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122-Year-Old Letter Found in Cape Bruny Lighthouse Wall

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– Categories: *Breaking News*



A significant historical discovery has been made at Cape Bruny Lighthouse in southern Tasmania, where a 122-year-old message in a bottle was found concealed within the structure's wall during restoration works in July 2025.

The message, dated 29 January 1903, was written by J.R. Meech, then Inspector of Lighthouses for the Hobart Marine Board (accurate historical body name), and placed inside a sealed glass bottle. It details upgrades made to the lighthouse at the time, including the installation of a new staircase, floor, lantern room, and lens, along with the associated costs

and names of the workers involved. The letter was discovered during maintenance in the lantern room when a specialist contractor, removing rust, noticed the object embedded in a cavity in the wall.

According to The Examiner, the bottle had been sealed with a cork and coated in bitumen, which contributed to the letter's preservation over more than a century. Jennifer Waghorn, conservator at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG), described the condition of the letter as "remarkable," crediting the sealed environment for its protection from moisture and decay.

The extraction required delicate handling due to the hardened seal and folded paper. Experts from both TMAG and the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) worked together to retrieve the letter intact, according to The Courier. Further conservation is now underway to stabilise the document for long-term preservation and public exhibition.

A TMAG spokesperson told The Border Mail that the letter provides a rare and tangible link to Tasmania's maritime infrastructure and offers unique insights into early 20th-century lighthouse operations. The museum plans to make the artifact accessible to the public once conservation is complete.

Cape Bruny Lighthouse, constructed in 1836, is one of the oldest lighthouses in Australia and has played a vital role in navigation along Tasmania's coastline. This discovery highlights the importance of heritage conservation not only in maintaining historic sites but also in uncovering forgotten records of the past.

David Reynolds, a local historian interviewed by ABC News, stated that such finds reaffirm the legacy of early engineering projects and the craftsmanship of those who built and maintained them. The letter, now awaiting display, stands as a testament to the diligence of 1903 maritime workers and the enduring importance of preserving Australia's historical landmarks.