



Port Procedures and Information for Shipping – Port of Skardon River June 2025



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Harbour Master's Direction
Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994
Division 2, Subdivision 1, Sections 88 – 92

I, **Captain David Ferguson**, Regional Harbour Master, Cairns am appointed as harbour master under part 7 of Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994.

Under section 86 of the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 a harbour master may give a direction only if the harbour master reasonably considers it necessary to ensure safety. Further, section 86A of the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 enables a harbour master to give a general direction that applies to all ship owners, ship masters, ships, other persons or matters.

I am satisfied that it is necessary to issue this direction to ensure marine safety in the Port of Skardon River. Sections of the Port Procedures and Information for Shipping – Port of Skardon River (<https://www.msq.qld.gov.au/Shipping>) are mandatory and must be complied with.

I DIRECT THAT:

The Port Procedures and Information for Shipping – Port of Skardon River must be complied with by all vessels within the Port of Skardon River.

Note:

It is an offence to fail to comply with my direction without reasonable excuse. It is also an offence to obstruct a harbour master in the exercise of a power. The maximum penalty is \$20,000 for an individual for each offence. If you fail to comply with my direction, then I may carry out the direction myself, and recover all expenses associated with performing the direction from you as a debt in civil jurisdiction.

Captain David Ferguson
Regional Harbour Master – Cairns
Maritime Safety Queensland

DATED AT CAIRNS THIS 3rd Day of June 2020

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Contact for enquiries and proposed changes. If you have any questions regarding this document or if you have a suggestion for improvements, please contact:

Contact officer: Regional Harbour Master (Cairns)
 Phone: +61 7 4052 7400
 Fax: +61 7 4052 7451

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1. Introduction

1.1 General

Shipping legislation in Queensland is controlled by Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ), a government agency of the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR).

The state of Queensland is divided up into six regions, five of which are controlled by a Regional Harbour Master (RHM) and the sixth by a manager, all officers of Maritime Safety Queensland who report to the General Manager and under the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#), are responsible for:

- improving maritime safety for shipping and small craft through regulation and education
- minimising vessel sourced waste and providing response to marine pollution
- providing essential maritime services such as port pilots and aids to navigation
- encouraging and supporting innovation in the maritime industry.

The limit of Queensland coastal waters is defined by a line three nautical miles (nm) seaward of the territorial sea baseline. The arrangements outlined in these procedures apply to the geographical areas gazetted as pilotage areas in Queensland. Pilotage areas have been gazetted around designated ports and maritime areas to ensure the safe and efficient movement of shipping. These areas encompass the approaches, main shipping channel and waters of the port.

Collectively, the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) and the port authority Far North Queensland Ports Corporation (Ports North) have responsibility for managing the safe and efficient operation of the port.

MARITIME SAFETY QUEENSLAND ADVISES THAT ESTUARINE CROCODILES ARE PRESENT IN THE WATERS OF THE PORT

1.2 Purpose

This document defines the standard procedures to be followed in the pilotage area of the port – it contains information and guidelines to assist ship's masters, owners, and agents of vessels arriving at and traversing the area. It provides details of the services and the regulations and procedures to be observed.

Nothing in this publication is intended to relieve any vessel, owner, operator, charterer, master, or person directing the movement of a vessel from the consequences of any failure to comply with any applicable law or regulation or of any neglect or precaution which may be required by the ordinary practice of seamanship, or by the special circumstances of the case.

Information contained in this publication is based on information available as at the latest date in the document control sheet at the start of this manual. Although every care has been taken to ensure that this information is correct, no warranty, expressed or implied, is given in regard to the accuracy of all printed contents. The publisher shall not be responsible for any loss or damage resulting from or caused by any inaccuracy produced herein.

Information on external agencies (Australian Border Force, quarantine, port authority rules, REEFREP and so on) is provided as an example only. Readers are strongly recommended to consult their respective websites for current information.

The latest version of this publication is available on the Maritime Safety Queensland website.

Any significant updates to the content of these procedures will be promulgated on this site. Ports North should be consulted for the latest information on port rules and notices:

Should errors or omissions in this publication be noted, it would be appreciated if advice of these could be forwarded to:

The Regional Harbour Master (Cairns)

Maritime Safety Queensland

Physical address: 100-106 Tingira Street, Portsmith, Queensland 4870

Postal address: PO Box 1787, Cairns Queensland 4870

Phone: +61 7 4052 7400

Cairns VTS phone: 1300 551 899

Fax +61 7 4052 7460

Email: rhmcairns@msq.qld.gov.au

1.3 Datum

All water depths refer to the lowest astronomical tide height (LAT).

All positions in this manual are in WGS84.

All directions are referenced to True North.

1.4 Definitions

1.4.1 Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA)

The [Australian Maritime Safety Authority](#) is the Commonwealth authority charged with enhancing efficiency in the delivery of safety and other services to the Australian maritime industry.

1.4.2 Australia Standard - AS 3846, 2005

AS 3846 refers to the Australian requirements for the transport and handling of dangerous goods in port areas.

1.4.3 Far North Queensland Ports Corporation (Ports North)

Ports North (PN) oversees the commercial activities in the port.

1.4.4 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRPMA)

Commonwealth authority responsible for the management of the marine park

1.4.5 Length Overall (LOA)

The LOA refers to the extreme length of a vessel.

1.4.6 Lowest astronomical tide (LAT)

This is the zero value from which all tides are measured.

1.4.7 Manager (Pilotage Services)

The person responsible for the service delivery of pilotage services within the region.

1.4.8 Manager (Vessel Traffic Management)

The person responsible for the management of the Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) centre.

1.4.9 Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ)

The state government agency responsible for the operations of pilotage, pollution protection services, VTS and the administration of all aspects of vessel registration and marine safety in the State of Queensland.

1.4.10 MASTREP – the Modernised Australia Ship Tracking and Reporting System

The Modernised Australian Ship Tracking and Reporting System ([MASTREP](#)) is a Ship Reporting System designed to contribute to safety of life at sea and is operated by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) through the Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) Australia in Canberra.

1.4.11 Navigation Act

Refers to the [Navigation Act 2012](#).

1.4.12 Pilotage Exemption Certificate (PEC)

Exemption granted to certain qualified masters who have satisfied the necessary legislative requirements and are authorised to navigate ships in the port pilotage area without a pilot.

1.4.13 Queensland Shipping Information Planning System (QSHIPS)

An internet web based ship movement booking service that may be accessed by the shipping community 24 hours a day seven days a week.

www.qships.tmr.qld.gov.au/webx/

The program allows port service provider organisations the ability to accept service requests made by shipping agents and streamline ship movement planning by significantly reducing the existing levels of point to point communications that are necessary to ensure a planned ship movement has been adequately resourced with supporting services.

1.4.14 Regional Harbour Master (RHM)

The person authorised to give direction under the relevant provisions of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#).

1.4.15 Sailing time

The actual sailing time is the time of the last line.

1.4.16 Vessel Traffic Service Operator (VTSO)

A person, suitably qualified, delegated by the Regional Harbour Master to monitor the safe movement of vessels and to give direction under the relevant provisions of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#).

1.4.17 Vessel Traffic Service (VTS)

VTS is any service implemented by a competent authority, designed to maximise the safe and efficient movement of water-borne traffic.

1.5 Contact information

1.5.1 The Regional Harbour Master (Cairns)

For operational maritime questions, marine incidents, pollution, pilotage, buoy moorings, navigation aids and towage requirements please contact the Harbour Master's office located at:

Physical address: 100–106 Tingira Street Portsmith, Cairns Queensland 4870
Postal address: PO Box 1787, Cairns Queensland 4870
Phone: +61 7 4052 7400
Fax: +61 7 4052 7451
Email: rhmcairns@msq.qld.gov.au

1.5.2 Skardon River Port Control

The Port control centre, (call sign 'Skardon River port control' operated by Maritime Safety Queensland) is situated at the Regional Harbour Master's office - Cairns. For ship traffic scheduling, pollution incidents and reporting defective navigation aids please direct initial enquiries to Skardon River port control. The service is provided by Maritime Safety Queensland and provides a 24 hour, seven days a week marine operations service to the port community. They are contactable on:

VHF radio: VHF channels 16 and 09
Phone: +61 7 4033 3670
Phone: 1300 551 899
Fax: +61 7 4052 7460
Email: vtscairns@msq.qld.gov.au

In the event of an emergency, the VTS centre is the key notification and communications facility that will activate the appropriate response agencies.

Ship traffic movements may be accessed on the QSHIPS website.

1.5.3 Port authority

The Port Authority is Far North Queensland Port Authority (Ports North)

Contact details: Kevin Malone, GM Commercial +61 7 4052 3814

1.6 Rules and regulations

1.6.1 General

The rules and regulations in the port contribute to the safe, efficient and environmentally responsible handling of shipping traffic. The international rules of the IMO, such as the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention and its amendments (for example the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code) and state, national and local port authority regulations are in force in the port of Skardon River.

Based on the Ports North [port notices](#), the port rules on dangerous substances contain additional, specific regulations for ships carrying dangerous cargoes in the port.

1.6.2 Applicable legislation and regulations

The procedures outlined in this document are designed to include the requirements of the:

- [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#) and [Regulation 2016 \(TOMSR\)](#)
- [Transport Operations \(Marine Pollution\) Act 1995](#) and [Regulation 2018 \(TOMPR\)](#)
- [International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code \(IMDG Code\)](#)
- Australian Standard – AS3846 – 2005
- International Ships and Ports Security Code (ISPS Code)
- [Maritime Transport and Offshore Facilities Security Act 2003 and Regulations.](#)

In addition, it will also complement the procedures of:

- Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited (FNQPC)
- Cassowary Coast Council
- [Maritime Safety Queensland \(MSQ\)](#)
- [Australian Maritime Safety Authority \(AMSA\)](#)
- [Customs - Australian Border Force](#)
- [Royal Australian Navy \(RAN\).](#)

As they relate to ship movements within the jurisdiction of the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns).

2. Arrival and departure procedures

2.1 General

For a quick reference of what and when to report please consult the following tables.

Masters of vessels arriving at, staying in or departing from the port are obliged to make previous notification on a variety of subjects, ranging from health to immigration to dangerous goods.

This section lists all the requirements for notifying the port authorities.

