

MEDIA RELEASE

21 March 2006

Heritage steam ship gets a Kick Start in its restoration appeal

The Heritage Council of NSW and the Heritage Office, Department Of Planning is partnering with the Sydney Heritage Fleet to help raise funds towards restoring the two original 1927 oil-fired boilers fitted in the heritage steamship *SS John Oxley*.

Heritage Office Executive Director Reece McDougall today presented a cheque for \$10,000 to the Sydney Heritage Fleet as part of its Kick Start funding program.

"Kick Start is a new fund raising program aimed at supporting community based heritage projects," Mr McDougall said.

"The Kick Start Funding Program is an initiative within the NSW Government Heritage Office's Heritage Incentive Program. Under the program, the NSW Government will provide \$10,000 seed funding through a tax deductible appeal," Mr McDougall said.

"Sydney Heritage Fleet is aiming to raise at least \$40,000 (inclusive of Kick Start funding) within four weeks from the launch of its fund raising appeal and at least \$80,000 within the next 2 years,"

"The Heritage Office is pleased to be able to provide this start up to the Sydney Heritage Fleet, an organisation which has an exemplary record of restoration projects and community involvement.

"I would like to congratulate The Sydney Heritage Fleet for being the first 'in the water' in signing on with Kick Start," Mr McDougall said.

John Oxley was built in 1927 to serve as a pilot vessel in Moreton Bay and as a buoy tender and lighthouse tender along the Queensland coast. During WW2 she was requisitioned by the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) for use as an examination vessel. In 1946 she returned to full Queensland Harbours and Marine control and operation and continued in service until 1968. Two years later the *John Oxley* was officially donated to Sydney Heritage Fleet.

John Oxley, unlike many other heritage vessels, was never altered from her original configuration. She is a time capsule of early 1900s shipping with her rosewood-panelled pilots' accommodation, original mast and derrick for working buoys and navigational equipment, coal fired galley, wooden boats and of course her quite large, steam powered main engine.

Her restoration began in 1982 and remains a major focus for the 42 year old community-based organisation which relies on the hard work and enthusiasm of its 650 plus volunteer labour force.

For more information please contact Debra Holland, Communication and Events Officer, Heritage Office, Department of Planning tel: 9873 8523