

Communication and Media Plan

Cullen Bay maintenance dredging

8 May 2025

RECORDS number:	
Cost centre/Project number:	
Project Manager:	Enda Dooley
Project Director:	Jay Corrick
Executive Director:	Shane Dahlhelm Chandan Kalase
Stakeholders:	<u>Northern Territory Government</u> Minister for Logistics and Infrastructure media.DLI@nt.gov.au Minister for Tourism and Hospitality DLO.DLI@nt.gov.au Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries DLO.DLI@nt.gov.au Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment DLO.DLI@nt.gov.au <u>NTG Department</u> Darwin Harbour Master anil.chadha@nt.gov.au RHM.NTG@nt.gov.au Department of Tourism and Hospitality media.DTH@nt.gov.au Department of Agriculture and Fisheries media.DAF@nt.gov.au Department of Lands, Planning and Environment Communications.DLPE@nt.gov.au Northern Territory Police PFES.media@pfes.nt.gov.au Northern Territory Fire and Emergency Services PFES.media@pfes.nt.gov.au <u>Local government</u> City of Darwin darwin@darwin.nt.gov.au Wagait Shire Council council@wagait.nt.gov.au ceo@wagait.nt.gov.au Belyuen Community Government Council dave.ferguson@belyuen.nt.gov.au Tiwi Islands Regional Council gina.mcpharlin@tiwiislands.nt.gov.au

	<u>Aboriginal organisations</u> Northern Land Council reception@nlc.org.au Tiwi Land Council bredan.ferguson@tiwilandcouncil.com Larrakia Nation ranger.manager@larrakia.com ceo@larrakia.com Larrakia Development Corporation mark.motlop@larrakia.com.au <u>Industry and associations</u> Amateur Fishing Association NT ceo@afant.com.au research@afant.com.au NT Guided Fishing Industry Association simmons@ntgfia.org.au Maritime Industry Council, Chamber of Commerce NT matthew@nauticalsupplies.com.au darwin@chambernt.com.au rbadenhop@chambernt.com.au mnewman@chambernt.com.au ceo@chambernt.com.au Tourism Top End admin@tourismtopend.com.au NT Seafood Council ceo@ntsc.com.au admin@ntsc.com.au <u>Nearby and interested stakeholders</u> Darwin Port darwinport@darwinport.com.au peter.dummett@nt.com.au david.power@darwinport.com.au Cullen Bay Marina admin@cullenbaymarina.com.au and CEO Clay Fredericks manager@cullenbaymarina.com.au INPEX cara.burke@INPEX.com.au joseph.pereira@INPEX.com.au RAAF Base Coonawarra, Department of Defence Mitchell.thomas@defence.gov.au dean.brown1@defence.gov.au Darwin LNG Angelina.Anictomatis@santos.com enquiriesNT@santos.com Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee darwinharbour.DEPWS@nt.gov.au SeaLink Etienne.Raubenheimer@sealink.com.au alex.sutcliffe-larsen@sealink.com.au Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service aquaticbiosecurity@nt.gov.au Cullen Bay, Wagait Beach, Mandorah, Tiwi Island and Cox Peninsula residents <u>Darwin Harbour users</u> Darwin Harbour list of marine agencies, boat clubs and boat and fishing retail outlets (attached) Recreational boat owners and users
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Funding allocated and source (NTG/AG):	The estimated total capital costs for this project is \$4 million, exclusive of GST, planning and other pre-construction costs. The works will be funded through reallocation of savings realised on the Mandorah Marine Facilities project.
Milestones - work commencement and indicative completion:	
The dates for the dredging works are not currently available and are subject to the environmental assessment processes and finalising the contract. The dates below will be inserted once they are available. Key milestones: • Dredging expected to commence: • Dredging expected to be completed:	
Background: The Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (the Department) owns and maintains the Cullen Bay ferry facility which includes the access channel, basin, ferry terminal, gangway, pontoon, rock groyne, associated car parking and civil infrastructure. The facility supports the movement of over 150,000 passengers per annum, with approximately 150 ferry services between Darwin and Tiwi Islands and 4,000 services between Darwin and Mandorah. When the Cullen Bay facility was constructed, it was anticipated that the Cullen Bay basin and access channel would require maintenance dredging on a varying cycle influenced by seasonal conditions. The entrance channel and basin have silted up over time since the last maintenance dredge, impacting on vessel access into Cullen Bay as a result of insufficient clearance between the bottom of vessels and the sea floor, particularly at lower tides. Due to the current and rapid siltation buildup recently, the ferry service provider has had to cancel or delay some Mandorah Ferry services due to limited low-tide access to Cullen Bay: • 18 services between 30 September and 15 December 2023 • 11 services between 9 and 13 March 2024 • 23 services between 4 and 22 October 2024 • 20 services between 1 and 31 December 2024 • 25 services between 1 and 31 January 2025. These delays have impacted 1.2% of all ferry services over 2 years and 1.7% this financial year. Stakeholders have raised concerns regarding the impact on community members that rely on the ferry services and the timeframe for the next dredging works. The Department will undertake urgent dredging without delay as Stage 1. The Department is progressing the environmental processes and dates to commence dredging are subject to processes being completed. The Department is going through an environmental process based on the dredging being a repeat activity and the proposed dredging methodology and monitoring is the same as the past two dredging campaigns at Cullen Bay in 2009 and 2017, which were conducted with environmental approval.	

