

Appendix 13 – Mackay

Extreme Weather Event Contingency Plan 2023 - 2024

Department of Transport and Main Roads — Maritime Safety Queensland September 2023

Mackay Port

This port-specific plan must be read in conjunction with the full Extreme Weather Event Contingency Plan document, available on the MSQ webpage <https://www.msq.qld.gov.au/safety/preparing-for-severe-weather> .

Extreme Weather Event

The hazards covered under this plan include CYCLONE and FLOOD. One or more hazards may occur simultaneously.

Yellow – Advice

Destructive Winds, Swell, Rain or Riverine Flooding Forecast Within 24-48 Hours

Masters and Owners are to **Prepare Now** for potential destructive winds, swell, rain or riverine flooding forecast within 24-48 hours.

Masters and Owners should **Monitor Conditions** and **Stay Informed**, monitoring the Bureau of Meteorology, Local Government and VHF channel 10/16 where possible.

General Information

An extreme weather event **advice** warning will be issued when an extreme weather event or developing event is likely to affect the area within 48 hours, but not expected to impact the area within 24 hours. This phase is a critical time for masters and owners to plan and prepare for the impact of the event.

The Regional Harbour Master may commence working towards closing the port to elements of commercial and recreational traffic movements, by giving explicit or by making a particular direction to restrict the:

- entering or leaving of specific vessels in or out of a marina, port or pilotage area; and/or
- movement of specific vessels within a pilotage area.

Such direction will be appropriate with the threat to the safety of shipping or the environment and may occur at any time during Yellow, Orange or Red Alert.

The restriction on commercial and recreational vessel movements will, as far as practical, be implemented in consultation with key authorities and in a timely manner in order to minimise risks.

The extreme weather event advice will be communicated through an appropriate combination of VHF radio warning messages, notices to mariners, email and media releases. Stay informed by monitoring weather updates from BoM and monitor conditions.

During this period, masters and owners (or their representatives) should review their safety plans and address any matters outstanding (for example fuel, food, water and contact details).

Certain high risk commercial vessels and facilities may receive specific advice and instructions through direct messaging from the Regional Harbour Master. Additionally, any regionally essential cargoes may be risk assessed such that their departure is conducted as late as is safe to do so.

BE AWARE of flood waters. River conditions can change rapidly and with little notification.

Vessels to remain in situ

Commence securing your vessel for the forecasted weather event including reducing wind loadings, securing your tender, double-up mooring lines and ensure commercial vessels are secured as per your Extreme Weather Event plan to cyclone rated moorings.

Vessels to relocate in the local area

Reduce wind loadings and anchor or moor in protected and sheltered location, clear of other vessels and infrastructure.

Vessels proceeding to sea

VTS will inform large ships' masters and agents of situation and potential reduction of notice to sail and/or expected closure of the inner and outer anchorages.

Vessels alongside loading, to update their completion loading times whenever a change has occurred.

Messaging

To the terminals and tug operators (Email / Text)

Maritime Safety Queensland is closely monitoring the low off the Queensland coast. This low may develop into a cyclone in the next few days and there is a possibility that the tropical low may develop into a tropical cyclone and impact the ports of Hay Point and Mackay. The Regional Harbour Master may close the Pilotage Areas and direct ships to sea to ensure marine safety, when deemed necessary. Vessels should closely monitor the Australian Bureau of Meteorology forecasts and warnings for further information. Please advise the Manager – Vessel Traffic Management of your plans in terms of the completion of loading ships and terminal/port preparation for a potential cyclone.

To vessels and ship's agents (Email / Text)

Maritime Safety Queensland is closely monitoring the low off the Queensland coast. This low may develop into a cyclone in the next few days. The Regional Harbour Master may close the Hay Point and Mackay Pilotage Areas to ensure marine safety, when deemed necessary. Please ensure you are prepared and activate your cyclone contingency plans accordingly. Ships should closely monitor the Australian Bureau of Meteorology forecasts and warnings for further information. The Regional Harbour Master will provide further advice in due course.

