

More cargo, same channels, better returns.

June 3, 2015



Captain Peter McGovern of the Victorian Regional Channels Authority (VRCA) announced today that the VRCA is adopting exciting new technology that will allow larger ships with more cargo to access the Geelong Port.

Some vessels will be able to import and export additional cargo, of the order of 3000 tonnes through Geelong, he said.

"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.

"Additional draught means bigger loads for bulk vessels. "Container ships rarely max out their draught, while bulk ships can be filled completely", Captain McGovern said.

The system is called Dynamic Under Keel Clearance (DUKC®). It is a computer algorithm that takes account of real-time conditions to predict whether the Geelong channel can cater for each ship's draught, the depth of water needed to float a ship, at a given time.

Information about tides and weather is fed into the DUKC® system, which calculates the available under keel clearance and advises pilots to adjust speed accordingly.

"The VRCA has adopted DUKC® as a way of admitting large ships with more cargo, without requiring any changes to the channel infrastructure.

"In the right circumstances, ships may be allowed up to 12 meters draught and that means a cargo uplift of 1350 to 3000 tonnes per vessel.

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

DUKC® was developed by Victorian company OMC International. Its CEO Peter O'Brien said "We are delighted to add Geelong to the 23 ports we service around the world".

Thys Heyns, General Manager Refining at Viva Energy welcomed the announcement "Dynamic under-keel clearance will allow businesses to safely transport more products into and out of the port.

"For Viva Energy, each additional 10cm in vessel draught results in saving of over \$1m per annum.

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

By adopting DUKC®, the VRCA enables optimal use of the existing channel, safely maximising productivity.

"Vessels visiting Geelong last year, particularly those carrying fluids, did not bring a maximum cargo.

"Once DUKC® is fully operational, vessels will carry more cargo without any change to the channel.

"Full ships are a far better use of resources and Geelong port will become a more desirable destination for importers.

"Geelong port also becomes more attractive as an export location for all bulk commodities", Captain McGovern said.