

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY****WRITTEN QUESTION**

Mr Maley

to Minister for Transport and Infrastructure

**Darwin Harbour**

1. As East Arm Port becomes a major container railhead for Australia over the next decade, can the Northern Territory Government confidently guarantee that the largest LNG ships in the world (290 metres long), daily plying harbour waters will not cause congestion and loss of commercial and public use in the Darwin harbour?
2. How long will Darwin Harbour port and shipping activities be delayed, or even stopped, with the entrance of large tankers to the proposed Wickham Point Gas Plant?

**ANSWER**

1. Darwin Harbour has very wide navigational fairways which allows two-way movements with appropriate separation. Movement of vessels in the Harbour poses low impact risk to other users of the Harbour. Phillip's ships will be up to 290m length overall. Similar sized ships regularly use the Darwin Harbour including Cruise Ships such as the QE2 at 295m length overall and United States Navy Boxer class ships at 290m LOA. Safety zones of 1000 metres forward, 500 metres aft and 200 metres on each side of the moving vessel have been established for LNG carrier movements and will be applied in Darwin Harbour.

The natural dogleg channel at the entrance to the Harbour acts as a restriction to deep draft loaded vessels at low tide and when applied, involves a transit time of approximately 12 minutes.

The restriction applies to existing shipping with Port entry procedures allowing only one deep draft vessel transit at any one time if deep draft clearance is required.

The number of commercial and large Defence vessels currently entering the Port is in the vicinity of 1,000 per year (i.e. approximately 3 per day of varying size and spread over a 24 hour period). With LNG carriers predicted to be in the order of 78 per year for a 3mtpa operation and 160 per year for a 10mtpa operation the added potential frequency for vessel conflict (i.e. up to 3 additional vessels per week) is considered minimal and therefore is not considered to cause congestion and loss of commercial and public use of Darwin Harbour. All shipping movements in the Harbour are managed by the Port Corporation Harbour Control with arrival and departure times co-ordinated so as to minimise impacts.

2. Given the above and the size of Darwin Harbour it is not envisaged that any delays or stoppages will occur with the entrance of large tankers to the proposed Wickham Point Gas Plant.