

Cullen Bay maintenance dredging

The Northern Territory Government is undertaking 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 is planned to commence from 22 May 2025 and 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, 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 natural 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 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 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>



Stakeholder notice

MAY 2025

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 will be some changes to the Mandorah 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 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.