Vessels within anchorage (VHF)

All ships at anchor off Hay Point are advised that the Australian Bureau of Meteorology has issued a tropical cyclone watch for coastal areas between **[location]** and **[location]**. A tropical cyclone watch is declared when the onset of gales is expected within 48 hours but not within 24 hours. The Regional Harbour Master is closely monitoring the situation and will advise of further action for ship masters to take. In the meantime, all ships are advised to ballast down to sea going condition and be ready to evacuate the port if directed by the Regional Harbour Master. All routine engine immobilisation activity is suspended with immediate effect. Vessels should closely monitor the Australian Bureau of Meteorology forecasts and warnings for further information.

To Public (Email / Text / social media / MSQ Website)

Maritime Safety Queensland is closely monitoring the low off the Queensland coast. This low may develop into a cyclone in the next few days. The Regional Harbour Master may close the Port of Mackay, including the marina, as well as Hay Point and Mackay Pilotage Areas to ensure marine safety, when deemed necessary. Please ensure you have reviewed and prepared to activate your cyclone contingency plans accordingly. Ships should closely monitor the Australian Bureau of Meteorology forecasts and warnings for further information. The Regional Harbour Master will provide further advice in due course.

Orange – Watch and Act

Destructive Winds, Swell, Rain or Riverine Flooding Forecast Within 12-24 Hours

Leave/Evacuate Now – If your extreme weather event plans require you to relocate within the local area or depart for sea.

Monitor Conditions as they are changing – Regularly checking the Bureau of Meteorology, Local Government websites as well as maintaining a listening watch on VHF channel 10/16 where appropriate.

Do not enter flood waters – This includes by vessel such as passive craft, tender or small craft.

General Information

An extreme weather event **watch and act** warning will be issued when an extreme weather event or developing event is likely to affect the area within 12-24 hours. This phase is critical for masters and owners to complete all preparations in an orderly manner prior to the event occurring.

The extreme weather event watch & act will be communicated through an appropriate combination of VHF radio warning messages, notices to mariners, email and media releases.

Masters, owners and marine facility operators are expected to implement their safety plans in a timely and orderly manner.

If requested by port stakeholders, any regionally essential cargoes WILL be risk assessed, such that their departure is conducted as late as is safe to do so, depending on agreement from Master and Terminal Management.

Certain high risk commercial vessels and facilities will receive specific advice and instructions through direct messaging from the Regional Harbour Master. Some activities will be suspended, and restrictions may be placed on the movements of other vessels. This may include directed evacuations, instructions to remain and shelter in place or instructions not to enter flood waters. Once the movement of ships in relation to a pilotage and anchorage area has been restricted, and the port has been effectively closed by the Regional Harbour Master, the entering and leaving of ships in and out of the port is not permitted.

Vessels to remain in situ

Continue to conduct your own extreme weather event plan, securing your vessel where it is safe to access.

Vessels to relocate in the local area

If safe to access, relocate your vessel now to a more suitable location in the local area.

Vessels proceeding to sea

Coordinate with Mackay VTS.

For vessels at anchor master's / agents to immediately report to VTS their intentions.

For vessels alongside, master's / agents / terminals to immediately report to VTS time of expected completion of loading (fully or partial), so as a departure schedule (evacuation plan) can be planned around port resources. Note departure sequence, if required, will occur in accordance with the established evacuation plan issued for the event by the Regional Harbour Master.

The evacuation plan will be developed based on vessel type, characteristics and terminal.

Port Closure

The Regional Harbour Master will have commenced Mackay port and anchorages closure plan, wholly or in part, by giving general or by making a particular explicit direction to restrict the following:

- entering or leaving of vessels in or out of Mackay Port and pilotage areas: and/or
- movement of vessels within a pilotage area.

Such directions will be appropriate to the threat to the safety of shipping or the environment and may occur at any time prior to the event.

The closure of the port and anchorages or restriction on vessel movements will, as far as practical, be implemented in consultation with key authorities and in a timely manner in order to minimise risks.

