

The BOA applauds the decision to dredge the Swansea Channel

FRANK DOWNING

The good news for those who use the Swansea Channel into Lake Macquarie is that the Channel will be dredged before the summer boating season. The Minister for Primary Industries, the Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP, announced this on 24 August 2011.

This decision is a first but most welcome step in correcting the years of neglect, uncertainty and stop-start efforts that occurred under previous Labor governments.

The decision was due, in no small part, to the support and efforts of the Member for Swansea, Garry Edwards. The BOA's Hunter Region Committee met with him in May to state its case and was

invited to meet with the Minister during the June Community Cabinet Meeting in Newcastle.

The Minister also invited the BOA to take part in work to develop a strategy that outlines a sustainable long-term approach to the issue of dredging in the area. The BOAHR is looking forward to working with the government on this objective.

In doing so, the BOAHR will also pursue its goal of gaining commitments from the government to maintain safe and reliable boating access to small ports along the NSW coast. A workable program for the Swansea Channel might well stand as a model for

elsewhere and for avoiding the perennial arguments with governments that have been necessary in the past to keep small ports open and safe.

Tenders for the immediate dredging of the Swansea Channel closed on 14 September. The Department of Lands hopes that work will start later in the month to dredge the northern part of the Channel to a depth of at least 3 metres and to clear the channel into moorings in Black Ned's Bay.

Frank Downing
Chairman
Hunter Region Committee