

Media Release

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Community joins forces to restore iconic “Little Blue Boat”

Sustainable Timber Tasmania has jumped on board to support the restoration of *Sea Breeze*, the beloved wooden boat that was a fixture on the River Derwent for nearly 50 years

Known affectionately as the “Little Blue Boat,” *Sea Breeze* was ripped from her moorings earlier this year during powerful storms in southern Tasmania. Moored near the busy Brooker Highway at Montrose Bay, the iconic boat has captured the hearts of many Tasmanians. Crafted by Robin Attrill in the early 1970s, *Sea Breeze* has become a symbol of Tasmania’s maritime heritage and a recognisable sight along the river.

After the storm damage, concerns from the community led the Wooden Boat Centre in Franklin to step in and purchase *Sea Breeze* for \$1. The Wooden Boat Centre and a dedicated team of volunteers, under the expert guidance of head shipwright Cody Horgan, has now embarked on the meticulous restoration process to secure the boat’s future.

Recognising the importance of this project, Sustainable Timber Tasmania reached out to the Wooden Boat Centre to offer support. Working closely with Cody and his team, Sustainable Timber Tasmania has sourced local Celery top pine and is donating this essential material to help in the restoration of the boat’s deck and hull, as well as salvaged Oregon pine for the mast, which was broken in two from the storm damage.

Suzette Weeding, General Manager Conservation and Land Management said Sustainable Timber Tasmania shared her excitement about the collaboration. “We’re proud to support the Wooden Boat Centre in this important restoration and feel privileged to play a role in preserving the legacy of the “Little Blue Boat” for future generations.”

Minister for Business, Industry and Resources Eric Abetz highlighted the importance of Tasmanian special species timber, which is vital to the region’s iconic wooden boat building industry. “As a strong supporter of Tasmania’s unique assets, it’s essential that we promote the sustainable use of our timber resources, ensuring these industries continue to thrive for generations.”

“This community project is a great example of preserving Tasmania’s maritime heritage and ensuring the craft continues to be enjoyed.”

Cody Horgan, Head Shipwright and Manager of the Workshop at the Wooden Boat Centre said that “The Little Blue Boat” is special to many Tasmanians. We’re thrilled to be able to restore *Sea Breeze* to her natural state of the original Celery top pine hull and the Oregon pine mast, alongside other needed timber pieces.”

“Sustainable Timber Tasmania’s support will help the Wooden Boat Centre fast track the restoration. Our aim is to showcase *Sea Breeze* at the Wooden Boat Show in February 2025, before she finds her forever home with new owners.”

Other donors contributing to the *Sea Breeze* restoration include local and international volunteer boat builders, Huon Aquaculture, Elliot's Crane Hire, and International Paints.

Attached images: "Little Blue Boat" before and during restoration. David White, Sustainable Timber Tasmania Forest Operations Manager and Cody Horgan, Wooden Boat Centre, Head Shipwright and Manager.

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