2.2 Arrival checklist

Sequence	Time	Report
1	48 hours before arrival	Arrival information to Regional Harbour Master via QSHIPS . If the estimated departure draft is greater than 10 m the form must also be submitted.
2	48 hours before arrival	Dangerous goods report to RHM and PN (section 11 Dangerous cargo)
3	48 hours before arrival	Gas-free status if applicable
4	96 hours before arrival	Customs – Australian Border Force (section 2.5)
5	Not more than 96 hours or less than 12 hours before arrival	Quarantine (section 2.4)
6	24 and 12 hours before arrival update estimated time of arrival if necessary.	Confirm arrival information to RHM via QSHIPS .
7	24 hours prior to loading / handling dangerous goods (includes bunkers)	Dangerous goods report (section 2.5) to RHM, and the port authority Ports North.
8	Two hours before arrival pilotage area	Call Skardon River Port Control on VHF 16 or VHF 09 All bridge equipment for the navigation of vessels is to be in good working order prior to the harbour pilot embarking. Non-serviceable equipment is to be advised to the ships agent and Skardon River Port Control (VHF channel 09) immediately. Vessels without serviceable bridge equipment will not be allowed to enter the port until assessed and authorisation given by the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns). (See also Inbound reporting requirements – section 3.7)

Table 1 – Arrival checklist

2.3 Departure checklist

Sequence	Time	Report
1	24 hours before departure	Confirm departure information to RHM via QSHIPS .
2	Three hours before departure	Dangerous goods report to Regional Harbour Master and the port authority PN (see 11.1.1 Notification)
3	Two hours before departure	Pre-entry report to Reef VTS (see 2.6 MASTREP Reporting and 2.7 Reef user guide)
4	In transit	Port Control reporting points

Table 2 – Departure checklist

2.4 Quarantine

Source: Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) requires vessels from overseas to submit their documentation no more than 96 hours and no less than 12 hours prior to arrival:

Contact details for DAFF at Cairns:

Phone: +61 7 4030 7800

Fax: +61 7 4241 7843

Email: nqldsea@aqis.gov.au via general enquiries on the website

Website: www.agriculture.gov.au

Postal address: GPO Box 858, Canberra ACT 2061, Australia

2.4.1 Ballast water information

Ships with ballast water from ports that are considered a high risk for introduced marine species and that have not exchanged water ballast in mid ocean or use an approved ballast water treatment system are forbidden to discharge this ballast into Australian waters. Vessels that do not need to discharge ballast in Australian waters are exempt from these requirements.

The Department of Agriculture (Biosecurity) provides a Ballast Water Management summary sheet for use by Masters/Agents which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/avm/vessels/marine-pest-biosecurity/ballast/australian-ballast-water-management-requirements>

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/avm/vessels/marine-pest-biosecurity/ballast>

2.5 Customs

Source: Australian Border Force (ABF)

Vessels arriving from overseas must submit their documentation 96 hours prior to the nominated date of arrival. If the voyage from the last port is likely to take less than 96 hours, the following timeframes will apply

72 hours or more but less than 96 hours – submit documentation 72 hours prior

48 hours or more but less than 72 hours – submit documentation 48 hours prior
24 hours or more but less than 48 hours – submit documentation 24 hours prior
All Australian Border Force forms may be accessed on their [website](#).

2.6 MASTREP Reporting

[Marine Order 63](#) issued by AMSA makes the provision of Position Reports mandatory for:

- Foreign vessels from the arrival at its first port in Australia until its departure from its final port in Australia; and
- All regulated Australian vessels whilst in the MASTREP area.

Domestic commercial vessels fitted with Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) and AIS technology are also encouraged to participate in the system as MASTREP assists AMSA in carrying out SAR activities.

To assist Master /Agents, the MASTREP and Australian Mandatory Reporting Guide can be found on the [AMSA website](#).

2.7 Reef user guide

The Queensland and Australian Governments established Reef VTS in 2004. Its purpose is to:

- make navigation in Torres Strait and the inner route of the Great Barrier Reef safer by working with shipping to give the best possible information on potential traffic conflicts and other navigational information;
- minimise the risk of maritime accidents, and therefore avoid the pollution and damage which such accidents can cause to the marine environment in the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait; and
- assist with quick response if a safety or pollution incident does occur.

Reef VTS is operated by Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) as a VTS authorised by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) under Marine Order 64 (Vessel Traffic Services). AMSA is an agency of the Australian Federal Government; whilst MSQ is an agency of the Queensland State Government.

Reef VTS operates 24 hours a day from the VTS Centre, situated at Townsville on the Queensland coast. Reef VTS uses information from many sources, including the Automatic Identification System (AIS); Radar; Automated Position Reports (APR) via Inmarsat C and the route plans that vessels provide to [Reef VTS](#).

To assist Master /Agents, the reporting requirements for REEFREP can be found on the [MSQ website](#) in the [Reef VTS User Guide](#).

2.8 Security

All commercial vessels with a gross tonnage of 500 tonnes or more and passenger ships are required to report their security information to the port authority. For further information refer to the following websites:

[Australian Border Force](#)

[FNQPCL \(Trading as Ports North\)](#)

3. Movement notification and traffic procedures

3.1 General

Maritime Safety Queensland, through the authority of the Regional Harbour Master, has jurisdiction over the safe movement of all shipping within the pilotage area.

The scheduling of ship movements is initiated by the agent submitting movement details for a vessel to Cairns Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) via the QSHIPS ship planning programme in accordance with this section.

All vessels, whether commercial or recreational, are to maintain a listening watch on VHF16 and if equipped on VHF09, whilst within the Skardon River Pilotage Area.

All vessels within the Skardon River Pilotage Area are to listen out on VHF16 for announcements made by the Skardon River port control, regarding movements within the port. These announcements will be advised on VHF16 and full details are given on VHF09.

3.2 Port control

Port Control (Skardon River Port control) is a local port service and is the principal tool by which the Regional Harbour Master manages the safe and efficient movement of vessel traffic approaching, departing and operating within the Skardon River pilotage area.

Port Control (call sign “Skardon River Port control”) is delivered from the VTS centre at Cairns and is manned by trained and qualified Vessel Traffic Service Operators, under the management of the Manager (Vessel Traffic Management) and the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns).

3.2.1 Port control role

Maritime Safety Queensland provides a Port Control as a traffic information service in accordance with International Maritime Organization guidelines.

The Port Control will:

- wherever possible interact with vessel traffic by VHF radio
- interact with port services
- inform participating vessels of current traffic and safety information pertaining to the pilotage area
- where necessary communicate the directions of the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) or delegate
- monitor compliance with the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#) and [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#)
- record the details of shipping movements in the QSHIPS programme in real time
- maintain a situational awareness of traffic in the pilotage area to the extent of the available information
- participate in emergency procedures.

- In the event Cairns VTS deems that a situation demands a higher level of interaction, the functions of a traffic organisation and navigational assistance may be enabled.

3.3 Port control communications

Ships of ten metres and over in length are not to move within the pilotage area unless satisfactory two-way communications are maintained with Skardon River Port control.

Skardon River Port control maintains a continuous listening watch; contact can also be made with the Regional Harbour Master's office and pilot station via VHF radio, telephone, facsimile and email.

Ships are required to establish two-way radio communications with Skardon River Port control on VHF channel 16 or VHF channel 09.

Channel	Call sign	Service
VHF 16	User	Distress and initial calling
VHF 09	Skardon River Port control	Port control calling/port operations
VHF 6	User	Tug operations
VHF 8	User	Auxiliary channel tug operations

Table 3 – Vessel traffic service

The Cairns VTS centre has telephone, fax and email services for administrative and emergency purposes. Any marine incident, for example a collision, grounding or fire, occurring within the port should be reported immediately to Skardon River port control on VHF channel 16.

3.4 Language

The English language is to be used in all communication. The International Maritime Organization's Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP) 2001 will be used.

3.5 Voice recordings

All voice communications with the VTS centre and all radio communications on the channels monitored are recorded against a date and time stamp.

3.6 Distress and emergency

Skardon River port control (Cairns VTS) is not a coast radio station; Maritime Safety Queensland, Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) and the Australian Coastguard have an agreement that the VTS will monitor channels 16 when VMR is not operational for emergency and distress calls only. A distress call should, in the ordinary course of events, be referred to the Queensland Police Service.

Any marine incident, for example a collision, grounding or fire, occurring within the port should be immediately reported to Skardon River port control on:

VHF radio: channel 16
 Phone: +61 7 4033 3670
 Fax: +61 7 4052 7460

3.7 Queensland Shipping Information Planning System (QSHIPS)

The movement of all vessels of LOA 35 m or more arriving at Skardon River is recorded in an Internet-based program known as [QSHIPS](http://www.qships.tmr.qld.gov.au/webx/): www.qships.tmr.qld.gov.au/webx/.

The program is operated from the Cairns VTS centre; shipping agents submit booking information online in accordance with the reporting requirements and record their requisitions for tugs, pilot and linesmen. The ancillary services respond online to acknowledge the booking and allocate their resources; the movement then assumes the confirmed status. Permit requests should be submitted via QSHIPS and to the respective agencies if required (see section 10 [Work permits](#)) QSHIPS will indicate when the approval has been granted and the agent is then able to print the permit for the vessel.

Since the program is live, port service providers, agents, government agencies and the general community are able to view scheduled movements in any Queensland port in real time.

3.8 Ship movement reporting requirements

All movements of ships 35 metres LOA or more are to be reported and all [Vessels that require a pilot](#) (section 8.1) including those ships whose master holds a pilotage exemption certificate for the Skardon River pilotage area.

Sections 171 to 176 of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#) require that all ship movements for vessels 35 metres in length or more within the Skardon River pilotage area are reported to Maritime Safety Queensland.

The use of the QSHIPS program is **mandatory** for notification of the impending arrival and subsequent movements of a vessel unless exceptional circumstances preclude this.

The report shall be made using the QSHIPS program and be submitted to Cairns VTS at least 72 hours before the arrival movement and at least 72 hours prior to any subsequent movement.

If an agent is unable to submit a booking via QSHIPS the [Arrival / Departure Report](#) must be faxed or emailed to the VTS centre on +61 7 4033 3670 (24/7) or email vtscairns@msq.qld.gov.au.

Arrival advice should be confirmed to Cairns VTS centre 24 hours prior to the start of the movement.

At the time of booking a vessel an agent acknowledges the following conditions:

They have read, understood and are in compliance with the current version of the Skardon River port procedures manual.

That all required resources will be available at the time of a movement occurring and that in the event of a resource (for example, tugs) becoming unavailable prior to a movement taking place, the agent will immediately inform the Regional Harbour Master's office in Cairns.

3.9 Reporting defects

The [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulations 2016](#) requires the master of a ship that is

- underway and entering, or about to enter a pilotage area; or
- navigating a ship from a berth or anchorage,

must report to VTS by VHF radio details of damage to, defects and deficiencies in, the ship that could affect the safety of the ship, a person or the environment;

VTS will notify the Regional Harbour Master and AMSA of the damage to, defects and deficiencies.

