

Media release

December 9, 2015

Big rig to bid farewell tomorrow

A large offshore drilling rig will leave Geelong's outer harbour anchorage early tomorrow morning to begin the next leg of her journey to Singapore.

Three tugs will tow the West Telesto from waters off Portarlington about 1am to deeper water in the middle of Port Phillip Bay for loading onto heavy-lift vessel Hawk. Loading is expected to start about 7am.

Geelong Harbour Master Captain Dilip Abraham said it would take several hours to safely position the jack-up rig onto the vessel.

"The Hawk will submerge her midsection almost to the seabed, then the three tugs will position the West Telesto over where the main deck has sunk and then they'll slowly bring the main deck up until it is under the rig," Captain Abraham said.

"Once they've completed the lashing, it is expected to set sail about 3.30pm and move through The Heads in the early evening."

The drilling rig, with its 51-metre-high derrick, has spent more than a fortnight anchoring off Portarlington, waiting for the heavy-lift vessel. The rig, owned by Seadrill, has been based in Bass Strait's Yolla gas field for most of the year.

The owner selected Port Phillip Bay for anchorage and loading because of its favourable conditions including limited current.

Captain Abraham said he expected the journey to Singapore to take about two weeks.

The Victorian Regional Channels Authority, Seadrill, the tug operators and Port Phillip Sea Pilots worked closely together to plan for the rig's stay in Geelong's outer harbour anchorage and movement through the bay.

For more information, please contact Geelong Harbour Master Captain Dilip Abraham at the Victorian Regional Channels Authority on 0439 635 912.