Messaging

To the terminals and tug operators (Email / Text)

All ships at Mackay Port are advised that the Australian Bureau of Meteorology has issued a tropical cyclone warning for coastal areas between **[location]** and **[location]**. A tropical cyclone warning is issued when the onset of gales is expected within 24 hours or are already occurring. All ships at Mackay Port are advised to consider being in a heavy weather sea condition and be ready to leave the berth at 4 hours' notice. SHIPS ENGINES to be on 15 minutes standby. Mackay Port tugs once dismissed from conducting port evacuation plan, to immediately enact their cyclone plans. The Regional Harbour Master will provide an update after **[time]** hours local time on **[date]**. All ships are to maintain a listening watch on VHF channels 10 & 16 for Vessel Traffic Services broadcast. Vessels should closely monitor the Australian Bureau of Meteorology forecasts and warnings for further information.

To vessels and ship's agents (Email / Text)

All ships alongside Mackay Port and at anchor off Hay Point are advised that the Australian Bureau of Meteorology has issued a tropical cyclone warning for coastal areas between **[location]** and **[location]**. A tropical cyclone warning is issued when the onset of gales is expected within 24 hours or are already occurring. All ships at Hay Point Anchorage are advised to consider ballasting down and be ready to leave the anchorage at 4 hours' notice. All ships at Mackay Port are advised to consider being in a heavy weather sea condition and be ready to leave the berth at 4 hours' notice. ALL SHIPS ENGINES to be on 15 minutes standby. The Regional Harbour Master will provide an update after **[time]** hours local time on **[date]**. All ships are to maintain a listening watch on VHF channels 10 & 16 for Vessel Traffic Services broadcast. Vessels should closely monitor the Australian Bureau of Meteorology forecasts and warnings for further information.

Vessels within anchorage (VHF)

All ships at anchor off Hay Point and Mackay are advised that the Australian Bureau of Meteorology has issued a tropical cyclone warning for coastal areas between **[location]** and **[location]**. A tropical cyclone warning is issued when the onset of gales is expected within 24 hours or are already occurring. All ships at Hay Point Anchorage are advised to consider taking on heavy weather ballast condition and be ready to leave the anchorage at 4 hours' notice. ALL SHIPS ENGINES to be on 15 minutes standby. The Regional Harbour Master will provide an update after **[time]** hours local time on **[date]**. All ships are to maintain a listening watch on VHF channels 10 & 16 for Vessel Traffic Services broadcast. Vessels should closely monitor the Australian Bureau of Meteorology forecasts and warnings for further information.

Port Closure Activated to ships, agents, terminals, and tug operators (VHF / Email / Text)

The Regional Harbour Master will close the Mackay Port, Mackay and Hay Point Pilotage Areas from **[time]** hours local time on **[date]** until further notice. All ships are to prepare to depart immediately. Mackay Vessel Traffic Services will allocate a departure time to each ship to ensure all ships have departed in an orderly state by **[time]** hours local time on **[date]**. No ship movement will be allowed after the closure. Ships returning to Hay Point Anchorage will be allocated the same Anchorage position before the pilotage area closure. Vessels should closely monitor the Australian Bureau of Meteorology forecasts and warnings for further information.

Port Closure Activated to Public (Email / Text / social media / MSQ Website)

The Regional Harbour Master will close the Mackay Port, including the marina, as well as Hay Point and Mackay Pilotage Areas from **[time]** hours local time on **[date]** until further notice. Owners of all ships should activate their cyclone response plans securing their vessels accordingly. No ship movement will be allowed after the closure. Vessels should closely monitor the Australian Bureau of Meteorology forecasts and warnings for further information.

Red - Emergency Warning

Destructive Winds, Swell or Riverine Flooding Forecast Within 6 Hours

Leave/Evacuate Immediately – If your extreme weather event plans require you to relocate within the local area or depart for sea and it is safe to do so.

Seek/take shelter now – If unable to depart for sea.

General Information

The extreme weather event **emergency** warning will be communicated through an appropriate combination of VHF radio warning messages, Notices to Mariners, email, SMS alert and media releases. Stay informed by monitoring weather updates from BoM and local government authority.

By this phase, all vessels are expected to have enacted their vessel safety plans noting that the port may be closed and/or vessel movements restricted depending on the threat to safety of vessel movements or the environment. Mariners should note that it is likely to be too late to consider the safety of your vessel and that extreme weather conditions may limit the ability of emergency services to assist you should you run into difficulties. Your vessel should be secured in place. Your actions should be directed towards your own personal safety.

