

4. Port description

4.1 General Information

Karumba is situated in the south-east corner of the Gulf of Carpentaria, 530 kilometres west of Cairns at the mouth of the Norman River. The Karumba Shipping Channel has been maintained in the past for Zinc concentrate exports. The mine was closed in February 2016 and there will be no more large scale maintenance dredging of the shipping channel. Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited, who manage the port, have advised that they will not be commissioning maintenance dredging therefore it is expected that the channel will gradually reduce in depth and width due to siltation.

A small scale maintenance dredging campaign took place in 2018 to remove siltation for the commencement of limited zinc concentrate exports.

Studies undertaken by Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited indicate that the minimum depth of the channel could be reduced to -2.0m LAT within 2 years – the rate of siltation may be effected by the strength of the NW monsoon during the wet season.

Karumba also provides a trawler base for the prawn and fishing industry, the export of live cattle and a community port for servicing townships in the area.

4.2 Pilotage area

The Karumba Pilotage area is described in Schedule 2 of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#) as the area of:

- a) Waters at the high water mark consisting of the following:
 - the Norman River and connected waterways system from the head of navigation to the river mouth
 - from the river mouth, the waters within a 10 nautical mile radius centred at the north head of the Norman River entrance; and

The navigable waters of rivers and creeks flowing, directly or indirectly, into the waters in paragraph (a).

4.3 Load lines

Karumba 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 100 metres overall length. A formal assessment will be conducted before any vessel is granted approval to enter the port.

Consult the [*Notices to Mariners*](#) for the latest port depth information.

4.5 Trim requirements

The safe handling of ships within the confines of the channels and swing basins requires certain conditions of trim. Ships should be ballasted or loaded in order to have an even keel or trimmed by the stern with the forward draft not less than 2% overall length and the propeller fully submerged. Vessels trimmed by the head or listing may be subject to restrictions. Ships not meeting this requirement may experience considerable delays until the problem is rectified.

Masters should pay special attention to their loading/ballasting plans to ensure that their ships are suitably trimmed and able to put to sea at short notice, especially during the cyclone season – November to April.

4.6 Time zone

UTC + 10 hours throughout the year.

4.7 Working hours

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

4.8 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 I)

Charts of the area include:

- AUS 6 Approaches to Karumba
- AUS 303 Nassau River to Wellesley Islands
- AUS 4720 Booby Island to Cape Wessel including Gulf of Carpentaria.
- AUS 4060 Australasia and adjacent waters
- AUS 4603 Australia North Coast and adjacent waters
- AUS 4620 Percy Isles to Booby Island including Gulf of Papua.

4.9 Shipping announcements

4.9.1 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).