

2026 Ports Price Monitoring Report

Port of Darwin

Key messages

- Darwin Port Operations Pty Ltd and Darwin Port Pilotage Pty Ltd (**Darwin Port**) met all ports price determination reporting and publication requirements in 2025-26.
- Standard charges set by Darwin Port for prescribed services at the Port of Darwin for 2026-27 (that took effect 1 July 2026) increased by 4.3% for pilotage and 4.6% for other prescribed services (port dues, wharfage, berthage and land entry charges) except for port induction fees or administrative fees, which remain unchanged.
- Darwin Port advised the increase in charges was calculated taking into consideration Darwin Port's operating costs, labour costs and current and projected Australian CPI over the next financial year, or specific increases (where more reliable information is available) to other costs on a weighted average basis.
- The increase in charges was above the annual increase in the Commission's chosen benchmark (March quarter 2026 CPI) of 4.1%.
- In 2025-26, total revenue received by Darwin Port for prescribed services at the Port of Darwin decreased by 3.9%.
- Wharfage continues to be Darwin Port's largest revenue source at 37% with pilotage accounting for a further 26% of revenue in 2025-26.

This 2026 Ports Price Monitoring Report provides summary information on trends in standard charges and revenue received for prescribed services by Darwin Port as the private port operator and private pilotage provider at the Port of Darwin.

The *Ports Management Act 2015* and *Ports Management Regulations 2015* establish the regime for port access and pricing for Northern Territory ports. The regime appoints the Commission as the regulator of port access and pricing for prescribed services provided by a private port operator and private pilotage provider of a designated port. The Port of Darwin is the only designated port under the *Ports Management Act 2015*.

Price regulation (in the form of price monitoring) applies to charges for prescribed services, which are:

- providing, or allowing for, access for vessels to the designated port
- providing facilities for loading or unloading vessels at the designated port
- providing berths for vessels at the designated port
- providing, or facilitating the provision of, pilotage services in a pilotage area within the designated port
- allowing entry of persons and vehicles to any land on which port facilities of the designated port are located.

Information and reporting obligations in relation to charges and revenue for prescribed services are set out in the Commission's ports price determination.¹ The Commission

¹ Refer 2025-2028 Prescribed Port Services Price Determination Port of Darwin Final Determination, available at <https://utilicom.nt.gov.au/publications>.

confirms that Darwin Port met the ports price determination reporting and publication requirements in 2025-26 and has done so each year since commencing as the private port operator and private pilotage provider at the Port of Darwin in 2015. The analysis provided in this report draws on information provided by Darwin Port.

Changes to standard charges for prescribed services

On 11 November 2025, Darwin Port notified the Commission that after feedback and consultation with port users, its tariff schedule would be changed to remove the charge for cancellation of a request for a pilot with less than 12 hours, but more than two hours notice. The change was effective from 1 December 2025.

On 29 May 2026, Darwin Port advised the Commission that its tariffs for prescribed services at the Port of Darwin would increase by 4.6% on 1 July 2026 for all charges other than pilotage and port induction and access administration fees. Pilotage changes would increase by 4.3% while port induction and access administration fees remain unchanged.

Darwin Port also amended its tariff schedule to clarify the scope and application of charges for other bulk products, port dues and use of the wheel wash facility. The amendments sought to address queries from port users and did not introduce new charges or alter the level of existing charges.

Darwin Port advised that the increase in charges has been calculated taking into consideration Darwin Port's operating costs, labour costs and current and projected Australian CPI over the next financial year, or specific increases (where more reliable information is available) to other costs on a weighted average basis.

The Commission notes the Darwin Port Operations Enterprise Agreement 2022 (which has nominally expired) and Darwin Port Marine Pilots Enterprise Agreement 2025-2029 allow for an annual increase of either 3% or CPI up to 5% (whichever is greater).² For the purposes of the marine pilot agreement, CPI is the Australian Bureau of Statistics' month of March Darwin CPI result, which was 4.2% in 2026.

The Commission uses the annual change in quarterly CPI for Australia (not Darwin) as the benchmark for monitoring and reporting on prices (national CPI).³ The benchmark is to evaluate the reasonableness of changes in Darwin Port's standard charges for prescribed services, not the efficiency of Darwin Port's tariffs. The annual change in national CPI for the March quarter each year is used as this is the data available at the time when Darwin Port typically advises of changes in its tariffs.

Darwin Port's increase in charges for 2026-27 (4.6% for most services) was above the annual increase in the Commission's chosen benchmark (March quarter 2026 national CPI) of 4.1%.

The Commission notes that although the Australian Bureau of Statistics has recently introduced monthly national CPI measures, the Commission will continue to use quarterly CPI

² Accessed at <https://www.fwc.gov.au/> on 8 October 2026.

