

Authority planning Geelong port future

PORT PHILLIP Sea Pilots carefully guided 'virtual' ships into Corio Bay this week as part of high-tech planning to ensure Geelong's shipping hub remains at the forefront of maritime trade.

The detailed simulation sessions took place at Smartship Australia's state-of-the-art port design and navigation simulator in Brisbane, allowing pilots to test the shipping channels' capacity to safely cope with a world trend toward larger ships.

The Brisbane trip, organised by Geelong Harbour Master Dilip Abraham for Victorian Regional Channels Authority (VRCA), paints a picture of potential channel and port infrastructure upgrades needed to meet demands of bigger ships, including the new Panamax ships and Suezmax tankers.

The VRCA is investigating a raft of channel improvements adjacent to Refinery Pier and Lascelles Wharf. The proposal follows on the heels of its successful \$9 million Geelong

dredging program, which finished in December.

"The largest vessels coming into port currently berth at Lascelles and Refinery," Captain Abraham says.

"The simulator allows us to trial the movement of even larger ships of the future, testing the limits of the channel network and existing berths as well as a potential new berth at Lascelles Four."

The bigger ships, up to 300 metres long, are already trading to Aus-

tralia. Proposed dredging will allow them to dock safely in Geelong.

VRCA chief executive Captain Peter McGovern said while safe navigation and improving channel capacity were paramount, the latest project will help hone Geelong port's competitive edge.

"This port, Victoria's most important bulk port, is a real success story and it's important we constantly plan ahead to ensure it remains that way," Captain McGovern said.



Geelong's port is being prepared to meet the demand of bigger ships.



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Authority



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