A cutter suction dredge will remove up to approximately 80,000 cubic metres of sand/silt from the basin and entrance to Cullen Bay and dispose of it via a sunken hose to a deep water site west of Emery Point. The Department has applied for a Waste Discharge Licence for this activity.

Accurately predicting silt deposition is subject to seasonal weather effects, therefore it can be difficult to determine ahead of time when maintenance dredging should occur. Stage 2 includes approvals for ongoing maintenance dredging to ensure expedient maintenance dredging into the future without the lag for approvals processes that can take up to 2 years.

The stage 2 environmental approvals are anticipated to be completed in late 2026 (TBC).

The new Mandorah Marine Facilities project is anticipated to be completed in July 2025 and the expedited dredging at Cullen Bay is expected to be completed prior to this.

Impacts

The dredging works will have the following impacts:

- There will be restricted access to the Cullen Bay ferry terminal for private, recreational and commercial vessels while dredging is underway.
- Some ferry times may be impacted.
- Cullen Bay lock access may also be periodically impacted.
- A small section of Cullen Bay beach will be cordoned off from public access for about 48 hours while Maritime Constructions mobilises the dredge plant and equipment.
- The dredger will operate 24 hours a day 7 days a week to shorten the overall timeframe for the project from an anticipated 90 days to 50 days.
- There may be some noise at night from the dredger, however this is not expected to have an impact.
- Any changes will be communicated via community and stakeholder notices, Notice to Mariners (NtM) via the Regional Harbour Master (RHM) and via the ferry provider.

Communication objectives:	• To inform stakeholders and the community of the Cullen Bay dredging works, including details of the key dates and impacts. • To minimise any inconvenience for users of the Cullen Bay ferry terminal and lock by providing advanced notice of works and impacts. • To promote the benefits of the dredging works for the community and stakeholders. • To address some public criticism that dredging should have occurred prior to ferry schedule impacts. • To create an open communication channel for stakeholders and the community to ask questions and seek more information.
Communication tactics:	Media opportunities Media Release opportunities for the Northern Territory Government for project announcement before dredging is confirmed to start. Web page A project page will be set up on dli.nt.gov.au. This page will be updated to provide information on the scope and progress of the dredging work. A link to the project web page can be added to the Mandorah Marine Facilities project page on the Infrastructure NT website.

	Stakeholder notices Stakeholder notices will be used to share project information and updates with stakeholders. They will be distributed via email and made available on the web page. These will be sent to residents in Cullen Bay and the Cullen Bay Marina to advise users of the Cullen Bay lock. Digital message boards – Darwin Harbour Messages will be posted on the 3 digital message boards (DMB) in Darwin Harbour to advise boat users of any safety messaging and updates on the location and timing of the dredging. The DMBs are located at boat ramps at East Arm, Elizabeth River and Dinah Beach. Notice to Mariners (NtM) Notice to Mariners will be sent to the Regional Harbour Master to put on the NtM website managed by Marine Safety NT to notify boat users of any changes to access to accommodate dredging for Cullen Bay. Public notice A public notice will be placed in the Northern Territory News to notify users of Cullen Bay beach and the general public about the dredging project and that a section of the beach will be inaccessible for a 48 hour period. Phone and email The Darwin Harbour Infrastructure Projects on DHIP.DLI@nt.gov.au or 8936 5668 will be used for enquiries about the project. Stakeholder meetings Meetings will be conducted when required to provide a greater level of detail and have in depth discussions with stakeholders. Meetings can also be an effective method to resolve complaints and concerns. Social media Project announcements will be posted on the DLI Facebook page when information is relevant to a wide audience.
Key messages/dot points:	• The Northern Territory Government owns and maintains the Cullen Bay ferry facility which includes the access channel, basin, ferry terminal, gangway, pontoon, rock groyne and car parking. • The facility supports the movement of over 150,000 passengers each year, with approximately 150 ferry services between Darwin and Tiwi Islands and 4,000 services between Darwin and Mandorah. • SeaLink operates the ferry services from Cullen Bay to the Tiwi Islands and Mandorah. • The Department of Logistics and Infrastructure undertakes dredging work at varying intervals subject to weather conditions, to maintain vessel access to the Cullen Bay ferry facility. • The entrance channel and basin have silted up more rapidly in the recent past, impacting on vessel access into Cullen Bay, particularly at lower tides and for deeper draft vessels.

