

DARWIN SHIP LIFT FACILITY



NEWSLETTER **QUARTER 3, 2025**

The common user Darwin Ship Lift Facility is a critical enabling infrastructure project for the Northern Territory economy.

The NT Government owned ship lift facility will establish Darwin as a key maritime maintenance centre in northern Australia, servicing South East Asia and capitalising on the Territory's strategic position in the Asia Pacific region.

The facility is a keystone project of Darwin's Marine Industry Park and is located at East Arm, inside Darwin's deep water harbour in Australia's most strategic port.

This project newsletter shares key information and progress about the Darwin Ship Lift Facility project.

Project update

Construction activity

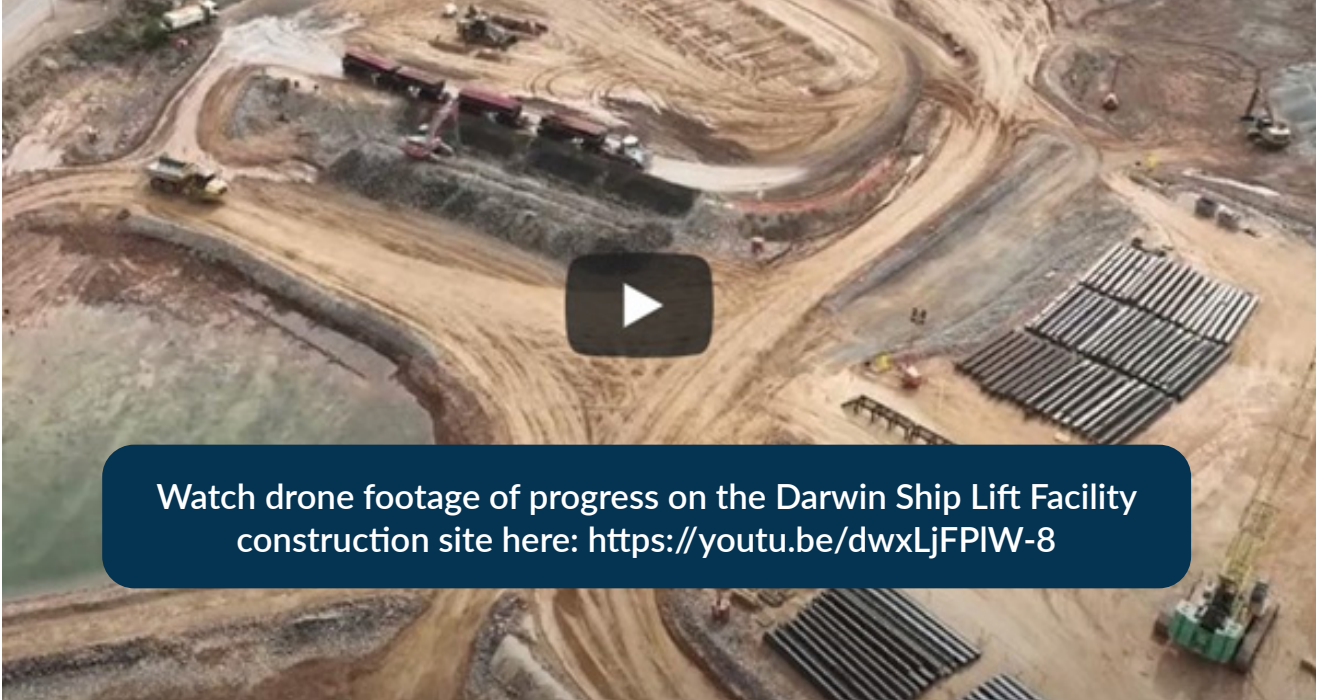
Construction is progressing on the marine and landside infrastructure for the Darwin Ship Lift Facility.

Seven out of the 47 caissons have been constructed to form the seawalls for the facility. A 450-tonne crane is operating from a barge on the seaward side to build caissons for the ship lift pocket while another crane constructs caissons on the landside of the project site (see image below).

The backhoe dredging has been completed for the project. The temporary material offloading facility, which was built to manage the dredge materials for land reclamation, is no longer required and has been dismantled.

Land reclamation is continuing with 90% completed so far for the project. Bulk earthworks are still underway and fill continues to be brought onto the site from local quarries to form the hardstand and dry berth areas for the facility.





Watch drone footage of progress on the Darwin Ship Lift Facility construction site here: <https://youtu.be/dwxLjFPIW-8>

Ship lift and SPMT systems

Pearlson Shiplift Corporation is progressing the design and construction of the ship lift systems and self-propelled modular transporters, which move the vessels around the facility once they are lifted out of the water.

The SPMTs (see example pictured below) have been designed and are under construction, with several components anticipated to be shipped to Darwin from Q4 2025.