In addition, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) requires notification of any deficiencies or suspected deficiencies on ships visiting Australian ports. Deficiencies are to be reported to AMSA using AMSA [Form 18](#) and [Form 19](#). Reports of suspected non-compliance with Navigation Act or safety/pollution Conventions –

[Report of marine safety concern \(form 355\) | Australian Maritime Safety Authority](#)
Deficiencies are also to be reported to the Regional Harbour Master, VTS Centre.

Vessels without serviceable bridge equipment will not be allowed to enter the port until assessed and authorisation given by the Regional Harbour Master – Cairns.

3.10 Reporting requirements

3.10.1 Reporting Requirements – Arrival reporting requirements

All ships greater than 24m LOA shall obtain approval from Skardon River port control before entering, leaving or manoeuvring within the Cairns pilotage area.

All ships greater than 10m LOA and less than 24m LOA must advise Skardon River port control before entering, leaving or manoeuvring within the Skardon River pilotage area.

The master of a ship entering, or about to enter the pilotage area must report to Skardon River port control by VHF radio according to the following table.

Report	Information to report	
1	Ship master to Port control Two hours prior to entry into the pilotage area or for pilot exempt vessels two hours prior to fairway beacon Entry to VTS/Port limits	Ships name, position, fore & aft draft, changes to ship details, defects, ETA to pilot boarding ground Master advises VTS passing limits
2	Port control or pilot to ship master Pilot transfer instructions Anchoring instructions	Instructions will include boarding side, course, speed, ETA and anticipated conditions. Instructions will include anchorage allocation and latitude/longitude if required
3	Ship master to Port control Arrival at pilot boarding ground	Ships name, at pilot boarding ground, time of arrival

Report	Information to report	
4a	Ship master to Port control On anchoring	Ships name, anchor position, time of anchoring.
4b	Ship master to Port control Departing anchorage	Ships name, anchor aweigh time
5	Port control or pilot to ship master Confirmation of pilot transfer and instructions for the ship	Instructions will include boarding side, course, speed, ETA and anticipated conditions.
6	Pilot to Port control Pilot transfer (when the pilot transfer has been completed)	Ships name, pilot onboard, pilot onboard time, pilot name, ETA at entrance beacons, Ships fore and aft draft, changes to ship details
7	Pilot to Port control Entering Entrance Channel	Time ship abeam entrance beacons
8	Ship master to Port control Secured alongside	Ships name, secured at (berth name), first line time, side to, all fast time

Table 4 – Inbound reporting requirements

Exempt masters must call Cairns VTS before proceeding past the pilot boarding ground to obtain clearance before entering the channel and then report their movements as per the above table.

3.10.2 Departure and removal reporting requirements

The master of a ship that is departing, moving or about to depart or move within the pilotage area must report to Thursday Island port control by radio according to the following table requirements.

Report	Information to report	
1	Ship master/pilot to Port control Pilot on board and ship ready to depart (not less than 30 minutes prior to ETD)	Ships name, pilot on board time, pilot name, fore and aft drafts, changes to scheduled movements
2	Ship master/pilot to Port control Departing berth	Ships name, anchor aweigh/last line time, destination
3	Ship master /pilot to Port control Exiting Entrance Channel	Time ship abeam entrance beacons or port limits

Report	Information to report	
4	Ship master to Port control Pilot transfer (when the pilot transfer has been completed)	Ships name, pilot disembarked, pilot off time
5	Ship master to Port control Exiting port limits	Ships name, vessel clear of port limits

Table 5 – Departure and removal reporting requirements

3.11 Schedule Movement scheduling

3.11.1 Confirmation of schedules

On receipt of an intended vessel movement, Skardon River port control will cross check for vessel suitability in the port and verify the movement in QSHIPS is in accordance with the parameters of the Port Procedure Manual.

Vessels that do not meet Port Procedure Manual parameters are to be referred to the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) for approval.

3.11.2 Schedule changes

Changes requested by the master/agent to scheduled movements must be made via QSHIPS, phone or email and are to be communicated to the vessel traffic service centre and marine services as soon as practicable advising the revised schedule. Changes to QSHIPS will be made as they occur. Changes within 24 hours of the scheduled start time must be made by phone.

3.12 Movement clearance notification

All ships require a clearance from the Regional Harbour Master in order to enter, depart or move within the pilotage area. It is the responsibility of the master or pilot to contact Skardon River port control to obtain the necessary clearance and information prior to the movement.

Clearances are valid for uninterrupted passage to a specified location or until the voyage is interrupted, completed (for example, by anchoring, berthing or due to a breakdown) or cancelled by the Regional Harbour Master. Ships will require a new clearance for any subsequent movement.

Refer to arrival / departure and removal reporting requirement table for applicable timings.

3.13 Master/Pilot responsibilities

Masters and owners of vessels are responsible for due compliance with the provisions of the [*Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994*](#) (the Act) and [*Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016*](#) (the Regulation).

When a vessel is under the direction of a pilot, the pilot is responsible for due compliance with the provisions of the Act and Regulations, however the responsibility of the pilot does not relieve the master and the owner of a vessel of their responsibility.

Arising from these responsibilities is the obligation of persons directing the navigation of vessels to comply with directions of the Regional Harbour Master. The duty Vessel Traffic Service Operator (VTSO) is delegated to exercise the relevant functions of the Regional Harbour Master.

4. Port description

4.1 General information

Ports North is responsible for the operation and management of the port.

Metro Mining is currently responsible for installation and maintenance of navigational aids and loading facilities at Skardon River.

MARITIME SAFETY QUEENSLAND ADVISES THAT ESTUARINE CROCODILES ARE PRESENT IN THE WATERS OF THE PORT

4.2 Pilotage area

The Skardon River pilotage area (see section 16.3) is described in schedule 2 of the [*Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016*](#) as the area of:

- (a) waters bounded by an imaginary line drawn—
 - starting at the high–water mark at approximate latitude 11° 47.00' south, longitude 141° 58.54' east on the mainland, south of the entrance of the Skardon River
 - then west to latitude 11° 47.00' south, longitude 141° 57.00' east
 - then north to latitude 11° 44.50' south, longitude 141° 57.00' east
 - then east to the high–water mark on the mainland at approximate latitude 11° 44.50' south, longitude 142° 00.12' east
 - then by the high–water mark, initially in a southerly direction, returning to the starting point; and
- (b) the navigable waters of rivers and creeks flowing, directly or indirectly, into the waters in paragraph (a).

4.3 Load lines

Skardon River is in the South Pacific seasonal tropical area.

Tropical: from 1 April to 30 November.

Summer: from 1 December to 31 March.

4.4 Maximum vessel size

The port limits ship size to 95.00 m LOA, beam 10 m. The entrance channel has a least depth of 1.0 m at LAT. Consult the [*Notices to Mariners*](#) for the latest port depth information.

4.5 Time zone

UTC + 10 hours throughout the year.

4.6 Working hours

Port service providers are available 24 hours per day seven days per week.

4.7 Charts and books

For navigation in pilotage areas, masters should refer to the nautical charts produced by the Australian Hydrographic Office and Admiralty Sailing Directions NP13 (Australian Pilot Volume 1). Charts of the area include:

- AUS 301 Booby Island to Archer River
- AUS 701 Vrilya Point to Duyfken Point.
- AUS 4060 Australasia and adjacent waters
- AUS 4603 Australia – North Coast and adjacent waters
- AUS 4720 Booby Island to Cape Wessel including Gulf of Carpentaria.

4.8 Shipping announcements

4.8.1 Notices to Mariners

Maritime Safety Queensland circulates marine safety information to mariners, organisations and other interested parties, in the form of [Notices to Mariners](#).

Notices to Mariners advise of:

- navigation warnings and hazards (such as aids to navigation which may have been destroyed, missing or unlit)
- changes to the uniform buoyage system (which assists with the correction and updating of marine charts)
- navigation depths (necessary when navigating in channels with depth restrictions)
- any other works which may affect the safe navigation of vessels in Queensland coastal waters and ports (such as dredging operations and construction works).

Faulty navigation aids should be reported to Skardon River Port Control on VHF channel 09 or to Cairns VTS by phone on (07) 4033 3670.

5. Port infrastructure

5.1 Berth information

Channel / berth	Design depth(metres)	Required UKC
Material Offloading Facility	-3.0m LAT	0.3m
Bulk Loading Facility	-4.5mLAT	0.3m

Table 6 - Berth information

Please note that depths are subject to change; consult the Notices to Mariners for latest information.

5.1.1 Skardon River Berth

A Marine Operations Facility is situated upriver of the Bulk Loading Facility and is used for transfer of personnel and stores.

Barges up to 90m LOA can berth at the facility.

5.1.2 Bulk Loading Facility

The Bulk Loading Facility is situated on the Western Bank of the river downstream of the Marine Operations Facility.

5.2 Leading lights and beacons

Name	Type	Characteristics
SB (RW)	BUOY	Fl.W.5s
P2	BUOY	Fl.R.5s
S1	BUOY	Fl.G.5s
P4	BUOY	Fl.R.5s
S3	BUOY	Fl.G.5s
P6	BUOY	Fl.R.5s
TSB	BEACON	SectRWG
P8	BUOY	Fl.R.5s
S5	BUOY	Fl.G.5s
P10	BUOY	Fl.R.5s
P12	BUOY	Fl.R.5s
SR1	BUOY	Fl.W
S7	BUOY	Fl.G.5s
P14	BUOY	Fl.R.5s
SLB1	BEACON	SectRWG

Name	Type	Characteristics
P16	BUOY	Fl.R.5s
S9	BUOY	Fl.G.5s
SLB2 & SLB3	BEACON	SectRWG
S11	BUOY	Fl.G.5s
SLB4	BEACON	SectRWG
S13	BUOY	Fl.G.5s
P18	BUOY	Fl.R.5s
SR2	BUOY	Fl.W
SLB5	BEACON	SectRWG

Table 7 - Navigation aids

WAYPOINT	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
WP1	11°46.22 S	141°57.46 E
WP2	11°46.26 S	141°58.21 E
WP3	11°45.57 S	141°59.38 E
WP4	11°45.43 S	142°00.13 E
WP5	11°45.44 S	142°00.40 E
WP6	11°45.46 S	142°00.81 E
WP7	11°45.46 S	142°01.10 E
WP8	11°45.46 S	142°01.38 E
WP9	11°44.84 S	142°02.50 E
WP10	11°44.60 S	142°02.99 E
WP11	11°44.58 S	142°03.50 E
WP12	11°44.89 S	142°04.20 E
WP13	11°45.42 S	142°04.37 E

Table 8 – Waypoints

5.3 Anchorage areas

There are four designated anchorage positions for large ocean-going vessels, which are located outside Skardon River pilotage limits.

