

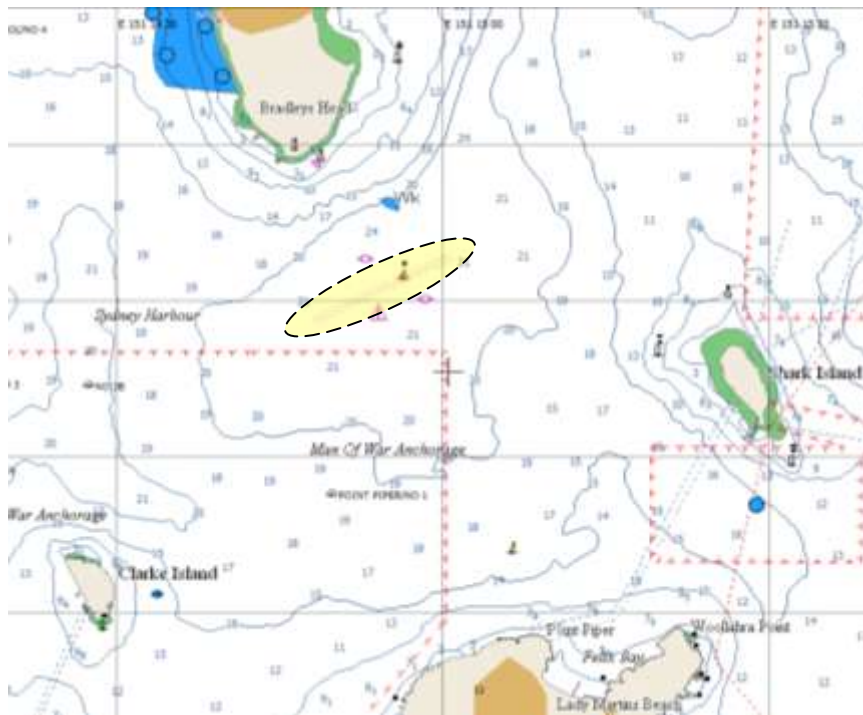
Marine Rescue Memory Jogger - Safe Water Mark off Bradleys Head.

No doubt all mariners will know and have seen the “Red & White pillar buoy - safe water mark” some 300m to the South-East of Bradleys Head. Why is it there, and what does it mean?

If we consult our chart, either AUS 200 or AUS 201, we see that the Safe Water Mark is surrounded by an elongated rectangular hatched area (see highlighted area below).

The hatched area lies on an alignment of 245°T when heading inbound (towards Fort Denison) and 065°T when heading outbound (towards Manly).

If we interrogate the chart information for that hatched area it is noted as “recommended traffic lane part” and if we consult the Sydney Ports Corporation Handbook we find that it states:



“3.2 Vessels rounding Bradleys Head

All vessels navigating in the vicinity of the safe mark buoy bearing 143°(T), 350 metres from Bradleys Head Lighthouse, shall pass to the north of the buoy when proceeding westward, and shall pass to the south of the buoy when proceeding eastward.”

This traffic separation zone and its function is not well publicised and is not well known, especially in the recreational boating fraternity.

Importantly, the Sydney Ports Corporation – Port Procedures Guide for Sydney Harbour and Port Botany defines Commercial, Trading and Recreational vessels and, in many clauses, it refers specifically to Commercial and Trading Vessels. However, in the Procedures Guide, Clause 3.2 (quoted above) the Guide refers to “ALL VESSELS” and while I’m not a lawyer, the application of this traffic separation zone appears to apply to Commercial, Trading and Recreational vessels equally.

The requirement for this traffic separation is already complied with by ferries, large trading ships and other commercial vessels however; the recreational boating fraternity are yet to understand and/or comply with this navigation requirement.

Whilst it is not apparent that NSW Maritime enforce this requirement, it may be a different matter if a collision occurs at Bradleys Head when the vessel are not using the traffic separation system.

We wish all at MHYC a very Happy, Safe and Successful 2012.

Don Alexander

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