

Freight expectations

NICOLE MILLS

New tech could boost Geelong Port loads

NEW technology developed in Western Victoria is set to improve efficiency at Geelong Port, allowing ships to safely increase their cargo load without the need for expensive infrastructure.

Dynamic Under Keel Clearance (DUKC) is a computer algorithm that assesses tides and weather to determine how much draught a ship needs when

entering port. Draught is the depth of water needed under the keel to float a ship.

Victorian Regional Channels Authority captain Peter McGovern said the technology would allow larger ships with more cargo to safely access Geelong Port.

"As a bulk port, Geelong will benefit appreciably

from technology that allows pilots to gauge with pinpoint accuracy the maximum draught ships can operate within the Port of Geelong," he said.

"DUKC will mean companies can fill bulk carriers to maximum draught and still safely navigate the Geelong channel."

The technology was

developed by Victorian company OMC International and is already used in 23 ports around the world.

Mr McGovern said the port would have a one-off investment of about \$200,000 for training, hardware and software and about \$140,000 each year for ongoing use of the technology.

Some of the cost will be recouped through increased port usage fees.

"For the big ships, being able to load a little deeper means they'll get more cargo in of course, but it's worth a lot of money too," Mr McGovern said.

"If you are an importer or an exporter it has just become more competitive and more cost effective to

ship in and out of Geelong."

Viva Energy refining general manager Thys Heyns welcomed the announcement saying it would allow businesses to safely transport more products in and out of the port. "For Viva Energy, each additional 10cm in vessel draught results in saving of over \$1m per annum," he said.

"This is just one of many steps that will help us build a sustainable refinery and this is good for Geelong."



United effort to rescue wildlife on the Surf Coast

CASSIE ZERVOS

INJURED and orphaned Surf Coast wildlife will have more help than ever before.

Torquay Wildlife Shelter and its foster carers in Torquay, Bellbrae and Anglesea have created the Surf Coast Wildlife Shelters Group to

cater for the growing number of injured animals in the area.

Torquay residents Robyn and Ian Rule have run the Torquay Wildlife Shelter for the last eight years and said, with more development and tourism on the Surf Coast, there is increasing pressure on wildlife, including kangaroos, possums, echidnas and birds, as well as

aquatic animals such as seals and little penguins.

The main focus of the group is to protect, rescue, rehabilitate and release injured and orphaned wildlife.

The Surf Coast Wildlife Shelters Group will have the support of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, and other state

and local government departments and agencies, including the Surf Coast Shire Council, as well as local vets.

Another priority for the shelter is raising money to house rescued wildlife.

"We will be embarking on an education and awareness campaign, so the community will hopefully see signs and

posters providing information and contact numbers for our rescue services and shelters, as well as basic advice if they come across injured or orphaned wildlife on the Surf Coast," Mrs Rule said.

"That's an important first step towards ensuring these precious animals get the care they need."



Robyn Rule and a rescued joey.

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