

Demolition robots to deconstruct Harbour Control Tower at Barangaroo Reserve

An innovative technique using demolition robots to deconstruct the old Harbour Control Tower by pulverising the concrete structure has been chosen by the Barangaroo Delivery Authority.

Deconstruction of the tower, which was approved by the NSW Planning Minister Rob Stokes last year, will commence at the end of March 2016 and be completed by the end of the year.

The 87m concrete and steel tower, which is sited in Sydney's new headland park, Barangaroo Reserve, ceased operating when shipping control was relocated to the Sydney Ports Communications Centre in Port Botany in 2011. Its removal will complete the Authority's vision of creating a naturalistic interpretation of the original headland.

The tower base sits in the Cutaway, a huge cultural space under the headland, and rises through a void above Stargazer Lawn next to Merriman Street. The deconstruction method has been selected by the Authority to have minimal impact on local residents, businesses and visitors to Barangaroo Reserve, and will also enable continued use of the Cutaway.

Specialist deconstruction contractor, Liberty Industrial, a Sydney company, has been selected through a tender process to carry out the work. Their method will be a first for Australia, using demolition robots and a special mast-climbing platform system that has been used in Europe on similar structures, such as old smoke stacks.

Once the top section of the building has been removed by hand, remote-controlled demolition robots will be used to "eat away" the tower itself, with the pulverised debris pushed into the tower's shaft which will act as a chute. Debris will be taken offsite at the Cutaway level. Some 98% of the materials will be recycled.

Peter Funder, Barangaroo Delivery Authority Project Director, said: "The deconstruction method was chosen because the safety of workers, residents and visitors is paramount. We also believe it will cause minimal inconvenience. We want to ensure people can continue to enjoy Barangaroo Reserve."

During the works, there will be minimal impacts on Barangaroo Reserve. Once the deconstruction is complete, landscaping works will be undertaken to make access to Barangaroo Reserve from Clyne Reserve playground easier.

The Authority will be seeking final approval for the selected methodology under the existing approved planning application.

The Authority is drafting a heritage interpretation plan which will detail how the modern maritime story of the tower will be celebrated. This includes opportunities for it to be included in the broader approach to commemorating the maritime history of the 22-hectare Barangaroo site.

Since opening in August 2015 Barangaroo Reserve has welcomed more than 500,000 visitors. It is home to 75,000 native plants, two new Sydney Harbour coves, public lawn areas and a naturalistic foreshore made of 6,500 carved sandstone blocks.