	• This has resulted in cancellations and delays to ferry services due to limited low-tide access to Cullen Bay. Urgent dredging is now required. • The Cullen Bay dredging project is anticipated to commence in late May, subject to finalisation of the environmental process. • The dredging activity is expected to be completed by July 2025 subject to progress. • The scope of work includes: ○ mobilise and commission the cutter suction dredge and ancillary marine plant and personnel ○ set up sunken hoses to take the dredge materials away from Cullen Bay ○ dredging the basin and access channel of the Cullen Bay ferry facility to relocate the silts away from Cullen Bay to deep water west of Emery Point. • The work is being undertaken by SMC Marine and Maritime Constructions, who will set up a temporary site office next to the Cullen Bay lock. • The dredging activity will occur 24 hours a day 7 days a week to reduce the timeframe for the project from an anticipated 90 days to 50 days and to limit the impact on ferry services during the day. • A small northern section of Cullen Bay beach and small section of the overflow public will be cordoned off over a 48 hour period to mobilise the hose. There may be some access restrictions to the ferry terminal and Cullen Bay lock, particularly when the dredge is working within the areas encompassing the eastern and western seawalls. • Stakeholders will be kept informed of access restrictions via stakeholder notices, Notice to Mariners (NtM) via the Regional Harbour Master (RHM) and via the ferry provider. • Notice to Mariners are available at: https://nt.gov.au/marine/marine-safety/directions-and-notices/notice-to-mariners • Dredging will be undertaken in accordance with environmental requirements, including controlling and monitoring water quality and managing cutter suction dredger operations. • The environmental process included a bathymetric survey, sediment sampling for geochemical testing and analysis, dredge material discharge and turbidity modelling and environmental impact assessments. • Environmental monitoring and water quality sampling is in place to measure water quality levels before, after and will continue during and after dredging activity in the construction works area. • There will be some changes to the ferry services to accommodate the dredging project. • SeaLink will notify ferry passengers on any changes to ferry services before they occur or go to https://www.sealink.com.au/darwin/ferry-information for updates.
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	For more information, contact Darwin Harbour Infrastructure Projects on DHIP.DLI@nt.gov.au or 8936 5668
Q & As	Why hasn't the dredging been done yet at Cullen Bay? When the Cullen Bay facility was constructed, it was anticipated that the Cullen Bay basin and access channel would require maintenance dredging on a varying cycle influenced by seasonal conditions. Dredging was scheduled for completion in 2026, however recent and rapid silt deposits have necessitated bringing this forward. The department has been undertaking the environmental approval process which includes conducting a bathymetric survey, sediment sampling for geochemical testing and analysis, dredge material discharge and turbidity modelling, environmental impact assessments and planning approvals required for maintenance dredging. Why wasn't the dredging done at Cullen Bay when the dredger was working at the Mandorah Marine Facilities project? The Cullen Bay maintenance dredging was scheduled well after the Mandorah dredging works, however due to recent seasonal effects this has necessitated bringing this activity forward. Dredging for the Mandorah Marine Facilities project required a different method, dredger, resources and approach, when compared to the dredging requirements for Cullen Bay ferry facility. For example, Mandorah required a backhoe dredger and transport vessels to dispose of those materials, whereas Cullen Bay requires a cutter suction dredge and a hose to transport the dredged materials away. Why isn't there ongoing approvals for dredging at Cullen Bay, considering it is needed on a recurring basis? In the past, obtaining recurring approval was not possible, however with changes in how and when harbour data is captured and harbour health is monitored, recurring approvals may be possible. The department is working on gaining environmental approvals which include recurrent approvals for future years to prevent delays. Will the dredging activity be noisy? Noise monitoring has been undertaken before the dredging activity starts and the noise levels are expected to be low. Why is the dredging activity occurring at night? The entrance channel and basin have silted up more rapidly in the recent past, impacting on vessel access into Cullen Bay, particularly at lower tides and for deeper draft vessels. This has resulted in cancellations and delays to ferry services due to limited low-tide access to Cullen Bay. Urgent dredging is now required.

