

LOCAL NAVIGATION WARNING

GIPPSLAND PORTS



The following navigation warning is published for general information.

AUSTRALIA - VICTORIA

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PORT OF CORNER INLET AND PORT ALBERT

PORT ALBERT

**OLD PORT CHANNEL – INTENTION TO WITHDRAW AIDS TO
NAVIGATION**

DATE: Wednesday 27th October 2021

DETAILS: The Old Port Channel commences at the junction of Midge Channel to the North of Pelican Island near Port Albert and is marked with an unlit West Cardinal Mark Buoy #1. The channel leads upstream to the mouth of the Albert River a distance of approximately 6 kilometres. The channel is currently marked with 26 minor unlit navigation buoys. The Old Port Channel is no longer used for commerce due to the shallow available depths and lack of port infrastructure upstream. The use for the channel is to access the Albert River from Midge Channel. There are no publicly maintained boat ramps in the Old Port Channel. There is a small verge used by some locals as a place to launch small shallow draft craft in the Albert River near the Alberton Highway Bridge.

Upstream of buoys # 6 & #11 the channel is split in several directions and is unreliable to carry a depth of greater than 0.4m at LAT. In parts of the channel upstream of these buoys the channel dries. The Old Port Channel is currently used for some commercial fishing and a few recreational fishers and paddle craft who have sufficient local knowledge regarding changes in channel alignment and tide height restrictions. They also use shallow draft vessels because of the compromised depths.

Marking the channel upstream of buoys #6 & #11 may encourage vessel operators, that do not possess local knowledge regarding channel alignment and tidal constraints, to venture upstream with the thought that because it is marked by aids to navigation it is safe to transit. Unknowingly they are faced with the risk of becoming stranded in shallow water as the tide ebbs. There is history of this occurrence.

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Gippsland Ports has carried out a Risk Assessment for the marking of the Old Port Channel with reference to maintaining aids to navigation in that channel. Good water depths are able to be safely marked with aids to navigation Upstream from the position of #1 West Cardinal Mark buoy to buoys #6 and #11. Upstream from this position is where the channel becomes confused, unreliable in direction and with compromised depths below 0.4m at LAT.

Accordingly, the risk assessment identifies that the aids to navigation upstream from #6 & #11, should be withdrawn from service so as not to encourage vessel traffic other than those who have sufficient local knowledge to navigate upstream without the use of aids to navigation.

Gippsland Ports shall commence the withdrawal of all aids to navigation in the Old Port Channel from #1 buoy to #31 buoy on or around the week beginning 22nd November 2021. They will be replaced with eight new buoys, strategically established to mark the channel from the original position of #1 West Cardinal buoy upstream to the current position of #6 and #11 buoys. Two new gate buoys will also be established near the mouth of the Albert River.

Mariners are invited to contact the Harbour Master on 0427 610 025 should they wish to discuss Port Operations. Mariners are also invited to visit the Gippsland Ports website at; www.gippslandports.vic.gov.au

**FURTHER
NOTICE:**

A further Notice will be issued when the Navigation Aid works are about to commence and when the works are completed.

**CAPT. BEVIS HAYWARD
HARBOUR MASTER**