

NOTICE TO MARINERS

GIPPSLAND PORTS



The following Notice to Mariners is published for general information.

AUSTRALIA - VICTORIA

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PORT OF GIPPSLAND LAKES

WARNING

PADDLE CRAFT AND SMALL VESSEL OPERATIONS NEAR THE OCEAN
ACCESS ENTRANCE

DATE: Monday 30th April 2018

DETAILS: A recent Marine Incident that occurred near the Entrance to the Gippsland Lakes on Sunday 29th April has again highlighted **the risks involved** for vessel operators attempting to make passage through the Lakes Entrance approach channel (the Narrows) or over the Lakes Entrance Bar.

The incident involved 3 persons operating Kayaks in the entrance channel for a sightseeing excursion when environmental conditions were not suitable.

Vessel operators are reminded that the ocean entrance to the Port of Gippsland Lakes can at times be very dangerous due to the run of the tide in the Entrance Channel **especially the ebb tide**.

Bar Crossings for all vessels is regarded as extremely dangerous and can cause serious personal injury or death when unfavorable environment and safety conditions exist. Incidents can occur for many reasons including any combination of the following;

- Inexperienced vessel operators;
- Under prepared vessel operations and passage plans;
- Experienced persons operating unfamiliar vessels;
- Poor weather and environmental conditions;
- Large swells created by recent weather events;
- **The run of the ebb tide** which lifts and shortens sea conditions between the entrance piers and on the bar **increasing the risk of swamping or capsizing**.
- Poor visibility, which may include the position of the sun relative to the vessels position;
- Changes in sea and swell conditions from the time of departure to the time of arrival

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- The presence of other vessel operators (increased traffic conditions)

Passage through the entrance channel and bar should only be attempted by prepared and experienced persons with sound local knowledge and only at times of fair weather, smooth sea conditions with little influence from the run of tide **especially the ebb tide**.

Near real time tidal stream rates (current speed) can be viewed on the Gippsland Ports Website at;

<https://www.gippslandports.vic.gov.au/boating/waves-tides-and-weather/>

Operating vessels through the entrance channel and bar at times of heightened risk **should be avoided at all times**.

Information regarding Bar crossing advice, safety equipment requirements, vessel preparation checks and voyage preparation checks can be found in the Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook. Vessel operators should take extra care during vessel equipment checks and conduct a safety briefing to passengers prior to departure.

Vessel operators are advised to take extra precaution before and during any decision to attempt a channel transit or bar crossing taking into account the advice previously described.

“If in doubt, don’t go out”

Further information about the Port of Gippsland Lakes can be found on the Gippsland Ports website at

www.gippslandports.vic.gov.au

**CHARTS
AFFECTED** Aus. 182

**PUBLICATIONS
AFFECTED:** Sailing Directions NP14,
Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook,
Gippsland Ports Waterways Online mapping tool available at
<https://www.gippslandports.vic.gov.au/boating/waterways-online/>

**CAPT. BEVIS HAYWARD
HARBOUR MASTER**