

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Marine mammal and turtle management

What marine mammals are found in Snug Cove/Two-fold Bay?

The following types of mammals often come into Snug Cove/Two-fold Bay:

- Humpback, Southern Right, Orca, Sperm and Minke whales
- Bottlenose and Common dolphins and seals.

When does whale migration take place?

Whale migration takes place annually from July to December. In winter, whales migrate north to warmer waters and return south between August and December.

Will the project impact whale migration?

As Two-fold Bay is traditionally a fishing area, and Snug Cove is an active port, there is already moderate to high shipping traffic in the area. According to assessments made during the environmental impact statement phase of the project, there should be no significant impact on whales or their migration by the additional vessels being used during the project.

Because whales are a protected species under state and Commonwealth legislation, additional conditions and management controls have been put in place for the duration of the project to ensure there is no negative impact on the animals.

What types of marine animals are specifically protected?

The following marine animals are protected under state and Commonwealth legislation:

- whales
- marine turtles
- dolphins.

These animals are specifically protected by the project's permits and licences and will be monitored during the project.

What controls will be in place to ensure marine animals will not be impacted during construction?

The project's environment protection and biodiversity conservation referral and its sea dumping permit specifically address whales and dolphins and require adherence to certain conditions to ensure impacts to protected species are minimised.

A project-specific aquatic ecology management plan and a marine ecology monitoring program have also been developed and will be in effect for the duration of the project.

The following project controls will be in place to manage dredging and spoil disposal activities around marine mammals and turtles:

- All vessels associated with dredging and construction will travel at a speed of 6 knots or less within the port limits, on the way to, or at the disposal ground. Vessels will also minimise noise and avoid any sudden changes in direction. The slow movements will allow animals adequate time to avoid vessels.
- Vessels must maintain a 300 metre exclusion zone with all whales on the way to and from and within the disposal ground.
- Where marine mammals and turtles are sighted within the 300 metre exclusion zone, dumping activities will not commence until 20 minutes after the last sighting. Alternatively, the vessel may move to another area of the disposal site to maintain the minimum distance of 300 metres.

In addition:

- Marine animal observers will be on board all marine vessels.
- All personnel will be educated on the requirements via site inductions and toolbox talks.
- There will be regular information exchanges with local residents, commercial fishers and whale watch cruises on known marine animal activity.

The following project controls will be in place during construction of the wharf:

- Marine animal observers will visually monitor for whales for a minimum of 30 minutes before the commencement of piling.
- If no whales have been spotted within the observation zone (which is between 1.5m and 2.2m) after 30 minutes, piling will commence with a gradual increase in piling impact of no more than 50% of full impact energy for 10 minutes. If no whales have been sighted, full impact piling will then commence.
- If visibility is poor and marine animal observers are unable to clearly identify objects to the full observation zone distance, a vessel or aircraft search must be conducted until visibility has improved.
- If any whales are spotted, piling will cease for a minimum of one hour after the last sighting.

Will there be monitoring of marine mammals and turtles?

The construction contractors are required to produce weekly and monthly environmental reports. Part of this reporting involves keeping sighting logs of whales, dolphins and marine turtles.

What legislation covers protecting marine animals?

Relevant legislation covering the protection of marine animals are:

- *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- *NSW Fisheries Management Act 1994*
- *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995.*

How can I find out more about the project?

To get more information about the project, contact us by:

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