	The dredging activity will occur 24 hours a day 7 days a week to reduce the timeframe for the project from an anticipated 90 days to 50 days. The dredging activity is occurring at night to limit the impact on ferry services during the day.
Risks/Sensitivities and Treatments of Risks: <i>(Not for distribution)</i>	The risks of not undertaking the maintenance dredging of the Cullen Bay basin and access channel will result in persistent and potentially worsening safety issues and increased uncertainty for ferry services and commercial vessels operating from Cullen Bay. In the past, the former DEPWS (now DLPE) have not had an appetite for recurring approvals, in more recent discussions, it seems they may be more willing to consider this approach subject to what assurances they can obtain, however until the assessment is referred for NT EPA consideration, confidence in this being approved is not absolute and should not be overstated. Doing a media announcement about the Cullen Bay dredging project before the environmental assessment is complete and dredging timeframes confirmed could be a risk as the timeframes depend on these and the information provided to stakeholders via the media could be incorrect and create unachievable expectations.
Contacts: Penny Baxter, Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Manager x65668 Shane Dahlhelm, Executive Director DHIP x47270	Date: 8/05/2025

Communications Tactics

[DLI project page](#)

The Northern Territory Government owns and maintains the Cullen Bay ferry facility which includes the access channel, basin, ferry terminal, gangway, pontoon, rock groyne and car parking.

The facility supports the movement of over 150,000 passengers each year, with approximately 150 ferry services between Darwin and Tiwi Islands and 4,000 services between Darwin and Mandorah.

SeaLink operates the ferry services from Cullen Bay to the Tiwi Islands and Mandorah.

The Department of Logistics and Infrastructure undertakes dredging work at varying intervals subject to weather conditions, to maintain vessel access to the Cullen Bay ferry facility.

Current situation

The entrance channel and basin have silted up more rapidly in the recent past, impacting on vessel access into Cullen Bay, particularly at lower tides and for deeper draft vessels. This has resulted in cancellations and delays to ferry services due to limited low-tide access to Cullen Bay. Urgent dredging is now required.

Dredging works

The Cullen Bay dredging project is planned to commence from 22 May 2025, subject to finalisation of the environmental process. The dredging activity is expected to be completed by July/August 2025 subject to progress.

The scope of work includes:

- mobilising and commissioning a cutter suction dredge and ancillary marine plant and personnel
- setting up sunken hoses to convey the dredge materials away from Cullen Bay
- dredging the basin and access channel to Cullen Bay ferry facility to relocate the silts to a disposal site away from Cullen Bay to deep water west of Emery Point.

The dredging program is being undertaken by SMC Marine and Maritime Constructions.

Dredging will be undertaken in accordance with environmental requirements, including controlling and monitoring water quality and managing cutter suction dredger operations.

Map



Impacts

There will be some access restrictions to the ferry terminal and Cullen Bay Lock, particularly when the dredge is working within the areas encompassing the eastern and western seawalls.

Stakeholders will be kept informed of access restrictions via stakeholder notices, Notice to Mariners (NtM) via the Regional Harbour Master (RHM) and via the ferry provider. Notice to Mariners are available at: <https://nt.gov.au/marine/marine-safety/directions-and-notices/notice-to-mariners>

There will be some changes to the ferry services to accommodate the dredging project.

SeaLink will notify ferry passengers on any changes to ferry services before they occur or go to <https://www.sealink.com.au/darwin/ferry-information> for updates.

For more information, contact Darwin Harbour Infrastructure Projects on DHIP.DLI@nt.gov.au or 8936 5668 and for any queries relating to the ferry service please contact SeaLink on 1300 130 679 or email contracts.dli@nt.gov.au.

Stakeholder notice

The Northern Territory Government is planning maintenance dredging for the Cullen Bay ferry facility.

The facility supports the movement of over 150,000 passengers each year, with approximately 150 ferry services between Darwin and Tiwi Islands and 4,000 services between Darwin and Mandorah.

The Department of Logistics and Infrastructure undertakes dredging work at varying intervals subject to weather conditions, to maintain vessel access to the Cullen Bay ferry facility.

The entrance channel and basin have silted up more rapidly in the recent past, impacting on vessel access into Cullen Bay, particularly at lower tides and for deeper draft vessels. This has resulted in cancellations and delays to ferry services due to limited low-tide access to Cullen Bay. Urgent dredging is now required.

