

## THE PIER THAT NEVER WAS

Many people are unaware that the border of the Manly Local Government Area (LGA ) follows the coastline like Warringah but includes a large expanse of the Tasman off Manly Ocean Beach.

This came about in the late 1800s when economic times were good and ambitious plans were considered just a matter of putting ones shoulder to the wheel. The reason for the extension of the LGA out to sea was for the building of what was eventually described in 1910 as the Manly Palace Pier. Fortunately World War 1 intervened before the project got started and then after the war, calmer heads prevailed. However in 1924 Sydney did get its ocean pier at Coogee, a construction extending 183 metres out from the beach with a restaurant for 400 people and a theatre seating 1400. Unfortunately or fortunately depending on your point of view, the pier was demolished in 1934 after incurring storm damage.

The Manly Palace Pier was going to be no minor construction, dwarfing Coogee, with a length of 900 feet (270 metres). The nominated builders, C and J Mayo had already built piers in England at Western-Super-Mare and Yarmouth. The pier was designed to be 36 feet (11 metres) wide and have a pier head that would provide access by steam ferries. The pier was to have had cast-iron piles and columns and braced with steel bars and rods.

In all this, Manly was endeavouring to emulate the home country, Great Britain, with its multitude of piers, the most famous being in Brighton. Starting in the 1860s, ocean piers were constructed all around the coast, 98 in all. 58 piers are still in existence, all under the watchful eye of the National Piers Society, who have an interesting website for those so inclined.

The popularity did spread across the Atlantic and the Santa Monica pier is still in evidence in Los Angeles.

So when you look out to sea from the North or South Steyne, remember that the Manly Council border is out there outside the line of surf and nearly including the Queenscliff Bombora. Perhaps it is better that we are able just to imagine the Manly Palace Pier that might have been..