

The Pilot Line

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The safe conduct of vessels in and out of any port is vital, and the Pilot Line defines the entrance to the port where vessels pick up the Pilot from the pilot launch.

Prior to 1954 the Hobart Pilot Station was at Piersons Point on the western shore of the Derwent estuary, at the entrance to D'Entrecasteaux Channel. The Pilot or his Deputy used to leave from there to board vessels off the Iron Pot light. All overseas vessels had to employ the Pilot but it was not compulsory for others to do so.

In 1954 the Marine Board of Hobart closed down the Piersons Point Station, moved the Pilot to Hobart and relocated the Pilot Line up-river to extend between Crayfish Point, Taroona, and White Rock, which is opposite on South Arm, on the eastern shore of the Derwent. The distance between these two points is 2.2 nautical miles. This line was chosen because it provided a more sheltered anchorage. It also allowed the Pilot sufficient time to obtain the feel of each ship and to advise the ship's Master of plans for berthing and the use of tugs. All vessels proceeding to Port Huon and Electrona, however, still pick up the Pilot at the Iron Pot light.

For vessels over 35 metres in length the use of the Pilot is compulsory unless the Master holds a valid pilotage exemption for the port of Hobart, which is only granted to Australian and New Zealand ships.

The light situated at White Rock is a familiar sight to residents of Taroona. It is mainspowered and its characteristic (signal) is one flash every three seconds.

The above information was supplied by the Marine Board of Hobart.

Once vessels entering the port of Hobart from Storm Bay have passed the Iron Pot light, the next light that they pick up is the White Rock light on the eastern end of the Pilot Line.

Owing to the bends in the river, the wharves of Hobart are not visible until the next light, the John Garrow, is reached. This light marks the only shoal between the Iron Pot and the wharves.

Vessels coming up through the D'Entrecasteaux Channel keep the Piersons Point light on the port side and once past it they can then pick up the White Rock light.

The above information was supplied by Mr Michael Roche.

Acknowledgements

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Mr Reg Gee for the map.



1. Hobart Wharves
2. John Garrow Light
3. Crayfish Point
4. White Rock Light
5. South Arm
6. Iron Pot Light
7. Piersons Point Light
8. D'Entrecasteaux Channel
9. Bruny Is.
10. Storm Bay

The Derwent Estuary showing the pilot line and navigation lights.

DRAWN BY R.S. GEE.