

Basic Detail Report



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Title

SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA

Date

1972-1974

Primary Maker

Ken Warby

Medium

Plywood, fibreglass, wood, paint

Dimensions

Overall: 1080 x 8230 x 2440 mm, 1524 kg Vessel Dimensions: 8.22 m × 2.37 m (26.97 ft × 7.78 ft)

Name

Hydroplane

History

Ken Warby, SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA's designer, builder and driver, achieved his world water-speed records on a shoestring budget. The boat was built over two years in the backyard of his suburban Sydney home, using stringers, brackets, stock bits of timber, plywood, screws and epoxy, and launched in 1974. Warby first claimed the world record in 1977, taking his home-made hydroplane to a speed of 464.44 km/h and breaking American Lee Taylor's ten-year-old record of 458.98 km/h. But where Lee Taylor's record had cost close to \$1 million in 1967, Warby built his boat in a suburban backyard with a military-surplus jet engine that cost \$65. In 1978 he returned to Blowering Dam in the southern highlands of New South Wales and pushed his record to 511.11 km/h (317.68 m/h), where it still stands. Warby was awarded an MBE (Member of the British Empire) in recognition of his achievement. More information about SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA's construction, configuration and condition can be found on the Australian Register of Historic Vessels www.anmm.gov.au/arhv.