

# A drop of sailing history

REBECCA TUCKER

THE time ball will once more drop in Geelong.

For those younger than 140, the time ball was a signal used in most major harbours to tell mariners the time and their location at sea.

The Mint Inc, an organisation charged with restoring heritage properties, has brought Geelong's time ball back to life as part of the refurbishment of Ryrie Street's Telegraph Station.

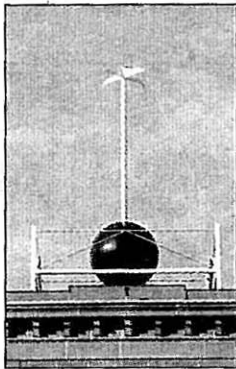
On Thursday, January 12, Attorney General Rob Hulls will officially open the building an hour before the traditional time ball drop.

Mr Hulls will drop the ball at 1pm, while a tug boat in the harbour responds to the signal.

Mint executive chairwoman Dr Jan Penney described the event as "a very rare opportunity" to recreate Geelong's history from the 1860s.

"You don't get to see a time ball drop very often," she said.

Dr Penney estimated just five or six time balls



The time ball

remained in the world, with just three or four in working order.

The time ball, measuring about 1.5 metres wide, will sit on top of a flag pole, surrounded by a cast iron barricade.

Dr Penney said the new ball would be a slight deviation from the original metal ball; this time made from fibreglass because "it's safer and will stay up longer".

The original ball could be seen clearly from across Corio Bay, thanks to Geelong's low rise city.

Dr Penney said it would be noticeable from Cunningham Pier.



BACK IN ACTION: Geelong's historic time ball on the roof of the old Telegraph Station is set to drop again.