 1971, and the final refit, that of the HMAS Orion, was carried out on the Island in 1988.

All Submarine training was carried out in the UK at HMS Dolphin in Gosport, until 1981 when the RAN Submarine School was established at Platypus. The students would learn how a submarine worked and carry out ‘Category Training’ where recruits learned a specific area of submarine workings; for example engineering technicians, sonar operators or chefs. Some of the training was undertaken at sea and the students would go to the UK to do the escape tank part of the training until a facility was built at HMAS Stirling in Western Australia.
Site Closure – Transfer to Harbour Trust

In the 1990s it was decided to re-equip the Navy with Collins Class submarines. Platypus was not considered suitable for this new class of submarine. HMAS Platypus and the Torpedo workshops were closed in 1999 when the Commonwealth transferred the submarine base to HMAS Stirling in Western Australia. The Torpedo Maintenance Workshops were transferred to the Missile Maintenance Facility at Kingswood.

The Department of Defence embarked on plans to dispose of the site. In 1997 a development application (DA) for 95 dwellings, on the remainder of the Defence site, was lodged with North Sydney Council. The DA was approved by the Land and Environment Court, however, the DA consent lapsed and the development did not go ahead.

In 2005, the Commonwealth Government announced the handover of the site to the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust for the purpose of rehabilitating the site as a public park.

4.4. Remediation of Platypus (2010-2016)

As a result of its former use as a Gasworks and Defence base, significant contamination was present on site when it was transferred to the Harbour Trust in 2005.

The fill and bedrock materials beneath the surface of the site, particularly at the northern end, were contaminated with a range of substances associated with the production of coal gas, including tar and tarry wastes.

Under the Memorandum of Understanding between the Harbour Trust and the Department of Defence, costs associated with the remediation of Platypus were borne by the Department of Defence ($46 million).
Platypus has been listed by the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) as a contaminated site under the *Contaminated Land Management Act 1997* (CLM Act). Platypus will be removed from the EPA list of contaminated sites once the remediation works have been certified by the auditor. The harbour area adjacent to Platypus, in Neutral Bay, is no longer declared a contaminated site under the CLM Act (See Section 5.6).

The Platypus Remediation Project was carried out by the Harbour Trust from 2010-2016 in two stages.

**Stage 1 of Remediation (April 2010-May 2012)**

This involved above-ground decontamination and site preparatory works. This included the demolition of the former three storey Naval Administration Building (Building 8) and its adjoining lift shaft, and the single storey former Flammable Liquids Store (Building 7), as shown in Figure 9 below.

To prepare buildings for demolition, hazardous materials such as lead paint, asbestos and synthetic mineral fibres was removed from the building fabric or abated.

**Stage 2 of Remediation (May 2012- April 2016)**

This involved the construction of an odour control enclosure, and installation of an emission control system and water treatment plant.

Around 3,000 tonnes of tar-containing materials were excavated and removed by barge and disposed of off-site (See Figures 10-11).

An additional 27,000 tonnes of material remained on site where it was treated and stabilised. It was then used to backfill the excavated area and mounded and capped with clean soil to form the base for the urban park at the northern part of the site (See Figure 35).

As part of the remediation works, the Harbour Trust also repaired the seawall and wharf, and replaced the power supply. When operated by Defence, the Submarine Wharf was 215 metres in length. The Harbour Trust demolished part of the wharf (100 metres) and repaired the remaining central 115 metres of the wharf due to its highly degraded state. It was not deemed cost effective to repair the southernmost 60 metres and northernmost 40 metres of the wharf so the upper deck sections were demolished. The raker piles and headstocks were retained at both ends, to be reused as support for part of a future walkway to the south and new timber deck to the north (See Figure 12). The former Boatswains Store (Building 16) on the southern end of the wharf was demolished during this period (See Figure 13).

Figure 14 summarise Platypus’ key phases of development.

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*Figure 9: Demolition of Naval Administration Building (2010)*
Figure 10: Excavated Tar Pit, Retort Building in the background (2013)

Figure 11: Odour Enclosure (2013)

Figure 12: Retained Wharf Headstocks

Figure 13: Former Boatswains Store
Fig. 14 Historical Development