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It's Outer Harbor's biggest visitor yet

SOUTH Australia's hope of becoming a premier import/export hub has received a boost as the largest container ship to enter the Port of Adelaide docked at Outer Harbor.

The 53,600 tonne ANL Warringa, carrying cargo such as grains and manufactured goods, arrived about 12.30pm.

The container ship, on its inaugural trade voyage, was able to dock in Berth 7 at Outer Harbor because of the \$45 million spent deepening the state's main shipping channel.

Under the project - jointly funded by the State Government and Flinders Ports - more than three million tonnes of sand, clay and weeds were dredged from the harbour to deepen it from 12.2 metres to 14.2 metres and extend it from 9km to 11.7km.

The upgrade of the precinct now enables fully-laden Panamax-size vessels to include Adelaide on their international schedules.

Flinders Ports general manager of business development Stewart Lammin yesterday said an independent study had calculated the economic benefit over 20 years to be worth between \$500 million and \$1.9 billion.

“The channel deepening was a fairly lengthy project,” he said.

“For both importers and exporters it really means they have got access to world markets.

“Larger ships coming in means there is less leakage through to ports such as Melbourne and Fremantle.”

The upgraded ANL service will operate between Singapore and Port Kelang, in Malaysia, and Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Fremantle.

The Warringa's sister ship, the Windarra, is expected to dock at Outer Harbor in about six weeks.

ANL spokesman Peter Tomlinson said the arrival of the Warringa was a boon for the state.

“It will give importers and exporters more reliability and provide their customers with reliability,” he said.

“The flow-on benefits are great for the exporter and great for those who are coming in.”

The deepening of the channel also meant container ships were no longer reliant on tidal movements to arrive or depart.