It is also important to be alert during the 'eye' of the cyclone as a period of calm may be experienced before the damaging wind force resumes once the eye has passed.

Vessels to remain in situ

Access to vessels at anchor, secured to cyclone buoy mooring may not be safe, as gale force winds if not already experienced will commence soon.

It may now be too late to consider the safety of your vessel and weather conditions may limit the ability of emergency services to assist you should you run into difficulties.

Ensure your evacuation plan allows for sufficient time to make your way to a shelter ashore.

Vessels to relocate in the local area

If **SAFE** to access, relocate your vessel now to a more suitable location relatively close-by as gale/cyclonic force winds if not already experienced will commence soon.

If **NOT SAFE** to access, leave your vessel in situ.

Ensure your evacuation plan allows for sufficient time to make your way to a shelter ashore.

It may now be too late to consider the safety of your vessel and weather conditions may limit the ability of emergency services to assist you should you run into difficulties.

Vessels proceeding to sea

All vessels commenced passage at best speed to safer navigable waters.

Vessel masters reminded to maintain proper lookout, due possible restricted visibility associated with storm front and traffic congestion as vessels determine passages to keep away from the effect of extreme/cyclonic weather conditions.

Port Closure

The Regional Harbour Master will have closed the port and anchorages.

VTS Closure

The Regional Harbour Master may be required to close Mackay VTS operations at Hay Point in part or wholly depending on safety of personnel. VTS may be relocated to the Nelson Street Office, Mackay City, on a minimal manning routine during this alert status, or transfer all operations to another regional VTS centre such as Townsville or Gladstone.

Messaging

Port Closure Conducted all Stakeholders (VHF / Email / Text)

The Regional Harbour Master has closed Mackay Port, all Pilotage and Anchorage Areas from **[time]** hours local time on **[date]** until further notice. No ship movements are allowed in the Hay Point Pilotage Area after this closure. Ships are recommended to maintain contact with their agents about when Hay Point and Mackay Pilotage Areas are to re-open. Once the pilotage area is re-opened ships returning to Hay Point Anchorage will be allocated the same Anchorage position before the pilotage area closure. Vessels should closely monitor the Australian Bureau of Meteorology forecasts and warnings for further information.

VTS Hay Point Closure all Stakeholders and Public (VHF / Email / Text)

Please be advised that the Mackay Vessel Traffic Services Centre is handing over VHF listening watch to **[location]** Vessel Traffic Services Centre as of **[time]** hours local time on **[date]** and de-manning the Hay Point centre. The Mackay Port Vessel Traffic Services Centre will reopen once it is all clear after the passing of Tropical Cyclone **[name]**. The Mackay Port Vessel Traffic Services phones have been diverted to **[location]**.

Port Closure Conducted to Public (Email / Text / social media / MSQ Website)

The Regional Harbour Master has closed the Mackay Port, including the marina, as well as Hay Point and Mackay Pilotage Areas from **[time]** hours local time on **[date]** until further notice. No ship or boat movements are allowed in the Ports or Mackay and Hay Point Pilotage Areas after this closure. Owners are recommended to continue monitoring media broadcasts and MSQ websites about when the ports or Mackay and Hay Point Pilotage Areas are to re-open.

Yellow – Advice

After The Event Has Passed, Recovery Underway

Monitor Conditions as they are changing – Regularly checking the Bureau of Meteorology, Local Government websites as well as maintaining a listening watch on VHF channel 10/16 where appropriate.

Do not enter flood waters – This includes by vessel such as passive craft, tender or small craft.

General Information

The Regional Harbour Master will assess residual risks and determine the actions needed to be addressed. Do not assume that as the extreme weather event (or cyclone) has passed, it is now safe to move your vessel.

Vessels should stay in their place of shelter until they are advised that it is safe for vessel movements to resume. The lifting of restrictions and resumption of vessel movements will be communicated through an appropriate combination of VHF radio warning messages, notices to mariners, email and media releases. Stay informed by monitoring weather updates from BoM and monitor conditions.

