

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 05/01/26

ALBERT SAN

Location

East Coast, Cape Conran, Beware Reef

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S13

Date lost

13/08/1926

Official number

152168

Construction material

Steel

Hull

Steel

Propulsion

Steam - Screw

Engine specification

Triple expansion engine 57 HP

Length/Breadth/Depth

117.00 Feet / 22.00 Feet / 11.90 Feet

Builder

Smiths Docks Ltd

Year of construction

1915

Built port

Southbank on Tees

Built country

England

Registration Port

Auckland

Date lost

13/08/1926

Departure

Melbourne

Destination

Sydney

Owner

Coastal Trawling Co

Master

Captain J Renton

Weather conditions

Thick weather

Cause of loss

Struck Beware Reef

Number of crew

11

Statement of significance

<p>This vessel is significant historically for its employment in the experimental state trawling industry in Victoria in the early stages of the 20th century.</p>

VHR history

Name changed to ALBERT SAN in June 1924. Landed cost 13,389 pounds.
 The SS Brolga was a "Castle" type steam side-trawler built by Smiths Dock Ltd in Middlesborough, England, and was purchased by the

NSW government in 1915 along with two other Castle trawlers. The trawlers were to be the backbone of the experimental State Trawling Industry, designed to supply Sydney and Newcastle with supplies of cheap fish. They also provided the blueprint for other trawlers built in Australia.

 The 217 tons gross Brolga's dimensions were 115 x 22 x 12 feet (35 x 6.7 x 3.7 metres). All vessels in the "Castle" class were powered by a triple expansion compound steam engine allowing an 8-10 knot maximum speed. In 1917 the Royal Australian Navy requisitioned these trawlers for auxiliary mine-sweeping work, and the Brolga swept for mines around the NSW coast and Gabo Island in World War I between October 1917 and 1918.

 After the war she was used as a trawler by different owners including the NSW government and a New Zealand company. The Brolga was renamed the Albert San in June 1924. Its owners at time of loss were the Coastal Trading Company Ltd of NSW.

 On 13 August 1926 on a voyage from Melbourne to Sydney, the Albert San struck Beware Reef and commenced sinking by the bow. All eleven crew got off safely in a boat and reached the mainland shore. The blame was attributed to faulty navigation by the Captain, J. Renton.

 No wreckage found on Beware Reef to date has been confirmed as belonging to the Albert San. It is possible that after striking Beware Reef it drifted off and sank in deeper water.

 #VHR: The steam trawler Albert San ran ashore on Beware Reef off the East Gippsland coast. All the crew escaped safely.#