

4. Port Description

4.1 General Information

The port operates 24 hours a day seven days a week.

4.2 Pilotage area

The Cairns Pilotage Area (see section 16.3) is described in Schedule 2 of the [Transport Operations \(Marine Safety\) Regulation 2016](#) as the area of:

- a) Waters bounded by an imaginary line:
 1. starting at the high-water mark on the north–western extremity of Cape Grafton then in a northerly direction to latitude 16° 49.875' south, longitude 145° 54.954' east
 2. then in a west-north-westerly direction to the high-water mark on the northern extremity of Taylor Point
 3. then by the high-water mark in a southerly direction along the shoreline of the mainland returning to the starting point; and
- b) The navigable waters of rivers and creeks flowing, directly or indirectly, into the waters referred to in paragraph a).

4.3 Load lines

The Cairns area is situated in the tropical load line zone when a vessel is inside the Barrier Reef and the south pacific seasonal tropical area outside the reef.

Tropical: from 1st April to 30th November.

Summer: from 1st December to 31st March.

4.4 Maximum vessel size

The port limits ship size to 200m LOA, beam 36m, except for Passenger ships.

Further exceptions to these limits may be allowed, but only after a successful assessment through receipt of vessel owner/operators risk assessment and the successful completion of full bridge simulation exercises conducted by Ports North pilots and assessed by the Regional Harbour Master (Cairns).

Consult the [Notices to Mariners](#) for the latest port depth information.

4.5 Trim requirements

The safe handling of ships within the confines of the channels and swing basins requires certain conditions of trim. Ships should be ballasted or loaded in order to have an even keel

or trimmed by the stern with the forward draft not less than 2% LOA and the propeller fully submerged. Vessels trimmed by the head or listing may be subject to restrictions; ships not meeting this requirement may experience considerable delays until the problem is rectified.

Passenger vessels may have to trim by the head up to one meter.

Masters should pay special attention to their loading/ballasting plans to ensure that their ships are suitably trimmed and able to put to sea at short notice, especially during the cyclone season – November to April.

4.6 Time zone

All Queensland ports: UTC + 10 hours throughout the year.

4.7 Working hours

Port service providers are available 24 hours per day, seven days a week.

4.8 Charts and books

For navigation in pilotage areas, masters should refer to the nautical charts produced by the Australian hydrographic office and Admiralty Sailing Directions.

4.9 Shipping announcements

4.9.1 Notices to Mariners

Maritime Safety Queensland circulates marine safety information to mariners, organisations and other interested parties, in the form of [Notices to Mariners](#).

Notices to Mariners advise of:

- Navigation warnings and hazards (such as aids to navigation which may have been destroyed, missing or unlit);
- Changes to the uniform buoyage system (which assists with the correction and updating of marine charts);
- Navigation depths (necessary when navigating in channels with depth restrictions); and
- Any other works which may affect the safe navigation of vessels in Queensland coastal waters and ports (such as dredging operations and construction works).

5. Port Infrastructure

5.1 Berth channel and swing basin information

The port of Cairns includes the dredged entrance access channel which has a designed depth of 9.0m lowest astronomical tide (LAT) and an average width of 90m to 100m on tow line.

The Entrance Channel has a length of 5.3 nautical miles (nm) and Trinity Channel is 1.8 nm in length from beacon C20 to Cairns number 12 wharf. The wharves are located on the western (city) side of the inlet, with further facilities for smaller craft being located in Smiths Creek.

Mariners are advised that the channel beacons are 180 meters apart, whilst the channel width is 90 to 100 meters on tow line. Mariners are advised that the toe line in the entrance channel varies in the area between C20 and C18 from 40 meters to 37.5 metres in width.

Table 6 Berth information

Berth	Design depth (metres)	Berth face\ (metres)	Wharf height (above datum)	Comments
Entrance channel	9.0			
Inner harbour	9.0			
Crystal swing basin				Swing basin diameters and depths may be reduced prior to scheduled dredging.
at 380 m	8.5			Maximum length 300 m dependant on draft
Navy swing basin	9.1			Swing basin diameters and depths may be reduced prior to scheduled dredging and when navy vessels are double banked at the navy jetty.
at 310 m	9.1			Maximum length 300 m depending on draft.
Smith's Creek swing basin				
at 310m	8.3			
Marlin Marina				Actual depth 4.2 mtrs
C1–C6*				
C6* berth from 500-550 metres	9.3	565 Plus 35	4.9	Berths C1 to C6 form a continuous quay line. Cruise ships, naval vessels, and trawler berths.

Berth	Design depth (metres)	Berth face (metres)	Wharf height (above datum)	Comments
C6* berth from 550-600 metres	8.4	565 Plus 35	4.9	Berths C1 to C6 form a continuous quay line. Cruise ships, naval vessels, and trawler berths.
C7	9.3	250	5.0	Berths C7 and C8 form a continuous quay line. Containers, bulk fertilizer and break bulk cargo.
C8	10.0	250	5.0	
C10	9.3	20	4.8	Tanker berth for oil and LPG and bunkering facilities.
C11				Owned and operated by the Royal Australian Navy (HMAS Cairns).
C12	10.5	190	5.0	Bulk sugar and bulk molasses.
CFB 1&2				Commercial Fishing Base – numerous moorings.
Barge ramp				Two barge ramps. Max barge size 55m x 13.2m or 500 grt.
Smith's Creek Wharf # 1	8.5m	53.4	3.7	General cargo berth. Max vessel size 80 m.

Please note that the depths are subject to change; for the latest information, please consult the Notices to Mariners.

Cairns Seaport is owned and operated by [Ports North](#). For more information, visit their website.

5.1.1 Berth headings

All headings utilise the WGS '84 datum and reflect port side too, head out.

Table 7 Berth information

Berth	Heading
Berths 1 – 6	10° 27.28'
Berths 7 – 8	10° 15.52'
Berth 10	3° 58.53'
Berth 12	351° 35.25'
Sailfish Quay (berths 5-7)	12° 41.67'