

## National Maritime Museum – operates smoothly on staff and voluntary effort

The Australian National Maritime Museum, on the shoreline of Sydney’s Darling Harbour, has a staff of just over 120... backed up with the strength of more than 800 volunteers.

Together these people collect the evidence of Australia’s maritime history, restore and conserve more than 40,000 historical objects, assemble exhibitions, present educational programs, show more than 400,000 visitors through the museum’s exhibitions and ships every year... and more!

“As you might imagine, there’s a wide variety of highly-tuned vocational skills in our professional staff,” says the museum director, Mary-Louise Williams.

“Like all bigger museums we have curatorial, registration, conservation, education, marketing and admin staff... but in our case, many of our people have a personal interest in the maritime world.

“Where we differ from other museums is we have specialist maritime people as well... shipwrights and others who maintain our historic vessels on the water, highly skilled tall ship mariners to maintain and sail our replica of Captain Cook’s *Endeavour*...

“We even have a team of maritime archaeologists to search out, identify and conserve Australia’s maritime heritage on the seabed.”

But it’s in the voluntary area that museum activities are presently booming and further recruitment is needed.

Most of the National Maritime Museum volunteers carry out their elected tasks at the museum home-base on Darling Harbour – many of them greeting visitors and acting as guides, others assisting in the various areas of museum work.

But in an interesting development, increasing numbers of volunteers are engaged on museum work a long way from the central-Sydney “hub”.

It all started when the museum acquired the HM Bark *Endeavour* in 2005. The museum decided to keep the vessel in survey and to send her out on voyages to different Australian ports every year.

The vessel accepts paying crew members who learn all about tall ship sailing at sea. In the various ports of call it reverts to museum mode, recalling the atmosphere on *Endeavour* during Cook’s great voyage of 1768-71.

Importantly, in each port the museum recruits volunteers to act as guides and explain the ship’s historical features to the visitors who stream aboard.

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Last year *Endeavour* voyaged to Brisbane, calling at Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie and Newcastle on the way back. More than 200 volunteers, all up, were recruited in these various ports to show *Endeavour* to enthusiastic visitors.

This year *Endeavour* will sail all the way to Cooktown in the far north of Queensland as part of the State's sesqui-centenary celebrations. It will call at Bundaberg, Townville, Cooktown, Cairns, Mackay and Gladstone between leaving Sydney on 15 July and returning on 7 November.

The museum will seek to recruit a total 400 new volunteers in these ports, to bring the total number of regional volunteers to 800!

Having made these friends in distant ports, the museum stays in touch, sending all of them copies of its regular volunteers magazine and newsletter, giving them access to the museum's volunteers website and extending them privileges when they visit the museum in Sydney.

Anyone interested in joining the staff of the Australian National Maritime Museum should consult the "Jobs" section of the museum website at [www.anmm.gov.au](http://www.anmm.gov.au) .

People interested in becoming a museum volunteer, as a museum guide in Sydney or in any of the ports to be visited by *Endeavour* this year, should visit the museum website at [www.anmm.gov.au/volunteers](http://www.anmm.gov.au/volunteers) or phone the Volunteers Office on (02) 9298 3772.

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