The Cullen Bay dredging will commence in late May, subject to finalisation of the environmental process. The dredging activity is expected to be completed by July 2025 subject to progress.

The scope of work includes:

- mobilising and commissioning a cutter suction dredge and ancillary marine plant and personnel
- setting up sunken hoses to convey the dredge materials away from Cullen Bay, including cordoning off a small northern section of Cullen Bay Beach to assemble the disposal hose
- dredging the basin and access channel to Cullen Bay ferry facility to relocate the silts to a disposal site away from Cullen Bay to deep water west of Emery Point.

The dredging activity will occur 24 hours a day 7 days a week to reduce the timeframe for the project from an anticipated 90 days to 50 days and to limit the impact on ferry services during the day.

There may be some access restrictions to the ferry terminal and Cullen Bay Lock, particularly when the dredge is working within the areas encompassing the eastern and western seawalls encompassing.

Stakeholders will be kept informed of access restrictions via stakeholder notices, Notice to Mariners (NtM) via the Regional Harbour Master (RHM) and via the ferry provider. Notice to Mariners and are available at: <https://nt.gov.au/marine/marine-safety/directions-and-notices/notice-to-mariners>

Dredging will be undertaken in accordance with environmental requirements, including controlling and monitoring water quality and managing cutter suction dredger operations.

Environmental monitoring and water quality sampling is in place to measure water quality levels before, after and will continue during and after dredging activity in the construction works area.

There may be some changes to the ferry services to accommodate the dredging project.

SeaLink will notify ferry passengers on any changes to ferry services before they occur or go to <https://www.sealink.com.au/darwin/ferry-information> for updates.

For more information, contact Darwin Harbour Infrastructure Projects on DHIP.DLI@nt.gov.au or 8936 5668 and for any queries relating to the ferry service please contact SeaLink on 1300 130 679 or email contracts.dli@nt.gov.au.



Digital message boards – when dates are confirmed

Content	Image
SLIDE 1 Cullen Bay ferry facility – maintenance dredging Maintenance dredging commences 22 May 2025 for the ferry facility at Cullen Bay. Dredging will occur 24/7 until July 2025. For more information, visit nt.gov.au and search Notice to Mariners Marinesafety.nt.gov.au NTG Logo	
SLIDE 2 Harbour users are directed not to enter the construction area marked by hazard markers, buoys and lights. Keep well clear of dredger, hoses and support vessels.	Image of Cutter suction dredger Ngurunderi 

Social media post

Content	Image
Maintenance dredging is starting to remove silt from the basin and access channel of the ferry facility at Cullen Bay. The scope of work includes: • mobilising and commissioning a cutter suction dredge and ancillary marine plant and personnel • setting up sunken hoses to convey the dredge materials away from Cullen Bay • dredging the basin and access channel to the Cullen Bay ferry facility to relocate the	

silts to a disposal site away from Cullen Bay. There may be some access restrictions to the ferry terminal and Cullen Bay Lock, particularly when the dredge is working within the areas encompassing the eastern and western seawalls. Stakeholders will be kept informed of access restrictions. Notice to Mariners and are available at: https://nt.gov.au/marine/marine-safety/directions-and-notices/notice-to-mariners For more information, contact DHIP.DLI@nt.gov.au or 8936 5668.	
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Public notice (content also to be included in a Notice to Mariners)

Content	Image/map
Maintenance dredging is starting on 22 May 2025 to remove silt from the basin and access channel of the ferry facility at Cullen Bay. Maritime Constructions will be mobilising plant and equipment for the project. A small northern section of Cullen Bay Beach will be cordoned off for a 48 hour period to set up the disposal hose before it is floated out to the project site This section of Cullen Bay beach will be fenced off for safety reasons and not accessible to the public. For more information, contact DHIP.DLI@nt.gov.au or 8936 5668.	 Include map showing lay down area for hose

Approvals

Director Communications and Engagement Review provided by: Meg Black

ENDORSED / NOT ENDORSED

Executive Director Darwin Harbour Infrastructure Projects Endorsement input and review provided by:
Shane Dahlhelm 10/03/2025

ENDORSED

Executive Director Transport Planning Endorsement provided by: Chandan Kalase 11/03/2025

ENDORSED

General Manager Endorsement provided by: Claire Brown 11/03/2025

ENDORSED

Executive Director Office of the Chief Executive provided by: Laura Schaefer-Lee 12/03/2025

ENDORSED

Does CE need to approve? Yes / ~~No~~

Louise McCormick (endorsed subject to dates being confirmed and environmental assessment details)

Chief Executive Officer

13 /03 /2025

Updated version approved 15/05/2025