

## River Murray shipwrecks at risk

In the early days of Australia's history, the River Murray was the main "highway" for the young colony's interior trade and played a crucial part in South Australia's development.

Memories of those days have been preserved in the historically significant shipwrecks and maritime heritage sites to be found along the river's South Australian waters, and some are considered to be nationally important.

"While many of these sites are known and registered with the Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH), many other wrecks that are believed to exist have not yet been located," said Ms Raina Nechvoglod, Heritage Branch Manager with the Department for Environment and Heritage.

"In recent times, with the river's water levels so low, some previously concealed wrecks and historic sites have been exposed," she said.

"This presents a rare opportunity to collect new information about these tangible remnants of SA's maritime history.

"Unfortunately, the exposure of these culturally valuable assets also makes them susceptible to both inadvertent and malicious damage," she said.

Wrecks located in South Australian inland waters, including the River Murray, are protected under the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1981* (South Australia).

"Any shipwreck or relic that is more than 75 years old is automatically declared as 'historic' and should not be disturbed," Ms Nechvoglod said.

"Exposed wrecks may also present a safety risk to people using the River. Reporting their presence helps ensure this risk is appropriately managed," she said.

River Murray users concerned about shipwrecks and navigational safety can obtain advice from the Department of Transport by calling 8260 0088. Information is also available on the DTEI website at [www.transport.sa.gov.au](http://www.transport.sa.gov.au). Look under Personal Transport / Recreational Boating.

"The public is also asked to help protect these historic assets by reporting the presence of any exposed shipwrecks or relics to DEH's Heritage Branch on 8124 4960," Ms Nechvoglod said.

"DEH holds a register of all historic shipwrecks declared in the State we're keen to add to this information."

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