



**Expression of Interest  
For  
Independent Audit of Environmental Management Plan  
(TSHD Program – Gippsland Lakes Ocean Access)**

**1. Introduction**

Gippsland Ports is seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) for provision of independent auditing services required during operation of the *Tommy Norton* Trailing Suction Hopper Dredge (TSHD).

This document details the services that are required and provides important information to assist in the preparation and lodgement of a submission.

**2. Project Brief**

**2.1 Background**

Lakes Entrance is home to Victoria's largest commercial fishing fleet, and is a popular recreational boating, fishing and tourism destination. Lakes Entrance is located on the Gippsland Lakes, an interconnected chain of six rivers and four lakes covering 420 square kilometres. The only access to the Gippsland Lakes from the ocean is at Lakes Entrance, via a man-made opening built in 1889 to connect the lakes with Bass Strait. Ever since its construction, natural coastal processes have caused a build-up of sand at the entrance, into the inner channels and formed the bar outside the entrance.

Maintaining access at the entrance is critical to the commercial fishing fleet supply of fish to the Melbourne and Sydney markets. The entrance is also strategically important as it provides access to a port of refuge, maritime services, salvage and rescue and supports economic activity in the Gippsland region associated with recreational boating and fishing and tourism.

Gippsland Ports is responsible for port and waterway management at the Port of Gippsland Lakes. The Victorian Government supports Gippsland Ports to operate dredging and sand management resources including a Trailing Suction Hopper Dredge (TSHD) *Tommy Norton* to provide the *Gippsland Lakes Ocean Access* (GLOA) program that ensures ocean access to the Gippsland Lakes.

Gippsland Ports is seeking Expressions of Interest from appropriately qualified and experienced companies to undertake the annual independent audit of the approved GLOA Environmental Management Plan.

**2.2 Scope of Work Required**

Gippsland Ports is seeking a consultant to undertake an independent audit of their GLOA Environmental Plan during and following the 2024 TSHD program.

The annual independent audit is a requirement of the approved Environment Management Plan that is approved by DEECA under a Marine and Coastal Act (MACA) consent.

**The objectives of the independent audit are:**

1. To undertake an independent compliance audit of the approved EMP including:
  - Independently assess the implementation of the EMP; and
  - Independently gather information verifying compliance.
2. To advise Gippsland Ports of any non-conformances with the EMP.
3. Provide an audit report to Gippsland Ports, outlining compliance and potential improvements.

*Please note: It is not the role of the Auditor to assess the impact of dredging on the Environmental Health of the Gippsland Lakes. The Environmental Risk Register provides an evidence-based assessment of the impact of dredging, and this is the basis of the Environment Management Plan.*

**The auditor needs to have:**

- the skills required to apply the audit principles, procedures and techniques outlined in relevant ISO and AS/NZS standards;
- knowledge of the operations of Gippsland Ports;
- knowledge of the Gippsland Lakes;
- an understanding of the environmental risk profile of the sand management activities;
- the ability to act independently, ethically and be objective.

Gippsland Ports may appoint a peer reviewer to review the work of the Independent Auditor. If Gippsland Ports choose to undertake a peer review, the Independent Auditor must fully co-operate with the reviewer.

The auditor is not required to have ISO 19011 accreditation.

**2.3 Deliverables**

The preferred Consultant will be required to submit a report to Gippsland Ports outlining compliance and areas of potential improvements.

Works are completed on an annual calendar basis. This report will be required within 30 days after dredging works have been completed, i.e. end of January / early February the year following the works.

A template for this report will be provided to shortlisted preferred EOI candidates.

**2.4 Important Project Dates**

External audits are required to coincide with the operation of the TSHD (ref. GLOA EMP V5.1) and occur in the later months of the calendar year (November / December)

The audit is required to audit compliance with the EMP during the period the TSHD is operational at Lakes Entrance inside and outside the entrance.

Gippsland Ports will appoint an Auditor and provide all necessary dredging information and records and ensure an opportunity is provided for the auditor to inspect the site while the dredge is operational.

**3. Contract**

The successful candidate may be required to enter into a contract with Gippsland Ports for the provision of goods / services.

#### **4. Submissions**

The following information is to be provided in submissions:

- Company details including legal name, trading name, address, ABN and contact details.
- The Company's experience in providing the auditing services required.
- The names of any personnel who would be assigned to the project, and briefly their roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and other professional experience relevant to the conduct of this work.
- Any other relevant information.

#### **5. Due Date and Lodgement**

Submissions must be received in writing by **4:00pm** on **Friday 17 January 2025**. Submissions received after that time will not be accepted.

Please deliver your submission to:

Expressions of Interest (EOI – EMP Audit)  
Att: David Holding  
Gippsland Ports  
97 Main St,  
Bairnsdale VIC 3875

Or alternatively by email to:

[davidh@gippslandports.vic.gov.au](mailto:davidh@gippslandports.vic.gov.au)

Please note that your proposal cannot be considered as accepted unless and until you receive written notice of acceptance.

#### **6. Selection Criteria**

The following selection criteria will be used to assess submissions:

- Relevant company experience
- Relevant experience of proposed personnel
- Relevant quality assurance systems
- Capacity to undertake work in accordance with the Program schedule

#### **7. Assessment Process**

Expressions of Interest will be assessed in accordance with the nominated selection criteria.

Based on that assessment, a shortlist of preferred candidate(s) will be prepared.

Shortlisted organisation(s) only will be invited to provide a detailed proposal for provision of the independent audit services.

## 8. **Further Information**

All general enquires and questions are to be directed to:

Name: David Holding

Position: Executive Manager Maritime Services

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