Anchorage name	Suitable for	Latitude	Longitude	Depth
Inner	All Ships	11°45.20'S	141°54.00'E	12.6m
Outer	Standby / All Ships	11°44.05'S	141°51.77'E	15.2m
Outer OA1	Panamax / Cape Size	11°44.89'S	141°51.37'E	16.6m
Outer OA2	Panamax / Ultramax	11°45.46'S	141°50.99'E	16.0m
Offshore	Cape Size	11°44.46'S	141°43.23'E	21.0m

Table 9 – Designated anchorage areas

6. Weather information

6.1 General

The prevailing winds tend to be easterly to south easterly. Although calmer conditions occur during the winter months, they may become very difficult during the summer months when the sea breeze augments the prevailing south easterlies.

Weather charts, satellite images, warnings and reports may be polled by fax from 1800 630 100 and from the [Bureau of Meteorology](#).

[Coastwatch](#) is a website with useful nautical information links.

From the commencement of the yellow cyclone alert the Skardon River Cyclone Control Centre, located at Metro Mining Office will monitor VHF channel 16.

The Skardon River Cyclone Control Centre will relay messages from the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) and act as the coordination and control centre.

Once in position all small craft are to contact the Skardon River Cyclone Control Centre and advise them of the area in which they are moored and how many people will be remaining on board. If a vessel is to be left unattended, its owners are to advise the Skardon River Cyclone Control Centre of their contact telephone numbers.

The Regional Harbour Master's requirements for clearing the port of large vessels will generally be:

- Wind speeds must not have reached 30 knots.
- Ships must be able to sail, for example machinery working, crew on board and a suitable trim.
- The ship's draft must give suitable clearance when sailing.
- Tugs must be available.

6.2 Tidal information

Skardon River is a standard port in the [Queensland Tide Tables](#).

Skardon River has a diurnal tide range, which is a tide which has a period or cycle of approximately one tidal day (about 25 hours). Diurnal tides usually have one high and one low tide each day. When the wind has been constantly blowing from the Southeast it is not uncommon for the tides to be 25 to 30 centimeters (cm) below prediction.

6.2.1 Tidal streams

South-Easterly winds tend to decrease in strength from October to December. The flood tidal stream in Albatross Bay flows to the North-East, and the ebb to the South-West, attaining a maximum velocity in the middle of the bay of 1.5 knots.

Tide boards/gauges to be established by Metro Mining

6.2.2 Tidal information – tsunami effects

The North, West and East coasts of Australia are bordered by active tectonic plates which are capable of generating a tsunami that could reach the coastline within two to

four hours. The resultant change in swell height could have an adverse effect on a vessel with a minimum under keel clearance navigating within or close to port areas.

The [Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre](#) (JATWC) has been established to monitor earthquake activity that may lead to a tsunami forming.

Mariners are advised to take heed of such warnings, plan their bar crossings and tend their mooring or anchorages accordingly.

6.3 Water density

Sea water is usually 1025 kilograms per cubic metre but may vary during the summer months after periods of heavy rain.

7. Port navigation and movement restrictions

7.1 General

Berth facilities within Skardon River are operated by Metro Mining to facilitate the loading of barges and export of Bauxite.

Typically, dumb barges are loaded via conveyor belt and transferred to anchored export vessels by tugs. Loading is via ships gear.

Metro Mining Company are responsible for the installation and maintenance of navigation aids

7.2 Speed

The following restrictions apply throughout Queensland whether signs are present or not. A speed limit of six knots applies:

- in boat harbours and marinas
- within 30 metres of:
 - boats anchored, moored to the shore or aground
 - a jetty, wharf, pontoon or boat ramp
 - people in the water.
- Within 60 metres of people in the water when operating a personal watercraft.

Under the provisions of the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994* a person must not operate a ship at a speed at which the ships' wash can cause a marine incident or damage to the shoreline. As a general principle, vessels over 20 metres LOA should travel at speeds up to 10 knots within smooth water limits where the speed limit is set at 40 knots.

The Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) will be responsible for all movements within harbour limits. No ships will enter or depart the port without the permission of the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns).

7.3 Channel depths and SUKCs

Channel	Design depth (m)	UKC (m)
Channel	-2.3m LAT	0.6m
Skardon River Jetty and berth Pocket	-4.2mLAT	0.3m

Table 10 - Channel depths and SUKCs

Please refer to the [Notices to Mariners](#) for the latest depth information.

7.4 Draft restrictions

Weather, tidal conditions or special circumstances, may require a departure from these guidelines.

A vessel is not to enter, depart or maneuver within the pilotage area unless tide, weather, transit time and traffic conditions allow the minimum UKC to be maintained until it is clear of the pilotage area.

The Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) is to be consulted for determining the tidal window for the planned movement of a draft-restricted ship in the port.

7.4.1 SUKCs – alongside berths

The master is to ensure that the ship maintains a SUKC of 0.3 m while alongside; this may require loading operations to be adjusted to suit SUKC conditions.

7.4.2 Dredge Under Keel Clearance Requirements

Vessels conducting dredging operations are exempt from under keel clearance restrictions. UKC limit for dredgers is set at 0.3 m.

7.4.3 Berthing and sailing times

Berthing and sailing times may be varied to take account of ships draft and other shipping movements.

7.4.4 Approaches to pilot boarding ground

Skardon River entrance is well defined opening distinguishable by a large clump of Casuarina trees close to South of the Entrance.

7.4.5 Restricted areas

Mariners should be aware of the Isolated Danger 0.75 nM east of the entrance marked by SR1 and the second Isolated danger just East of the Bulk Loading Facility marked by SR2.

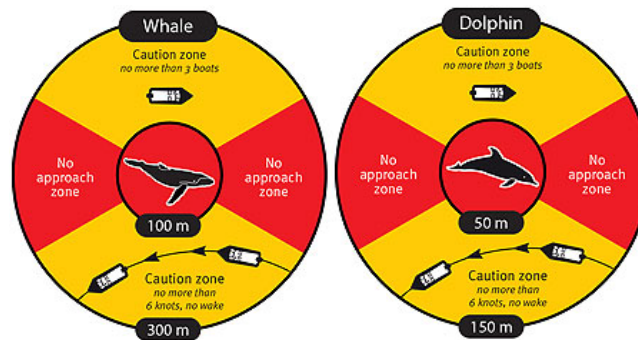
7.5 Advisory Note – Interaction with Marine Mammals

The presence of whales or marine mammals indicates that our ports are seen as environmentally attractive places.

The safety of life and the security of the environment from ship based incidents is paramount.

All vessel masters are required to fully comply with relevant marine mammal legislation, such as the provisions of the [Nature Conservation \(Animals\) Regulation 2020 Chapter 6](#)

Part 1 which prescribes minimum approach distances and maximum speeds within proximity to whales as illustrated in the diagram below.



When whales or marine mammals are reported in the vicinity of port areas and a risk to marine mammals is perceived, then every possible endeavor will be undertaken to manage shipping movements around the marine mammals to keep them safe, provided the safety of life, the ship and other environmental protection objectives are not threatened. Such action may include not commencing transits until the mammals are deemed clear.

In situations where a vessel is underway and restricted in its ability to maneuver or constrained to a channel and marine mammals are reported in the vicinity of the transit and a risk to marine mammals is perceived, the master must take all reasonable action necessary to keep them safe, without endangering the vessel, crew and the environment. Such action may include the reduction of speed to the minimum safe speed to safely navigate the channels.

Masters are required to report collisions with marine mammals to VTS and Department of Environment and Science **1300 130 372**

[Marine wildlife strandings | Environment, land and water | Queensland Government](#)

8. Pilotage

8.1 Vessels that require a pilot

The [*Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994*](#) specifies that, unless a current pilotage exemption certificate (PEC) is held by the master of a ship, pilotage is compulsory for:

- a ship that is 50 m or more
- a vessel towing another vessel where the combined length of the vessels is 50 m or more
- a ship whose owner or master asks for the services of a pilot
- a ship whose master is directed by the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) to use the services of a pilot.

Pilotage exemption may be obtained by masters of ships, depending on ship length, trading regularly to the port after they have completed the required number of observation trips, mentored pilotage trips and check pilotage as determined by the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) and completed a written examination [04/2023 - Pilot transfer arrangements](#)

8.1.1 Night pilotage

The port of Skardon River is open for night pilotage, there are no restrictions to Night Pilotage

8.1.2 Request for pilot

The requirements of the [*Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016*](#) shall be observed for all bookings. Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Ltd (trading as Ports North) provides a pilotage service for ship arrivals, departures and removals. Pilot transfers are carried out by pilot launch.

In order to ensure the services of a pilot, masters of ships or ships agents should make the request via the QSHIPS program and if unable to do so email or telephone the office of Maritime Safety Queensland at Cairns VTS at least 72 hours prior to arrival at the pilot boarding ground.

Radio contact should be made with Skardon River Port Control on VHF channel 09, 30 minutes prior to arrival at the pilot boarding ground confirming the arrival time.

8.1.3 Notice required

Ships requiring the services of a pilot are required to submit arrival, removal and departure notices no less than the indicated number of hours prior to the desired movement:

- arrivals – 72 hours
- removals – 72 hours
- departures – 72 hours

Due to logistics and location of Skardon River an initial notification should be made as soon as possible, when a pilot is determined as being necessary.

8.2 Pilotage area

See section 4.2 – pilotage area.

8.2.1 Pilot boarding place

The Pilot Boarding Place is adjacent to the Fairway Beacon in approximate position 11°46.32S 141°55.5E

8.2.2 Pilot boarding arrangements

Ships are to be at the pilot boarding ground at the notified time of pilot boarding, with all preparations for boarding completed in accordance with the instructions in this section.

Ships should be underway:

- proceeding at 7 knots and
- providing a good lee.

The pilot ladder is to be rigged on the lee side:

- 2.0 m above the water,
- with two manropes and
- a heaving line standing by.
- At night, a forward facing light is required to illuminate the ladder in accordance with IMO requirements and IMPA recommendations see [Pilot Boarding Ladder Arrangement](#) and [Pilot transfer arrangements – Marine Notice 04/2023](#).
- If the ship has freeboard of 9 metres or greater, a combination ladder must be rigged.

8.2.3 Passage planning

A passage plan is a basic indication of preferred intention and both pilot and master should be prepared to depart from it when circumstances so dictate.

A passage plan for this port can be found on the [MSQ website](#).

