

First Damen Dredger in Australia



The Damen Shipyards Group is constructing a trailing suction hopper dredger (TSHD) 650 for Australian client Gippsland Ports. The TSHD will be the first Damen dredger to operate in the country. The dredger will be used to maintain entry to the port of Lakes Entrance and the Gippsland Lakes system, in Victoria, which is used by recreational, fishing and supply vessels. The vessel is currently under construction at Damen Yichang Shipyard in China and will be delivered in Q3 2017.

Currently, Gippsland Ports contracts a dredger annually to carry out the necessary dredging to maintain port access. However, it became clear that there was a case for investing in their own vessel. Having their own dredger will, over time, reduce the maintenance costs and ensure year-round availability, for example in the event of weather

related shoaling events.

Adaptations to the Design

One of the key adaptations to the design involved increasing the installed propulsion power to cope with the strong currents characteristic of the harbour's entrance. Another feature takes into account the environmental sensitivity of the operating area. The client specified the installation of an anti-turbidity valve on the overflow. This reduces air bubbles and, therefore, visible plumage in the water.

Capable of dredging to depths of 15 metres, this dredger will be built with self-emptying capabilities, with bottom doors for dumping and either bow connection or rainbow extraction for beach reclamation work. In order to increase the vessel's payload capacity when dredging sand with a high specific density, Damen will reduce the freeboard of the vessel and apply a dredge mark.

Navigational Dredging Aid

Taking advantage of the numerous available options, Gippsland Ports also selected an indication package to measure soil density. This allows the suction pipe to be angled precisely for efficient operations. The dredging process will be made even more efficient by the installation of the navigational dredging aid, NavGuard, indicating the area and quantity of substrate dredged.