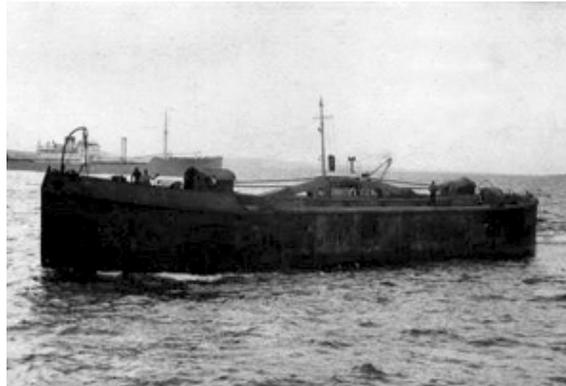


## No. 3 DUMB HOPPER BARGE – Glenelg (also known as 'The Glenelg Barge')

On 10 April 1984, the Department of Marine and Harbors No. 3 dumb hopper barge was deliberately scuttled in Gulf St Vincent, approximately 3.6 nautical miles off Glenelg. The redundant barge had recently been acquired by the Department of Fisheries for use as an artificial reef.

Built in Sydney in 1911 by Pool and Steel for the Marine Board of South Australia, the steel barge measured 140 feet (42.7m) in length, 26 feet (7.9m) width, 13.5 feet (4.1m) breadth and had a capacity of 450 cubic yards. It had 9 watertight compartments and 6 sets of hopper doors, which were originally opened by hand but later converted to hydraulic operation. The barge had been used to dump spoil from dredging operations in Port Adelaide and most major outports, but became surplus to requirements after the commissioning of two self-propelled barges in 1978.



No. 3 Hopper Barge, June 1957  
Photo: PortsCorp

The vessel was sunk in 20 metres of water, adjacent to the tyre reef which had been on the site since 1975. The original tyre bundles had dispersed over a wide area of the seafloor and had greatly reduced the size of the artificial reef. To add to the barge's effectiveness as a reef, six 30 metre steel pipes, donated by Steel Mains Pty Ltd of North Haven, were placed inside the hoppers. The Department of Fisheries believed that the layout of the barge and pipes would provide a suitable habitat for fish and an excellent site for divers. It was anticipated that catch rates in the area would return to those reported from the tyre reef in the past.

The vessel's successful placement was a cooperative effort. The barge was stripped by the Department of Marine and Harbors and towed to the site by the motorised barge *Denis O'Malley*. Demolition experts from the Department of Mines and Energy then carried out the required explosives work.



Preparing the barge for scuttling, April 1984  
Photo: PIRSA



Explosives detonated, April 1984  
Photo: PIRSA

In ideal weather conditions, and with a large number of spectators present, the sinking was spectacular. Smoke and flames shot from the barge four minutes after the delayed fuse was lit, and within three minutes the barge had disappeared. Underwater observations by divers within 30 minutes of the sinking showed that the barge lay upright on the seabed, with curious fish already gathering.

See [swath bathymetry and side-scan images](#), courtesy Flinders Ports