8.2.4 Pilotage delay and cancellation fees

The following will apply to all piloted vessels when arriving, departing, or being removed within the Skardon River pilotage area:

- Delay fees will apply if a vessel departs more than 30 minutes after her scheduled departure time; fees are charged on an hourly basis up to a maximum of two hours.
- If the delay exceeds three hours, then the pilotage is deemed to have been cancelled and a full cancellation fee applies; if a cancellation fee is applied the hourly delay fees are not applicable.
- A delay caused by weather which may affect a vessel's ability to be safely navigated will not constitute a delay for the purpose of this section.

- Equipment and mechanical failures will constitute a delay and attract a delay fee or cancellation fee as described above.

In determining the delay time, the following criteria will be used:

- Inbound – a pilotage cancellation without the required three hours' notice will attract a penalty of the relevant pilotage fee.
- Delay fees will be incurred if the pilot boards a vessel more than 30 minutes after the programmed estimated time of arrival of the vessel at the pilot boarding ground or the agreed boarding ground.
- Outbound or removal – delay fees will be incurred if the vessel departs the berth or anchorage more than 30 minutes after the programmed estimated time of departure. The actual time of departure will be taken as 'last line' or 'anchor aweigh' as these times are recorded in QSHIPS and are the acknowledged and accepted time of departure.

Full details of the regulations and fees are contained in schedule 6 Part 2 Division 3 of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#).

8.2.5 Alcohol management

The [Transport Operations \(Road Use Management\) Act 1995](#) section 79 requires that persons in charge of ships have a zero blood alcohol reading. The Queensland Water Police periodically conduct random breath tests of masters and pilots on ships arriving or about to depart the port. Severe penalties apply to infringements.

8.3 Pilot licences, pilot area endorsements and exemption from pilotage licences

The master of a vessel with a LOA greater than 50m may be exempt from pilotage once they have obtained a pilotage exemption area endorsement.

8.3.1 Examination for pilotage exemption area endorsement

The examination will consist of written and oral components and will include an assessment to determine the candidate's ability to safely conduct the navigation of a ship without a pilot while within the pilotage area. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of port procedures and the ability to navigate a ship through the pilotage area and port without the aid of navigational charts.

8.3.2 Cancellation of licences

A licence may be cancelled or suspended when major port changes or developments are taking place. It may also occur where masters fail to comply with port procedures.

8.4 Pilotage requirements for Torres Strait and Great Barrier Reef (GBR)

All merchant vessels 70 m in length and over and all oil, gas and chemical tankers irrespective of size are required to take a licensed marine pilot when transiting the Torres Strait and Great Northeast Channel. Pilotage is also required for these vessels transiting

the inner route from Cape York to Cairns Roads and for transit of Hydrographers Passage; significant penalties apply for non-compliance.

Full details can be found in [Marine Order 06/2022—Coastal pilotage](#)

[Marine Order 54 \(Torres Strait Draught Variation\) – Exemption 2021](#) enables AMSA licensed coastal pilots to pilot a vessel through Torres Strait with a maximum draught up to 12.5 metres. The exemption is subject to certain conditions including that the vessel must have:

- an active UKCM system transit plan for the whole time the vessel is within the Under Keel Clearance Management (UKCM) system monitoring area
- a complete hard copy of the activated UKCM system transit plan onboard for the intended transit
- a fully functioning type-approved Class A Automatic Identification System (AIS) onboard.

Refer to [Reef VTS publication](#) for further information.

9. Tugs

There are currently no tugs at this port for towage. The port users operate company tugs to facilitate cargo operations.

10. Work permits

10.1 General

In order to be able to perform certain work on ships in the port masters, owners or their agents must first apply for and obtain the necessary permits before that work can proceed. Applications for approval by the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) must be submitted via the QSHIPS program and by fax or email to the relevant authorities; the required terms and conditions are completed by the Regional Harbour Master's office and the agent may then print off the completed permit for passing to the master of the applicable vessel.

Works requiring permits include:

- hot work
- engine immobilisation
- bunkering
- ship to ship/shore transfer operations
- lifeboat drills
- overside work
- live flare (pyrotechnic) demonstration.

Ship's masters must comply with all requirements specified in the permit.

10.2 Permit requests

Who	Permit	When	Comments
All ships	Overside work	48 hours prior to arrival	Lodged to Ports North and copy to the RHM
All ships	Lifeboat drill	Prior to event	Lodged to the RHM
All ships	Hot work	48 hours prior to arrival	Lodged to wharf operator
All ships	Engine immobilisation	24 hours prior to commencement	Lodged to Ports North and RHM

Table 11 - Permit requests

10.3 Work permits

10.3.1 Immobilisation main engines

Ships may not be immobilised without first obtaining written permission from the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns). Permission may not be given for more than 24 hours during the cyclone season (November to April), or more than 48 hours during the rest of the year (see 16.5 [Permission to immobilise main engines](#))

Ships wishing to immobilise main engines must lodge an application via QSHIPS with the Regional Harbour Master and to the port authority at least 24 hours prior to the requested immobilisation.

Skardon River Port Control is to ensure that the duty and allocated marine pilots are advised of any work being carried out to main engines in Skardon River.

10.3.2 Hot work permit

Ships wishing to carry out repairs and any form of metal work, which includes performing hot work, must lodge an application in writing with the Port Authority, Ports North Qld, via the online web portal.

<https://www.portsnorth.com.au/srp/forms-permits/permit-to-work/>

Once approval has been granted by the relevant port authority, the ship's agent is to lodge an advice via QSHIPS to the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns).

Masters are to contact Skardon River port control on VHF 16/09 prior to commencement and again on completion of any such hot works.

10.3.3 Lifeboat drills

Ships wishing to put boats in the water for painting, maintenance purposes or to carry out lifeboat drills, must first obtain clearance from the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) and the Port Authority, Ports North Qld via the online web portal.

<https://www.portsnorth.com.au/srp/forms-permits/permit-to-work/>

This clearance is to be obtained by the vessel's agent.

The ship's agent is to lodge an advice via QSHIPS to the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns)

Masters are requested to contact Skardon River port control on VHF channel 16/09 prior to commencement and again on completion of such drills when the boats have been returned on board and secured

10.3.4 Diving Operations

Diving operations in Skardon River should be conducted with the appropriate safety infrastructure relevant to protect against the threat of Estuarine (Saltwater) Crocodiles and other marine life, which are known to inhabit the area.

10.3.5 Notification of handling of bulk liquids

Under the [*Transport Operations \(Marine Pollution\) Act 1995*](#) Maritime Safety Queensland is both the statutory and combat agency for response to all ship sourced oil spills. It is therefore a requirement for owners/agents or masters of vessels to notify Maritime Safety Queensland of the intention to load, unload or transfer any form of bulk liquids to, from or between vessels. Such notification is required to be lodged with Cairns VTS via QSHIPS and the port authority via the [online web portal](#). For the purposes of this notification, it would be deemed that the liquids will be transferred by pipeline to, from or between vessels.

The operations of bunkering and the pumping of sullage/sludge from vessels, by road, barge or ship transfer, are to be included within this notification.

Masters of vessels conducting bulk liquid transfers, as specified above, are required to notify Skardon River Port Control on VHF channel 09 of the time of commencement of such transfer/bunkering operation and again the time when the operation is completed.

10.3.6 Overside maintenance work

For environmental reasons, the port authority has strict guidelines on the performance of overside maintenance work on ships within the port limits. Ships wishing to undertake overside maintenance work must:

- comply with the conditions spelt out in the port authority port notice – overside maintenance
- lodge a request, with the port authority, Ports North Qld, via the online web portal for permission to undertake overside work; when granted, masters must comply with the conditions of the permit.

<https://www.portsnorth.com.au/srp/forms-permits/permit-to-work/>

Scraping of the hull is not permitted within port waters.

11. Dangerous cargo

11.1 General

Ports North is responsible for the management of dangerous goods in port, including the loading and unloading of ships alongside and movement across the wharf.

Maritime Safety Queensland is responsible for monitoring and managing the safe movement of ships in Queensland waters. The Regional Harbour Master (Cairns), will assist the port authority Ports North in controlling traffic movement in the port, maintaining on-water safety distances, and responding to any emergency situation.

Maritime Safety Queensland and other relevant authorities operate under the codes and guidelines of:

- IMO – IMDG Code
- International Chamber of Shipping Oil Companies, International Marine Forum
- Society of International Gas Tankers and Terminals (ISGOTT)
- Australian Standard AS 3846-2005
- AMSA – Australian Annex to the IMDG Code – Marine Orders Part 41
- AAPMA – dangerous substances guidelines.

11.1.1 Notification

Section 90 & 91 of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#) requires owners or masters to report all proposed handling or carriage of dangerous goods within a pilotage area. Reports are to be made to the Regional Harbour Master at least 48 hours prior to the arrival of the ship. The [Dangerous Cargo Report](#) should be faxed to the Regional Harbour Master and the port authority. The North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation duty officer will issue a permit for the handling of the cargo within the jurisdiction of the port authority.

Accompanying the dangerous cargo report should be a copy of the dangerous cargo manifest (giving the correct technical name as listed in the IMDG code, the UN number, the IMDG class and particulars regarding stowage and marks of each parcel of dangerous goods.

Under no circumstances are security sensitive ammonium nitrate, class 5.1, oxidizing substances and explosives as classified in the IMDG code under the United Nations classification as Class 1 explosives be brought into the port without first notifying the port authority.

Minimum notification times for the scheduled movement or handling of dangerous cargo in a pilotage area are as follows: Movement	Minimum notification
Ship inbound	48 hours prior to scheduled arrival at pilot boarding ground
Ship departure or removal	Three hours
Ship to ship transfer	24 hours

Loading, removal or handling alongside	24 hours
Operation of a local marine service	48 hours (See sec.90&91 TO(MS) Reg. 2016)

Table 12 - Dangerous cargo minimum notification times

11.1.2 Dangerous cargo limits

The [port operator](#) will promulgate the limits that apply to the class of dangerous cargo loaded and unloaded in the port, including the maximum permissible types and quantities for approved berths.

11.1.3 Dangerous cargo events

Section 93 of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#) defines a dangerous cargo event as:

- the loss, or likely loss, of the cargo from a ship into Queensland waters
- a breach, or danger of a breach, of the containment of the cargo that could endanger marine safety
- anything else involving, or that could involve, the cargo that causes risk of explosion, fire, a person's death, or grievous bodily harm of a person
- for a cargo that is a materials hazardous only in bulk (MHB) – an event that causes risk of explosion, fire, a person's death, or grievous bodily harm to a person.

The master and or the person in charge of a place where a dangerous cargo event has occurred are required to report the event immediately to the port control centre or relevant authority.

