

Tasman Bridge, Hobart TAS, Australia



Located in Hobart, Tasmania is the Tasman Bridge a 1.395km 5 lane prestressed concrete girder bridge. It crosses the Derwent River, connecting the CBD of Tasmania to the eastern shore. Construction commenced in May 1960 and the bridge was opened on 18th August 1964.

It was decided to build the structure as a result of demand from the development of the eastern shore as well as the inadequacy of the existing Hobart Bridge which was pressured from large volumes of traffic and the time consuming raising of the lift span for shipping vessels.

Disaster struck on the evening of Sunday 5th January 1975 when a 7174 tonne bulk ore carrier the "Lake Illawarra" collided with the Tasman Bridge. As a result of the collision, 2 piers and 3 spans of concrete deck fell onto the decking of the ship killing 7 of the ships crewmen and sinking the vessel. In addition, 5 motorists also perished when 4 cars drove over the collapsed sections of the bridge before traffic was stopped. The ship was later identified as being off course due to tidal currents and partly due to captain error.

An interim ferry service was established to reconnect residents in Hobart's eastern suburbs, thus avoiding a 50 km journey via the next bridge at Bridgewater to the western shore which housed many of Hobart's hospitals, schools etc. As a result, a decision was made to construct a temporary 2 lane bridge (the Bailey Bridge) to help restore connectivity to residents.

The reconstruction of the Tasman Bridge occurred in October 1975. The construction lasted 2 years at an approximate cost of \$44 million. This re-design saw an improvement in safety measures, as well as an additional 5th lane which is now used as a reversible lane. Due to the depth of the Derwent River, the "Lake Illawarra" still lies beneath the bridge, approximately 35 metres below the surface with the original concrete slab on top.

The Tasman Bridge was officially re-opened in its current state to members of the public on Saturday 8th October 1977.

Today the Tasman Bridge serves as a crossing for vehicles as well as a pedestrian foot bridge and a central navigation span for shipping.



Technical Details

Design: Prestressed concrete Girder

Original Bridge Cost: £7,000,000

Start/Completion Date: May 1960 - December 1964

Reconstruction Cost: \$44 million

Reconstruction Start/Completion Dates: October 1975 - October 1977

Location: Derwent River, Hobart, Tasmania Australia

Clearance for Shipping: 46 metres

Width: 17.5 metres - 5 lanes of traffic

Length: 1,395 metres

Men Killed: 12 people (5 motorists & 7 crew men on the ship)

References:

www.parliament.tas.gov.au

www.abc.net.au

Contact Details

AEOL - Australian Engineering OnLine (Historical Article)

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