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Sand Pump in Operation at the Entrance

A new technologically advanced sand pump is removing significant quantities of sand that has built up at the Entrance. Due to the continuing improvement in the channel navigability the excavation work that was undertaken to facilitate the sand migrating from the channel to the sea, has been suspended until further notice.

The pump is in operation on the eastern side of the eastern breakwater. It is shifting sand that has the potential to enter the channel to an existing discharge point on Ninety Mile Beach, approximately half a kilometre away.

The sand pump was put into operation pending the installation of the Sand Shifter. The Sand Shifter is expected to be operational by the end of the month, two years ahead of schedule. The Sand Shifter is a key component of one of the six projects in the LESMP.

Other projects in the Lakes Entrance Sand Management Program (LESMP) have also been brought forward in the schedule and are being implemented alongside the emergency measures to keep the entrance open.

The new Cutter Suction Dredge *Kalimna*, another project in the LESMP, is on schedule to be delivered in July 2007.

"The LESMP projects are now ahead of schedule and on budget and we are entering a very good stage," said LESMP Program Manager Andrew Fullard.

Gippsland Ports Board member Peter Hinksman said: "The navigability of the entrance has been restored to a good condition, enabling boats to confidently enter and leave the Port. The Board is confident that the emergency works and the works that have been bought forward in the LESMP, together with ongoing routine dredging will continue to maintain a safe navigable entrance channel and the channel through the bar."

Mariners navigating the channel can keep up-to-date on the state of the Entrance by referring to the notice board outside Gippsland Ports' Bullock Island office, calling: 5155 6999 or visiting: www.gippslandports.vic.gov.au for the latest information.

For further information about the Lakes Entrance Sand Management Program, please visit the website: www.lesmp.vic.gov.au.

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Notes to Editors:

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Keeping the Ocean Entrance Open at Lakes Entrance

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