A full written report is to be submitted on [Dangerous Cargo Event Report – From F3220](#) to the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) as soon as reasonably practical.

12. Port safety

The aim of this section is to provide guidance to the port community for initial response procedures in the event of dangerous incidents, emergencies, terrorist acts and disasters.

12.1 Emergency contact numbers

Organisation	Work	Mobile	Fax
TSA Marine Superintendent		0448 119 386	
TSA Operations Manager		0415 082 989	
First strike response team		0415 082 989	
Regional Harbour Master/pilot			
Regional Harbour Master (Cairns)	07 4052 7400		07 4052 7451
Manager VTS centre (Cairns)	07 4052 7474		07 4052 7460
Skardon River Port Control	07 4033 3670		07 4052 7460
Government services			
Dept Agriculture – Weipa	07 4069 7380	0427 747 659	07 4069 7390
Dept Agriculture– Cairns	07 4030 7800		07 4035 9578
ABF– Customs	07 4069 7158	Landline diverts to on call	07 4069 7496
Bureau of Meteorology	07 4069 7059		07 4069 7087
Department of Environment and Heritage Protection	07 4069 7908		07 4069 7739
Emergency Services			
Port control – Skardon River Port Control	07 4033 3670		07 4052 7460
Police	000	112	
Fire	000	112	
Security			
Port security officer			
Deputy port security officer			

Table 13 - Emergency contact numbers

12.2 Authorities

Maritime Safety Queensland's emergency procedures are prepared under the provisions of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#) and the [Transport Operations](#)

[\(Marine Pollution\) Act 1995](#). All emergencies should be reported to Skardon River Port Control on VHF channel 16 or VHF 09, who will activate the emergency response plan and call the appropriate emergency response service.

12.3 Fire

Notify Skardon River Port Control on VHF channel 16 or VHF 09. The Regional Harbour Master (Cairns), in consultation with the facility operator will make the decision if the vessel is to be removed from the berth for the safety of the port.

12.3.1 Emergency plans

It is the responsibility of port users/customers and organisations carrying out an operation or activity within the port to develop and manage their own emergency plan and procedure in accordance with relevant legislation, standards and codes. Depending on the nature and size of the operation or activity the authority may request that a copy of this plan/procedure be provided for the authority's perusal. There may also be a requirement to link this plan/procedure with those used by the authority. It is an offence to fail or to refuse to supply a copy of the emergency plan/procedure to the authority upon request.

12.4 Marine pollution

The [Transport Operations \(Marine Pollution\) Act 1995](#) is designed to protect Queensland's marine and coastal environment by minimising deliberate and negligent discharges of ship-sourced pollution. Discharges of oil, noxious liquid substances, packaged harmful substances, sewage and garbage (MARPOL Annexes I, II, III, IV and V) from ships are prohibited in Queensland coastal waters and pilotage areas.

Maritime Safety Queensland has the authority to detain any vessel suspected of causing marine pollution and to intervene where there is imminent danger to the coastline.

There are no waste facilities.

12.4.1 Reporting

Section 67 of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Pollution\) Act 1995](#) requires the master of a ship to report a discharge or probable discharge without delay to the Regional Harbour Master. The report should be made via Cairns VTS (24 hours)

The following details should be provided in a report of marine pollution:

- date/time of incident
- location (latitude, longitude and physical site)
- report source and contact number
- nature, extent and estimated quantity of spill
- type of oil or description
- spill source and point of discharge from source
- identity and position of nearby ships or name of alleged polluter
- nature and extent of spill and movement and speed of spill

- local weather/tide/sea conditions
- whether a sample of the substance spilled has been collected

and any additional information that relates to the spill.

The Maritime Safety Queensland regional office will complete [Marine Pollution Report \(F3968\)](#) based on the above information and fax to the relevant authorities.

12.5 Marine incidents

Under the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#), a marine incident is classified as an event causing or involving:

- the loss of a person from a ship
- the death of, or grievous bodily harm to, a person caused by a ship's operations
- the loss or presumed loss or abandonment of a ship
- a collision with a ship
- the stranding of a ship
- material damage to a ship
- material damage caused by a ship's operations
- danger to a person caused by a ship's operations
- danger of serious damage to a ship
- danger of serious damage to a structure caused by a ship's operations.

12.5.1 Procedures subsequent to serious marine incidents

In the case of a serious marine incident as defined in section 11.5 including a vessel grounding or if structural damage has occurred, the vessel is to be removed to a position of safety. The Regional Harbour Master (Cairns) through Skardon River Port Control is to be immediately advised and advice sought.

The vessel will be surveyed by the appropriate authority (AMSA or classification society) to ensure seaworthiness before it leaves port limits.

12.5.2 Marine Incident Reporting – Maritime Safety Queensland

A marine incident must be reported to a shipping inspector within 48 hours of the incident unless there is a reasonable excuse. Shipping inspectors are marine safety officers (located at Maritime Safety Queensland marine operations bases), and officers of Queensland Water Police and Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol. If you are unable to access one of these offices, contact a shipping inspector by phone. They will advise you what to do next. The reporting form used for recreational vessels is:

- Maritime Safety Queensland - [Marine Incident Report \(F3071\)](#) Recreational Vessels

The form is available online from Maritime Safety Queensland or from Department of Transport and Main Roads customer service centres, Maritime Safety Queensland regional offices, Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol and Water Police offices. This form is used to report all incidents, no matter the type of ship involved. The form may be

completed with the assistance of a shipping inspector to ensure the information is accurate, unbiased and as reliable as possible. It is important that the form is filled in completely, with the incident described in as much detail as possible. The shipping inspector who receives the form will check to ensure it has been correctly completed.

If the initial report is not made in the approved form, the owner or master must make a further report to a shipping inspector in the approved form as soon as possible. The master would normally report a marine incident but the owner would report if the master, for some justifiable reason, was not able to make the report. Each marine incident reported will be investigated by a shipping inspector and the results of the investigation reported in the approved form.

Section 124 of the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 requires ships masters to assist if a marine incident involves two or more ships. The master of each ship involved in the marine incident must to the extent that he can do so without danger to his ship or persons on board his ship:

- Give the other ship involved in the incident, its master and persons onboard the ship the help necessary to save them from danger caused by the marine incident.
- Stay by the other ship until no further assistance is required.
- Give the master of the other ship reasonable particulars adequate to identify the ship and its owner.

Section 129 of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Act 1994](#) requires the master of a ship to promptly report dangers to navigation including an abandoned ship, a damaged aid to navigation, severe weather conditions and so on.

12.5.3 Marine Incident Reporting – Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Under section 19 of the [Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003](#) any incident involving a ship in Australian waters including:

- breakage of gear or injury to any person during cargo work
- damage or defect to ship, machinery or equipment
- peril or a close quarters situation
- stranding or disappearance
- death, serious injury or a dangerous occurrence
- a birth

must be reported to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA)

- AMSA Incident form Domestic Commercial Vessels (DCV)
- AMSA form 18 (incident alert within 4 hours of the incident occurring)
- AMSA form 19 (detailed incident report must be submitted within 72 hours of the incident occurring)

Reports are to be submitted by fax +61 2 6230 6868 or 1800 622 153 or email Reports@amsa.gov.au.

Complete details of these requirements are available on the [AMSA web site](#).

12.5.4 Marine Incident reporting - Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

To report an incident where a breach of Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority regulations is observed witnesses are asked to complete the [incident report form – GBRMPA](#). Urgent matters should be reported by phone to the appropriate number listed on the form.

12.5.5 Environmental Incident Reporting

Incidents with potential to cause or which have caused ‘environmental harm’ as defined in the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* within the port including land and facilities under the control of the Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited must be reported to the authority as soon as reasonably practicable. Failure to report an incident that impacts adversely on the environment is an offence.

Port users, owners, masters and organisations are reminded it is their responsibility to notify the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency and/or Cassowary Coast Council where the incident is of the nature that requires notification under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* and environmental protection policies.

12.6 Port community responsibilities

As a responsible member of the maritime community, any person witnessing an incident which was/or is capable of becoming an emergency is obliged to report the matter to the Maritime Safety Queensland regional office (VTS) and/or the emergency response agencies of Police, Fire or ambulance.

AMSA requests pilots, stevedores, port authority officers and others to notify them of suspected deficiencies on ships.

13. Security

13.1 General

The [Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts](#) is responsible for administering maritime safety legislation for the Australian Government. Australia's primary framework for maritime safety is established under the Navigation Act 2012 (Navigation Act) and the Marine Safety Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012 (National Law Act).

The Navigation Act 2012 establishes Australia's regulatory framework for international ship and seafarer safety, shipping aspects of protecting the marine environment, and the actions of seafarers in Australian waters. The Navigation Act also gives effect to international conventions and treaties developed by the International Maritime Organization, the International Labour Organization and United Nations Conferences to which Australia is a signatory.

The Australian Government regulates the security of the Australian maritime transport through the [Maritime Transport and Offshore Facilities Security Act 2003](#) (MTOFSA) and the [Maritime Transport and Offshore Facilities Security Regulations 2003](#). This legislation was introduced to meet obligations in response to Chapter XI-2 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea 1974 (SOLAS) and the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code 2003 (ISPS).

The MTOFSA sets out a regulatory framework which centres on maritime industry participants assessing their operations for security risks and preparing a security plan which sets out measures to counter these identified risks. Under this framework, security regulated ships, port operators, port facility operators, offshore facilities and offshore service providers are regulated.

The department is responsible for administering the Act and regulations, while maritime industry participants are responsible for delivering security on a day-to-day basis.

Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited has an approved Maritime Security Plan as required under the Maritime Transport and Offshore Facilities Security Act 2003.

A ship's master, prior to entering the port must report directly to Cairns port authority or via their respective ship agency the following:

- ISPS compliance number
- current ship security level or any change to the ship security level whilst in port
- ship security officer contact details
- list of expected visitors/contractors
- nominated provedore
- crew list and identification.

Any security incident (as defined under the ISPS code or Maritime Transport Security Legislation) whilst in port.

Refer to the [Skardon River | Ports North](#) website for complete details

13.1.1 Security levels

The federal government determined, and will declare when necessary, three maritime security levels (MarSec Levels):

- **MARSEC Level 1** – minimum appropriate protective security measures will be maintained at all times.
- **MARSEC Level 2** – appropriate additional protective security measures will be enacted because of heightened risk of a security incident.
- **MARSEC Level 3** – further specific protective security measures maintained for limited times when a security incident is probable or imminent, although it may not be possible to identify the specific target.

Unless otherwise advised the port will operate on **MARSEC Level 1**.

