

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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MELBOURNE AQUARIUM LAUNCHES NEW SHIPWRECK ATTRACTION

Melbourne Aquarium today officially unveiled “Shipwreck Cove”, an all new attraction which features Australia’s only sunken Shipwreck experience and offers a unique opportunity to showcase iconic marine animals.

The new 600,000 litre exhibit positions Melbourne Aquarium as a must-see Australian tourism attraction, and was the catalyst for a significant upgrade of the existing Ocean Theatre space, creating a refreshed offering that delivers an ever greater value for money experience.

Currently featuring sharks of Australia, including White Tip and Black Tip reef sharks, Dusky whaler, Whiskery and Tawney Nurse juvenile sharks, the new Shipwreck Cove exhibit provides Melbourne Aquarium with the ability to introduce and display unique and iconic marine species never before seen in Melbourne.

Looming from the sandy floor of Melbourne Aquarium’s largest exhibit, the 2.2 million litre Oceanarium, the skeleton of a full-scale shipwreck contains the new exhibit space, with themed acrylic partitions creating a seamless flow between the two areas of the Oceanarium.

Melbourne Aquarium General Manager, Mark Manteit, said the development reaffirms the aquarium’s position as a Victorian tourism leader by offering a whole new experience for visitors to Melbourne.

“The new Shipwreck Cove exhibit will enhance Melbourne Aquarium’s tourism offering, delivering a new interactive and entertaining experience in which to educate our visitors about the amazing aquatic world,” said Mr Manteit.

“The attraction will also create opportunities for Melbourne Aquarium to develop partnerships with like-minded research organisations, offering a facility that can house juvenile rare and iconic animals of larger marine species for observation in a safe and secure environment.”

The Shipwreck Cove exhibit and acclimatisation area concept was successful in receiving Australian Government funding of \$100,000 under the T-QUAL Grants (Quality Tourism Projects) Program from the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism.

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In line with the National Long Term Tourism Strategy, the T-QUAL Grants program supports tourism projects that stimulate sustainable economic growth in the Australian tourism industry by enhancing the supply of quality tourism products and experiences.

“In winning a grant under the T-QUAL Grants Program, we are excited to have this opportunity to enhance the tourism offering in Melbourne by providing an exhibit unique to Australian aquariums,” said Mr Manteit

“The exhibit will be promoted extensively to international tourism markets, allowing opportunities to partner with other local and regional attractions, accommodation houses and restaurants.”

Construction of the exhibit took three months; one month off-site, and a further two months of underwater construction by Melbourne Aquarium’s Dive Team, with the main feature of the exhibit, a full-sized figurehead, the last piece of the giant underwater jigsaw puzzle.

The new Shipwreck Cove exhibit will also enhance Melbourne Aquarium’s function and event business - Five Star Functions - in providing one of the newest and most unique event spaces in Melbourne, as well as offer a new education space for Underwater Zoo students to be inspired about the amazing underwater world.

From 26 December 2011 – 31 January 2012, Melbourne Aquarium will launch the summer school holiday special event “Sharks of Shipwreck Cove”. With daily interactive presentations, animal feeds and heaps of exciting pirate-themed activities, there’s fun for the whole family.

Melbourne Aquarium is open every day of the year, from 9:30am until 6pm. For further information, visit www.melbourneaquarium.com.au.

EXHIBIT FAST FACTS:	Over 20 juvenile sharks on display
	Shark species include; White Tip Reef Shark, Black Tip Shark, Black Tip Reef Shark, Dusky Whalers, Sandbar Whaler, Whiskery Sharks, Tawney Nurse Sharks
	The average size of the sharks is between 80cm and 1.2 metres
	The partitioned section of the tank is approximately 600,000 litres
	The Shipwreck exhibit took over two months to build; one month off-site, and a further month of underwater construction by a team of Melbourne Aquarium divers

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