In light of the potential anticipated growth for the Port of Gladstone, GPC has carried out channel capacity studies to better understand the adequacy of the port’s existing and future shipping channels. The most recent channel capacity study indicated that the future ability of the Port to accommodate an increase in shipping traffic is limited by the lack of passing capacity, as it is currently a one-way channel. The existing channel depth also limits the potential for vessels with a deeper draft to access the port. The global trend in shipping is for deeper draft ships to transport cargo, as a more economically efficient transport method.

To facilitate the potential increase in port throughput into the future and to mitigate the risks caused by additional vessels utilising the port’s shipping channels, an overriding need exists to duplicate the Gatcombe and Golding Cutting channels at some point in the future, and potentially other port shipping channels in the long term.

Based on current and predicted shipping demand over the next five years from existing and soon to be completed industries within the Gladstone region, there is no immediate requirement for any physical capital dredging to take place.

Without duplication of the Gatcombe and Golding Cutting channels, the ability of the port to accommodate potential future trade commitments will be significantly limited, hindering the economic potential of the region. A ‘no action’ option would also result in potential shipping delays, safety risks and other issues associated with increased congestion of existing shipping channels.

There is no immediate requirement for dredging of the Gatcombe and Golding Cutting channels, however due to the long lead-in time required for pre-dredging tasks, including environmental baseline data collection, impact assessment, government approval processes, detailed design and dredge contractor procurement, we believe it is necessary to undertake the preparation of the Channel Duplication Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) over the next 12 months.

WHAT IS A SHIP’S DRAFT?

A ship’s draft is the vertical distance from the water to the lowest part of a vessel. Draft determines the minimum depth of water a ship can navigate.

What does the project involve?

THE KEY COMPONENTS OF THE CHANNEL DUPLICATION PROJECT INCLUDE:

- Duplication of the existing Gatcombe and Golding Cutting shipping channels by deepening and realigning the existing 9.12km long bypass channels, to a depth of approximately 16.1 metres and a width of 200 metres, allowing for two-way passage of vessels.
- A new onshore and/or offshore (at sea, within port limits and outside of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park) dredge material placement area for placement of approximately 12 million cubic metres of dredge material.
- Relocation of existing, and placement of new, navigational aids.
The proposed Gatcombe and Golding Cutting Channel Duplication Project was declared a ‘coordinated project’ by the Queensland Coordinator-General under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 on 25 September 2012. The Queensland Government issued the EIS Terms of Reference for the Project in December 2012.

The Project was also determined to be a ‘controlled action’ requiring an EIS by the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 on 23 October 2012. The Commonwealth Government issued guidelines for the EIS in March 2013.

The EIS Terms of Reference and Guidelines specify the scope of the environmental, social, cultural heritage and economic studies required to be undertaken by Gladstone Ports Corporation, which when completed, will enable an assessment to be carried out by the Government and a decision made on the project.

Stakeholders and the community will be able to review and comment on the Channel Duplication EIS during the public display period.

**Commonwealth and Queensland Government EIS Process**

**What is an EIS?**

An EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) is a document prepared to describe the potential impacts of a proposed activity on the environment. An EIS describes the impacts, and documents ways to avoid, minimise or mitigate potential negative impacts of a project.
What is the current progress of the EIS?

Gladstone Ports Corporation is currently proceeding with the EIS phase of the project. The progress to date is as follows:

- Commonwealth, State and Local Government officer briefings on the project through several meetings.
- Preparation of EIS baseline marine ecology and water quality monitoring strategy, including government stakeholder consultation as part of the strategy development.
- Whole of Port of Gladstone seagrass survey.
- Preparation of geotechnical and geochemical investigation scope of work specification, including government stakeholder consultation and Commonwealth Government approval of the dredge area Sampling and Analysis Plan.
- Seasonal baseline marine ecology, water quality, wave and current monitoring within Port Curtis.
- Site selection process to identify feasible locations for dredge material placement to be taken forward in the EIS. This process involves government stakeholder consultation and workshops, which include the following key tasks:
  - Identifying and ranking environmental constraints for locating preferred dredge material placement options within Port Curtis and adjoining mainland areas;
  - Developing criteria to guide the identification of opportunities for beneficial reuse and placement;
  - Discussions with local industries regarding potential beneficial reuse options. Multi-criteria analysis workshop(s) with all relevant departments and stakeholders on potential dredge material placement options; and
  - Preliminary hydrodynamic modelling and ecological assessment of dredge material placement options.

If, or when you dredge, where will the material be placed?

Gladstone Ports Corporation is currently undertaking a thorough investigation of dredge material placement options, with the outcome to inform the EIS.

This investigation includes collection of baseline environmental data and impact assessment on potential offshore (at sea, within port limits and outside of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park) and onshore locations.

Engaging with the community on potential dredge material placement options will be an important part of the EIS process.

GPC is committed to providing the community with balanced and objective information to assist in the understanding of the impacts and opportunities at potential dredge material placement locations.

We will work closely with stakeholders and the wider community to understand concerns and ensure feedback is considered.

DID YOU KNOW? GPC’s Marina and Spinnaker Parklands were reclaimed as part of the dredging campaign in 1981/1982 to deepen the port’s shipping channel, enabling an increase in ship size for coal exports from 60,000 DWT to 120,000 DWT.
EIS tasks for the next six months

The following EIS tasks will be undertaken over the next six months:

- Commence geotechnical and geochemical investigations.
- Concept design development of reclamation options, including stakeholder and community consultation.
- Continue EIS baseline data collection for inclusion in the existing environment sections of the EIS.
- Further development of the Port Curtis hydrodynamic model to allow plume dispersion modelling and impact predictions.
- Regular consultation with government officers on project progress and key EIS issues.
- Commence community consultation activities (refer below for more detail).

EIS community consultation activities for the next 6 months

The following Channel Duplication Project EIS community consultation activities are proposed to be undertaken over the next 6 months:

- Quarterly newspaper articles and EIS fact sheet updates.
- Establishment of a Community Reference Group.
- Conduct information session(s) for interested stakeholders and community members upon request.
- Regular project and EIS updates will be published on GPC’s website, www.gpcl.com.au on the channel duplication page under Operations & Development - Dredging - Project Dredging.