In addition to normal security measures undertaken, additional security measures on the land and water may be implemented:

- if directed by officers of DITRDC
- the current ship security level is higher than security level 1 or the port/port facility security level.

Responsibility for the implementation of the additional security measures will be agreed via a declaration of security between the ship and the port authority or the port facility operator. If between the ship and the port facility operator, the port security officer must be consulted and agree with the security measures proposed to be implemented.

13.1.2 Maritime security zones

Dependent upon the security level in force, these zones will apply in particular areas of the port.

Zones which will typically apply are:

- Landside restricted zone – an area of land, to which access is controlled, within the boundaries of a port facility or of land under the control of a port service provider.
- Waterside restricted zone – an area of water within the port where a ship may berth, anchor or moor, and access to the area is controlled. It extends below the water level to the seabed and under any wharf adjacent to the zone.

Zones established at maritime security Level 1 are as follows:

- Waterside restricted zone – 30m from any wharf or the outside face of a security regulated ship.
- Landside restricted zones – areas defined by security fences and signage on all berths.

All zones will be clearly identified, and conditions must be observed by all port users.

Access to the zones is controlled and entry into the zones is not permitted unless authorised by the ship and/or port authority, as required. To do so is an offence under the *Maritime Transport and Offshore Facilities Security Act 2003* (the MTOFSA) and subject to significant penalties.

13.1.3 Security measures

Entry on to, and use of, the port area is subject to compliance with the Metro Mining – port rules. A copy of the port rules is available from the Metro Mining website.

13.2 National security

In line with the Federal Government's recent publications to do with the reporting of any possible terrorist activity then these procedures are to be followed.

Contact the National Security 24 hour hotline if you have any information of possible terrorist activity or have seen or heard something suspicious that may need investigating by the security agencies.

24 hour National Security hotline: 1800 123 400

Email: hotline@nationalecurity.gov.au

Suspicious activities reporting: [Border Watch](#)

14. Port state control in Australia

Select the link below to view the current information issued by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

[Port State control | Australian Maritime Safety Authority](#)

15. Port services

15.1 Port facilities

There are limited facilities at Skardon River. Large ocean going vessels remain at anchor for the duration of loading. There are no shopping / supply facilities.

15.1.1 Bunkering

Not available

15.1.2 Fresh water

Limited Supply

15.1.3 Waste

It is an offence for a person to discard, dispose of, or leave rubbish, refuse, sewage, waste of any kind (including galley waste), wastewater or other liquid waste in the port unless it is in a controlled manner in authorised and designated areas or through approved services.

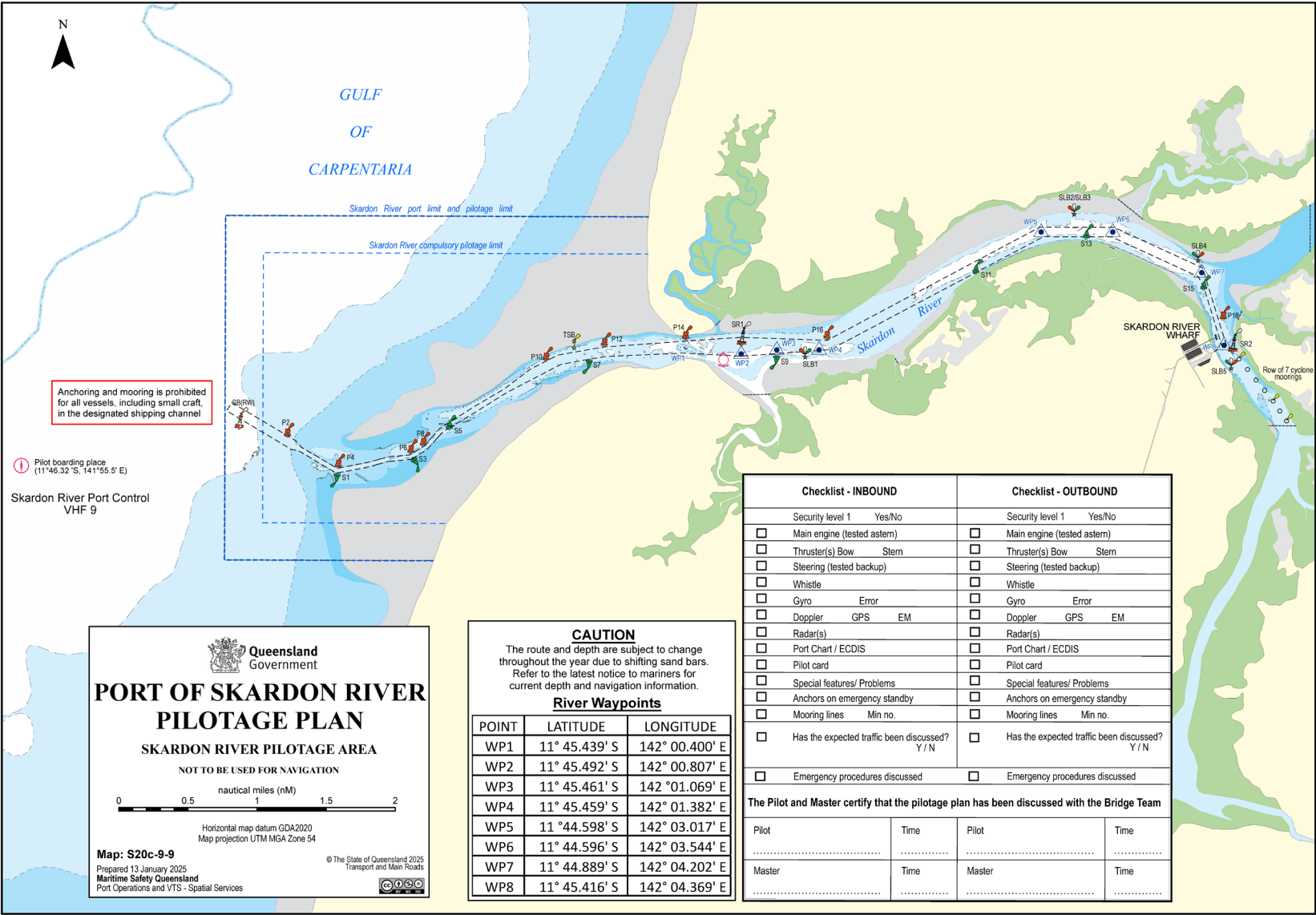
15.1.4 Electric power

Shore power connection is not available.

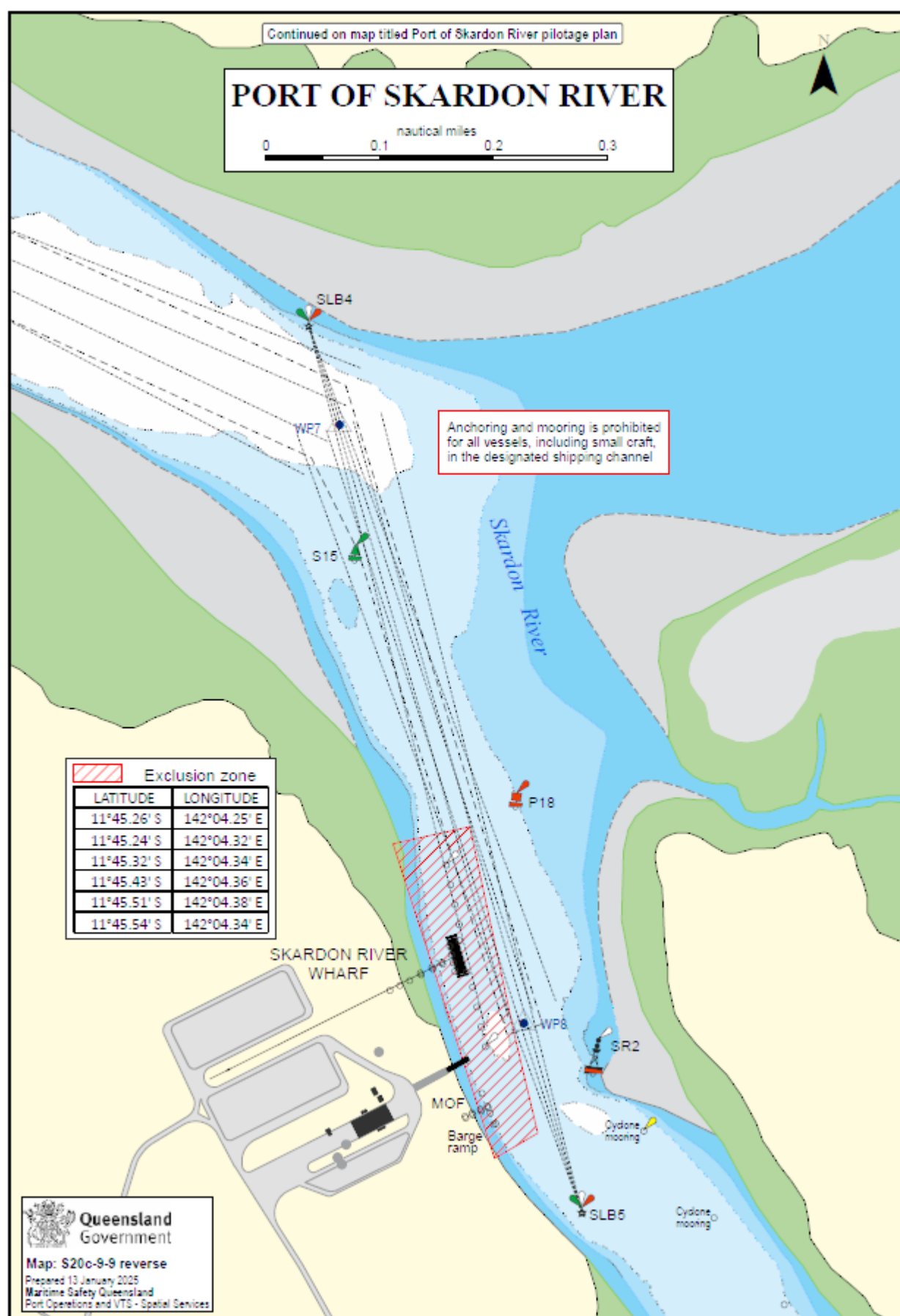
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16.1 Skardon River pilotage area



16.2 Pilotage plan



PORT OF SKARDON RIVER

Vessel

PILOTAGE PLAN - ARRIVAL

VTS Cairns listens continuously on VHF 16 or VHF 9.
Should any emergency arise, call Cairns for assistance.
The bridge team will be required to plot vessel's position as required by Maritime Safety Queensland and International Regulations.
The pilotage passage will be monitored by VTS Cairns.

