

Factsheet: March 2009

# Channel Deepening Project Dredge Schedule - Entrance

## The Entrance

The Entrance is a stretch of open water approximately 3.2km wide between Point Nepean and Point Lonsdale and is characterised by strong tidal currents and sometimes very rough wave conditions. It is the only entry and exit for bay water to move in and out to Bass Strait.

Five shipping channels exist at the Entrance and are transited daily by container vessels under the management of a Port Phillip Sea Pilot.

The largest vessels only operate in the middle channel known as the Great Ship Channel, where dredging will predominately occur 24 hours a day.

People can expect to see the dredge working in the Entrance and moving between the designated material ground in the southern end of Port Phillip Bay. Dredging at the Entrance was technically completed in September 2008. Further details are explained in another PoMC factsheet entitled, The Entrance.

## Vessels/Equipment

Dredging at the Entrance will be carried out by the Trailing Suction Hopper Dredge (TSHD), Queen of the Netherlands.

Refined dredging dragheads and techniques will enable the rock material to be dredged in line with world's best practice. This follows learnings from a trial dredge in the area in August 2005.

## Schedule

Dredging at the Entrance began on 5 April 2008 and was technically completed in September 2008.

## The Entrance Ecology

The Entrance mainly consists of shallow reefs, these shallow reefs are relatively common along the Victorian coastline and include kelp beds, other common seaweeds and benthic invertebrates.

Another attraction to the Entrance is the Canyon. The Canyon is nearly 100m deep and has a dramatic and complex bathymetry. The Canyon contains a range of sessile invertebrates including sponges, hydroids, anemones and bryozoans which are common in these types of deep reef environments.

## Safeguarding the environment

The dredging techniques and equipment have been improved and modified to reduce residual loose material. Dredging methods and additional clean up of loose material will ensure rock movement is kept to a minimum. This is to reduce the amount of material able to move into the canyon area.

The material to be dredged at the Entrance is soft rock. Fine loose particles released from dredging leading to turbidity at the Entrance will be considerably less than dredging other parts of the bay.

Dredging methodologies will also reduce residual material's movement into the national park limiting the impact to 1.5%

A 200m restricted access area applies around dredging equipment. Dive boat operators can contact PoMC control centre at Point Lonsdale for dredging updates. Telephone 5258 1252 or by VHF radio channel 12.

## For more information:

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