Owners and masters of vessels should be aware that aids to navigation may be affected by the extreme weather event and that other dangers may be present in waterways. VTS may conduct messaging about unusual currents, floating debris, subsurface obstruction or unknown shoaling depths.

Mariners should maintain a listening watch on VHF frequencies 16 and 10 and follow advice/directions given by Mackay VTS.

Movements will be at the RHM's discretion and can be in stages including limited internal port movements until the channel or areas within the port are deemed safe.

Mariners are to consult the latest Notices to Mariners for updated information on port depths and conditions.

Maritime infrastructure will need to be inspected to ensure that facilities are operational and fit for purpose.

Port Partial Re-Opening to Support Specific Port Clearance Operations

The Mackay and Hay Point Pilotage Area will be re-opened in part, based on a planned approach by the Regional Harbour Master following directions to allow the entering or leaving of specific ships in and out of a pilotage area, or movement of vessels within a pilotage area. Such direction will be provided:

- based on individual risk assessment, and the pilotage area determined as safe as reasonably possible for identified vessels to re-enter and conduct specific port operations, anchor or leave.
- based on risk assessment to re-open the anchorages (outer and inner) returning specific vessels on a planned basis via VTS coordination.

The Vessel Traffic Services centre will coordinate the safe movement of these specific vessels, as part of supporting specific port operations in accordance with the port opening plan.

Messaging

Port Partial Re-Opening all Stakeholders (VHF / Email / Text)

The Pilotage area Hay Point and Mackay is no longer under a Bureau of Meteorology cyclone warning or watch. With improving weather conditions, the Regional Harbour Master has declared that the pilotage and anchorage area of Hay Point and Mackay will be partially re-open as of **[time]** hours local time on **[date]** to specific vessels supporting, determination of infrastructure damage and safe navigation or to allow effective port operations. Masters of vessels identified with re-opening operations are advised to navigate with extreme caution and keep a proper lookout for debris and marine hazards within the area. Navigational aids may be out of position or damaged.

The anchorage and pilotage area remains closed to all vessels other than those identified as suitable to conduct operations within the Pilotage area. All other vessels to maintain listening watch on VHF Channels 10 and 16 or contact their agents, for information regarding planned reopening of the Pilotage and Anchorage areas.

Anchorage Partial Re-Opening all Stakeholders (VHF / Email / Text)

The Pilotage area of Hay Point and Mackay is no longer under a Bureau of Meteorology cyclone warning or watch. With improved weather conditions, the Regional Harbour Master has declared that the pilotage and anchorage areas of Hay Point and Mackay will be partially re-opened to specific ships directed by VTS to return. Masters are advised to navigate with extreme caution and keep a proper lookout for debris and marine hazards within the area. Navigational aids may be out of position or damaged. Ships will be coordinated to return to the anchorage they were allocated before the port closure. Ships to maintain VHF listening watch 10 and 16 for VTS direction to enter the pilotage area and make way to their allocated anchorage. Ships not identified to return to maintain a safe distance from pilotage area to prevent traffic congestion and await their direction to return.

Port Closure Continued to Public (Email / Text / social media / MSQ Website)

Mackay Port, including the marina, as well as Hay Point and Mackay Pilotage Areas are no longer under a Bureau of Meteorology cyclone warning or watch. Though improving weather conditions, the Regional Harbour Master directs continued closure of the Mackay Port, including the marina, as well as Hay Point and Mackay Pilotage Areas to ships not identified as part of re-opening survey operations of waterways. No ship or boating movements are allowed in the Ports or Mackay and Hay Point Pilotage Areas during this continued closure, due the unknown waterway hazards that may exist. If safe to do so, owners deciding to return to their ships, are recommended to conduct safety survey to determine watertight integrity and consider if safe to remain on board. Owners are recommended to continue monitoring media broadcasts and MSQ websites about when the ports or Mackay and Hay Point Pilotage Areas are to fully re-open.

