



Media Release

27 February 2018

Damaged CY O'Connor statue recovery underway

Investigations are continuing into damage caused to the iconic C Y O'Connor bronze statue at North Coogee beach, with its severed head and torso section located nearby on the ocean floor.

In conjunction with the statue's artist Tony Jones and the Department of Transport, the City has arranged for the immediate retrieval of the severed section as soon as weather permits tomorrow. The site will be secured in the interim.

The operation will also endeavor to temporarily remove the statue itself so that the severed section can be reattached by the artist on dry land, and then reinstated as soon as possible in coming weeks.

A warning float will be attached to the remaining pylon in the interim.

Mr Jones has told the City that the statue, installed in 1999, was funded by the then Department of Trade and Commerce.

The City chose Mr Jones as the project artist and arranged for its installation but the statue sits 30m offshore in an area of Crown Land under the jurisdiction of the Department of Lands, Planning and Heritage.

The Department of Transport is also involved in providing permission for the work to be undertaken.

The City has received several reports that a catamaran was seen near the statue around 3pm on Sunday, 25 February. The assistance of local yacht clubs, marinas and harbours has been requested to identify the vessel to see if its skipper or crew can provide any additional information about the statue or the damage.

Mayor Logan Howlett said the sculpture had a special place in people's hearts, having been voted one of WA's most significant artworks in 2013.

It commemorates the important life's work of Charles Yelverton O'Connor, a celebrated



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West Australian engineer and former Engineer-in-Chief appointed by WA Premier John Forrest in 1891.

He was responsible for projects including Fremantle Harbour, extensive railway construction in Perth, Fremantle, the Wheatbelt, Goldfields and Southwest, plus the Perth to Kalgoorlie Water Pipeline.

But CY O'Connor's pioneering projects attracted prolonged criticism from members of parliament and the press of the day.

"His death in the ocean south of Fremantle on 10 March, 1902 is a stark reminder of the pressures of daily life and their impacts on individuals, families and communities that continue to this day and that have become more prevalent over time," Mayor Howlett said.

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