

10 April 2013

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL LEISURE SAILORS IN SYDNEY HARBOUR AND BOTANY BAY

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Re: 'Close Quarters' with Large Vessels

Whilst the majority of sailors in the Sydney and Botany Bay area are strongly focussed on safety, I believe it is nonetheless important to remind the boating community of their responsibility for the safety of all on the waters we share.

My main concern is the increasing number of reports of 'close quarters' between recreational vessels and sea going ships transiting the shipping routes within Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay.

These incidents, most of them involving vessels under sail, indicate a lack of appreciation by some skippers of the potential dangers of getting too close to large ships which, given their size and tonnage, are unable to quickly stop or turn to avoid a collision.

Sydney Ports provides escort vessels that run ahead of sea going ships as they move to and from their berths, to ensure as much as possible the way ahead is clear of recreational vessels.

Skippers are reminded that passing between the escort vessel and the sea going ships is regarded as a dangerous manoeuvre which could impede safe navigation and lead to an accident and/or result in prosecution.

To remind all about safety obligations and to better understand the issue of 'close quarters,' situations, I urge you to visit the Sydney Ports website <http://www.sydneyports.com.au>.

Please familiarise, or reacquaint yourselves with the information provided and pass this information on to your friends who may not yet fully understand that escort vessels are there for the safety of all harbour users – please spread the word.

We are all fortunate indeed to share the most beautiful harbours in the world but it's not something we can take for granted – stay safe and when it comes to sea going ships – Steer Clear.

Yours faithfully,



Capt. Philip Holliday
Executive General Manager – Marines Services
& Harbour Master