White – All clear

Port open to all traffic, business as usual

General Information

The Mackay Port and Hay Point Pilotage Area (including all Compulsory Pilotage Areas) is fully re-opened by the Regional Harbour Master following direction to allow the entering or leaving of ships in and out of a pilotage area, or movement of vessels within a pilotage area. Such direction will be provided:

- When satisfied that all danger has passed, and the pilotage area is safe for vessels to re-enter or leave; and
- Following inspections and surveys to critical maritime infrastructure (for example navigational aids and wharves) as well as clearance of navigational hazards.

The Vessel Traffic Services centre will coordinate the safe movement of vessels following the opening of the pilotage area in accordance with normal practice.

Berths will be re-opened, and operations resumed when wind and sea conditions are within operational limits.

Port operations to be conducted in accordance with the Mackay Port Procedures and Information for Shipping Manual

Masters are reminded that vessels must proceed at a safe speed to the prevailing circumstances of information and directions.

Owners and masters should inspect their vessel for any repairs or maintenance required and review their emergency preparedness plans.

Vessels who remained in situ

Safe to return to your vessel.

Recommend conducting a full vessel survey to ensure no damage and watertight integrity maintained.

Vessels who relocated in the local area

Safe to return to your vessel.

Recommend conducting a full vessel survey to ensure no damage and watertight integrity maintained.

Remain vigilant that local waterways may still have unseen submerged obstructions, if relocating your vessel.

Vessels returning from sea

Vessel masters to contact their agents for information (time and date) regarding planned return to anchorage or berth.

All vessels to listen for and follow Hay Point VTS instructions.

Vessels will be returned to anchorages based on a planned process.

Vessels will be returned to berths based on terminal requirements and availability of tugs and pilots.

Messaging

Port Re-Opening all Stakeholders (VHF / Email / Text)

The Pilotage area of Hay Point and Mackay is no longer under a Bureau of Meteorology cyclone warning or watch. With improved weather conditions, the Regional Harbour Master has declared that all pilotage and anchorage areas of Hay Point and Mackay will re-open as of **[time]** hours local time on **[date]**. Masters are advised to navigate with extreme caution and keep a proper lookout for debris and marine hazards within the area. Navigational aids may be out of position or damaged.

time on **[date]**. Owners of ships are advised to navigate with extreme caution and keep a proper lookout for debris and marine hazards within the area. Navigational aids may be out of position or damaged.

Port Re-Opening Public (Email / Text / social media / MSQ Website)

Mackay Port, including the marina, as well as Hay Point and Mackay Pilotage Areas is no longer under a Bureau of Meteorology cyclone warning or watch. With improved weather conditions, the Regional Harbour Master has declared that all ports, marinas, pilotage and anchorage areas of Mackay and Hay Point will fully re-open as of **[time]** hours local time on **[date]**. Owners of ships are advised to navigate with extreme caution and keep a proper lookout for debris and marine hazards within the area. Navigational aids may be out of position or damaged.

Communication

The successful implementation of this plan relies on high quality communication of information and directions.

The **Mackay** Vessel Traffic Service, at the Regional Harbour Master Office **Mackay**, will be the Maritime Control Centre.

The Vessel Traffic Services Centre will implement the extreme weather event contingency plan on behalf of the Regional Harbour Master by acting as the central communications point and will be designated as the Maritime Control Centre for the duration and aftermath of the extreme weather event.

The Maritime Control Centre call sign will be **Mackay VTS**.

VHF channels **10, 16** and **67** will be continuously monitored before and during the extreme weather event, unless the centre is evacuated.

Maritime Safety Queensland may contact stakeholders via SMS and/or email regarding information to potential extreme weather events or extreme weather events.

Updates on whether broadcasts and conditions in your local vicinity may be broadcast by the local coastguard or marine rescue stations, initiated on VHF channel **16, 21, 67 and 80**.

Key Contacts

Name	Contact Number
Regional Harbour Master	0418 872 478
Hay Point VTS	1300 645 022
Emergency Services	000

Key Websites

Name	URL
Detailed weather updates: BOM	www.bom.gov.au
MSQ Website	www.msq.qld.gov.au
MSQ Dashboard – detailed information on Port closures, Notice to Mariners, Tide Charts and more.	https://www.qldmaritime.msq.qld.gov.au