Pilot			Pilot card	yes	no
Date			Defects	yes	no
Passage				Bar	River
Channels (VHF)			LAT + Tide		
Berth			Avl Water - Draft		
Draft in metres	F	A	UKC		
Tide	Time	Height	Minimum UKC	0.5 m	Berth 0.3 m
Wind	DIR	SP			
Remarks:					

PORT OF SKARDON RIVER

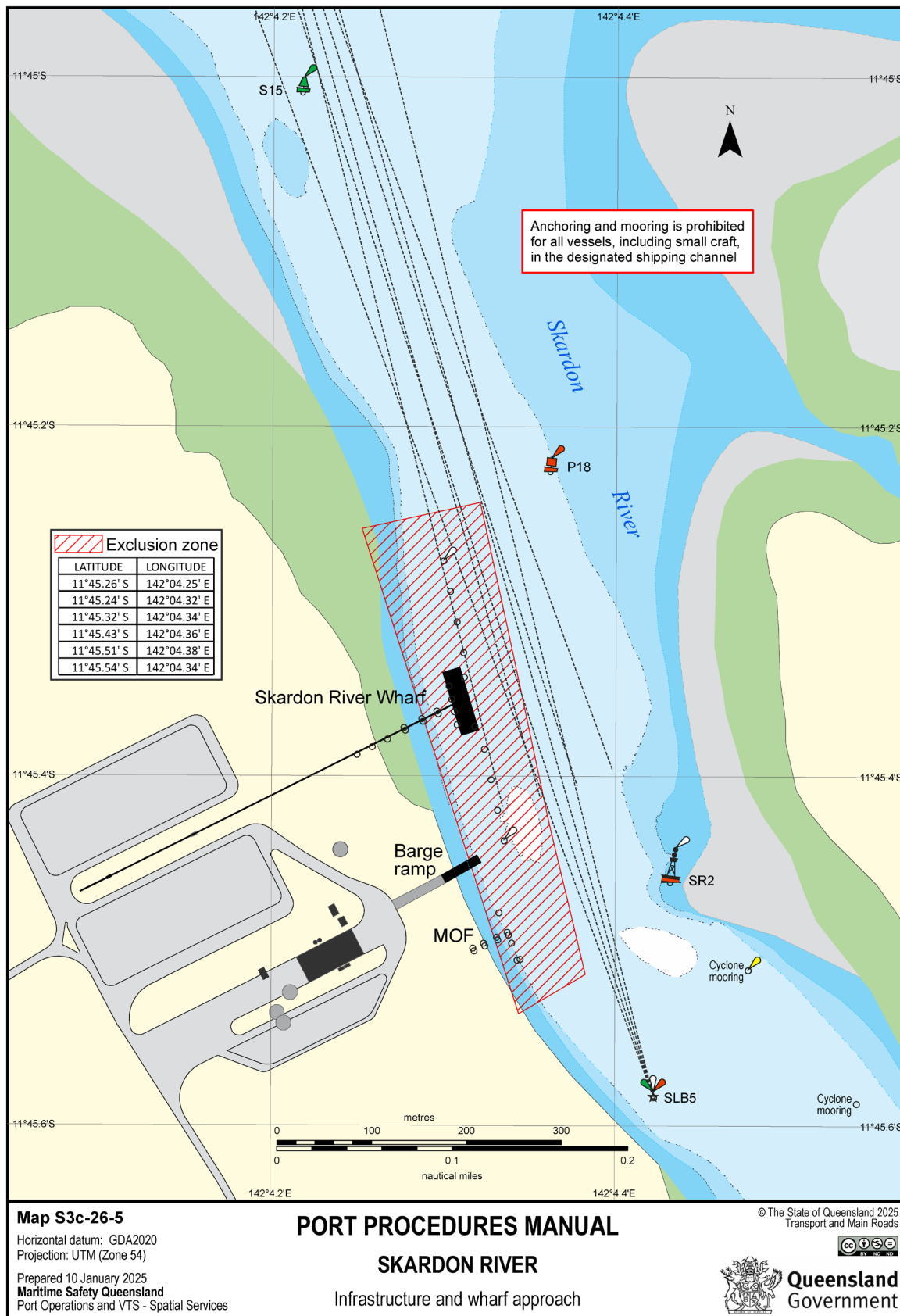
Vessel

PILOTAGE PLAN - REMOVAL/DEPARTURE

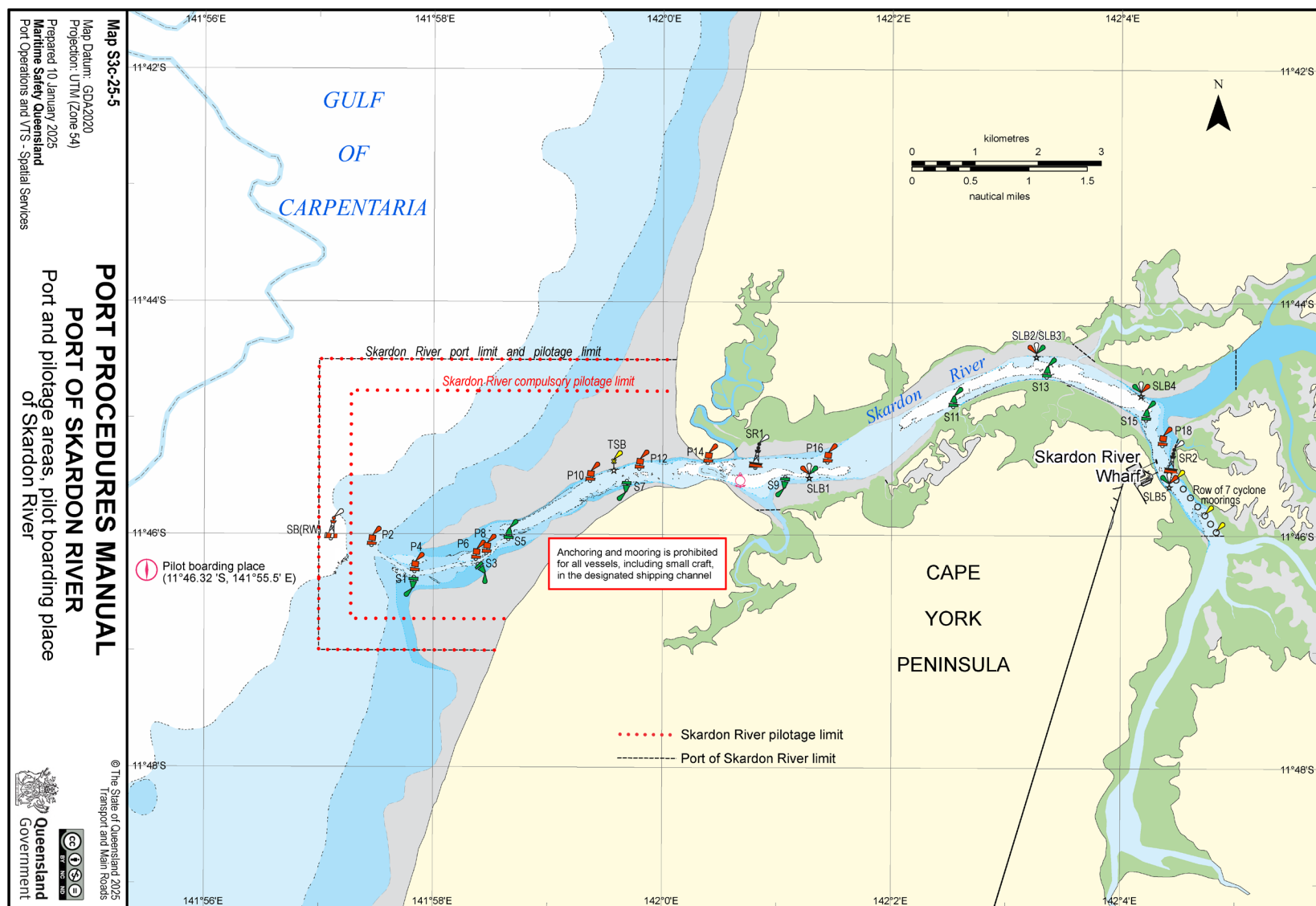
VTS Cairns listens continuously on VHF 16 or VHF 9.
Should any emergency arise, call Cairns for assistance.
The bridge team will be required to plot vessel's position as required by Maritime Safety Queensland and International Regulations.
The pilotage passage will be monitored by VTS Cairns.

Pilot			Pilot card	yes	no
Date			Defects	yes	no
Passage				River	Bar
Channels (VHF)			LAT + Tide		
Draft in metres	F	A	Avl Water - Draft		
Tide	Time	Height	UKC		
Wind	DIR	SP			
Remarks:					

16.3 Skardon River port layout



16.4 Port and pilotage areas, pilot boarding place



16.5 Permission to Immobilise Main Engines

[Link](#) to fillable PDF

(THIS FORM IS ONLY TO BE USED IF THE REQUEST CANNOT BE SUBMITTED BY THE AGENT WITHIN QSHIPS)



Queensland
Government

Permission to Immobilise Main Engines - Cairns Region

Before operations are carried out this form should be filled out by ship's agents/masters and forwarded to the Regional Harbour Master for approval on:

Fax: 07 4052 7460 or

Email: vtsc Cairns@msq.qld.gov.au

Location: Cairns ☐ Karumba ☐ Thursday Island ☐ Mourilyan ☐
Cairns anchorage ☐ Karumba anchorage ☐ Thursday Island anchorage ☐ Mourilyan anchorage ☐
Weipa ☐ Amrun ☐ Cape Flattery ☐ Skardon River ☐
Weipa anchorage ☐ Amrun anchorage ☐ Other ☐

Vessel name

Agent

--	--

Permission is sought to immobilise main engines - master to complete noting the conditions below:

From hrs On / / To hrs On / /

Scope of repairs (if appropriate)

Time required to mobilise in emergency situation

--

Subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to immobilising, advise VTS on port working channel.
2. For vessels alongside moorings, to be tended throughout.
3. For vessels at anchorage, anchored position to be monitored at all times.
4. During daylight hours, fly signal flags 'R' over 'Y'.
5. On completion, advise VTS on port working channel.

For vessels at anchor, this permission is only valid whilst weather conditions are suitable.

Masters are requested not to conduct prolonged engine trials whilst berthed at Cairns Port Authority wharves.

Approved/Not approved

Date

	/ /
--	-----

Privacy Statement: The Department of Transport and Main Roads is collecting the information on this form under the provisions of the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994*. The department may disclose this information to authorised departmental officers and officers of Queensland port authorities. Your personal information will not be disclosed to a third party without your consent unless required or authorised to do so by law.