The ship lift system is undergoing final design reviews while concurrently several components will start being built and then transported to Darwin. Design reviews continue for the control room, which is being designed by Australian electrical and telecommunications infrastructure experts Mayfield Industries.

Commercial activity

Clough-BMD Joint Venture have awarded a number of subcontracts for quarry supplies, structural steel supply, concrete supply, precast concrete units, scaffolding, stormwater management and reinforcing steel.

Procurement for several subcontractor packages are underway including precast stormwater drainage, pile top drilling services and hydraulic services.

For upcoming procurements email Clough-BMD Joint Venture at dsl.procurement@cloughbmdjv.com.au

FAST FACTS



623,681 HOURS
worked on the project to date for the head contractor and subcontractors





Project spotlight

Local builder wins admin building contract

A family run Territory business has started works on the administration building and gatehouse for the Darwin Ship Lift Facility.

JMT Builders, headquartered in Berrimah, was recently awarded the contract to construct the 2 key buildings for the new ship lift facility by head contractor Clough-BMD Joint Venture (Clough-BMD JV).

Headed up by Brad Hagen and Robyn Richards, JMT Builders employs 6 Territorians in total with the majority born and raised in Darwin (pictured above). They are expecting to engage 115 subcontractors during this contract.

The company, which Brad started in 1997, is experienced in industrial and commercial construction, including working with the Arnhem Land Progress Association (ALPA) across a number of Aboriginal communities in the Territory.

JMT Builders is passionate about providing work opportunities for Aboriginal Territorians, with about 6 Aboriginal workers engaged to work on the administration and gatehouse project for the ship lift facility.

The local builder has poured the footings and concrete slabs for the administration building and the gatehouse (see images below).

“ We only employ local subcontractors and this project has given us the opportunity to work on a one-of-a-kind project for Darwin and do something meaningful in the region,” Brad said.

“ It’s a great project because there has not been a lot of construction work around and this gives us a wonderful opportunity to engage 115 subcontractors in Darwin,” Robyn said.

“ We get to showcase our skills and we are proud to be part of the ship lift project.”

JMT Builders is one of 13 Territory companies who have been awarded contracts by Clough-BMD JV to work on the ship lift facility project. Contracts valued at approximately \$103 million have been awarded to Territory companies, of which \$38.7 million has gone to Aboriginal Business Enterprises.





Once in a lifetime job for Seth

Every day Seth Vanderkley has a front row seat to one of the most significant projects being built in the Northern Territory.

The 20-year-old works on the Darwin Ship Lift Facility project as a Project Support Officer after successfully completing a Technical Trainee Program with the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (DLI) in 2024.

Seth is part of the DLI project team that manages the nationally significant project for the NT Government.

The Howard Springs local finished school at Taminmin College before graduating from the DLI traineeship program last year with a Certificate IV in Civil Construction. He was also awarded the Civil Contractors Federation NT Technical Trainee of the Year.

Conducting site inspections for key milestones multiple times a day, Seth has worked on this life changing project since construction started in early 2024.

He has seen the backhoe dredging being completed, ongoing caisson construction and hundreds of road trains bringing in local quarry materials to the ship lift facility.

“It’s really interesting and different, there aren’t any other projects like this in the NT,” Seth said.

“It is a once in a lifetime opportunity to work on a marine project like this because there are not many ship lifts being built very often in Australia or the world.”

For more information on traineeships or other careers with the NT Government visit <https://earlycareers.nt.gov.au>

Milestones

MARCH 2025	Temporary access bunds construction completed
AUGUST 2025	Backhoe dredging complete
Q4 2025	Land reclamation to be completed
Q4 2025	SPMT components to be shipped to the project site
Q2 2026	Administration building to be complete
Q2 2026	Caisson installation to be complete
2026-27	Gain Defence Facility Qualification
2026 - 2027	Ship lift facility to become operational in stages

Road access

Road trains continue to bring material to the Darwin Ship Lift Facility site during the life of the project, the route includes the Arnhem Highway, Stuart Highway, Tiger Brennan Drive, Wishart Road and Berrimah Road.

The speed limit on Berrimah Road (adjacent the site) continues to be 40 km/h from the Common User Facility to the Darwin Port entrance. Road users are advised to slow down, take care and follow the traffic signage in place. The speed limit is expected to remain in place for the duration of the project.

Marine access

Caisson construction continues in the marine construction activity zone around the Darwin Ship Lift Facility site. Harbour users are directed not to enter the construction area marked by hazard markers and lights and keep well clear of marine support vessels and barges.

Contacts

For further project information visit [Darwin Ship Lift Facility](#) or contact 8936 5668 during business hours or email DHIP@nt.gov.au

For construction, procurement or recruitment related queries please email Clough BMD Joint Venture at:

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