³ Calculated from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 6401.0 Consumer Price Index, Australia, Table 17, Index Numbers; All groups CPI; Australia, series ID A2325846C. In prior publications, series ID A2325847F (percentage change from corresponding quarter of previous year; all groups CPI; Australia) was used for the benchmark, but this series is no longer published by the ABS.

data for its benchmark as monthly data is not available for past years and the monthly index may be volatile, reflecting seasonal effects and short-term irregular price fluctuations.⁴

Figure 1 shows the cumulative nominal growth in Darwin Port's tariffs for prescribed services between 2015-16 and 2026-27 and cumulative growth in national CPI over the same period. Cumulative growth in Darwin Port's charges has been lower until 2025-26 when at 37%, it was the same as cumulative growth in national CPI. The convergence is due increases over the past three years, which have been higher than national CPI (Figure 2).

Figure 1 Cumulative nominal growth in Darwin Port's tariffs and national CPI, 2015-16 to 2026-27

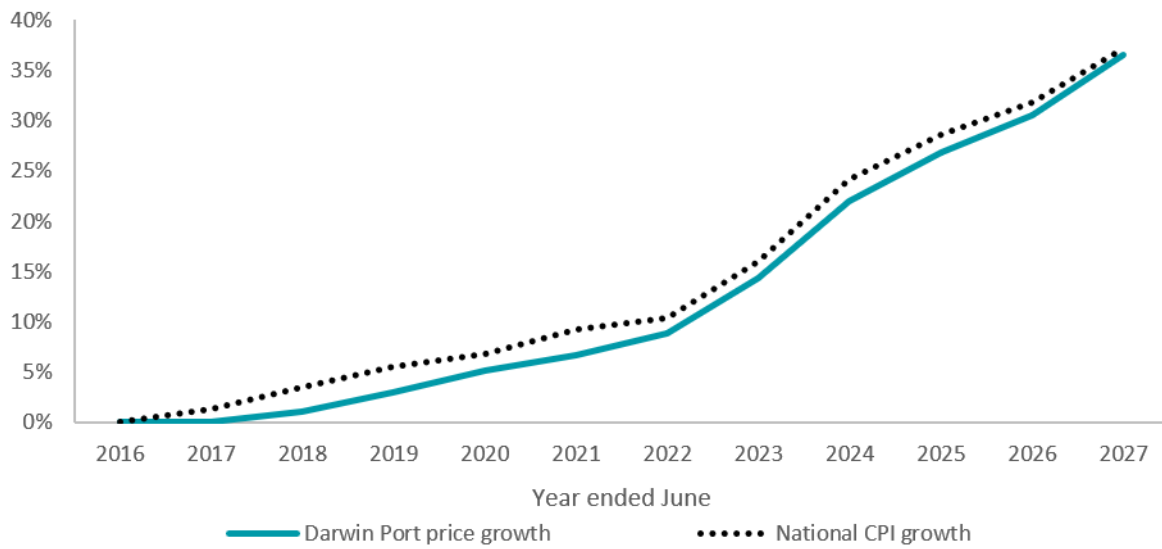
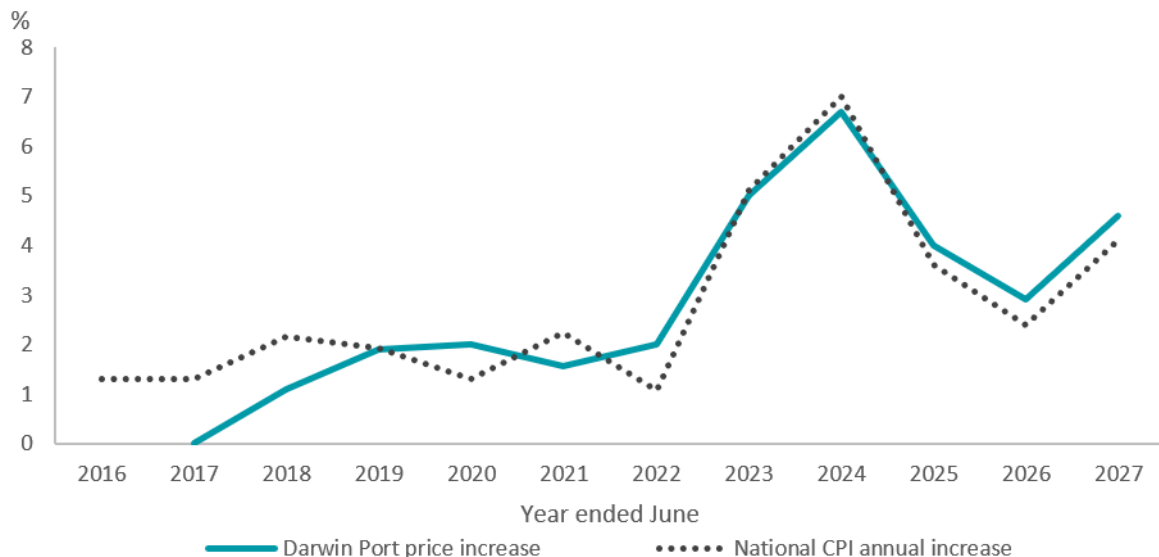


Figure 2 Comparison of Darwin Port's annual price increase and growth in national CPI, 2015-16 to 2026-27

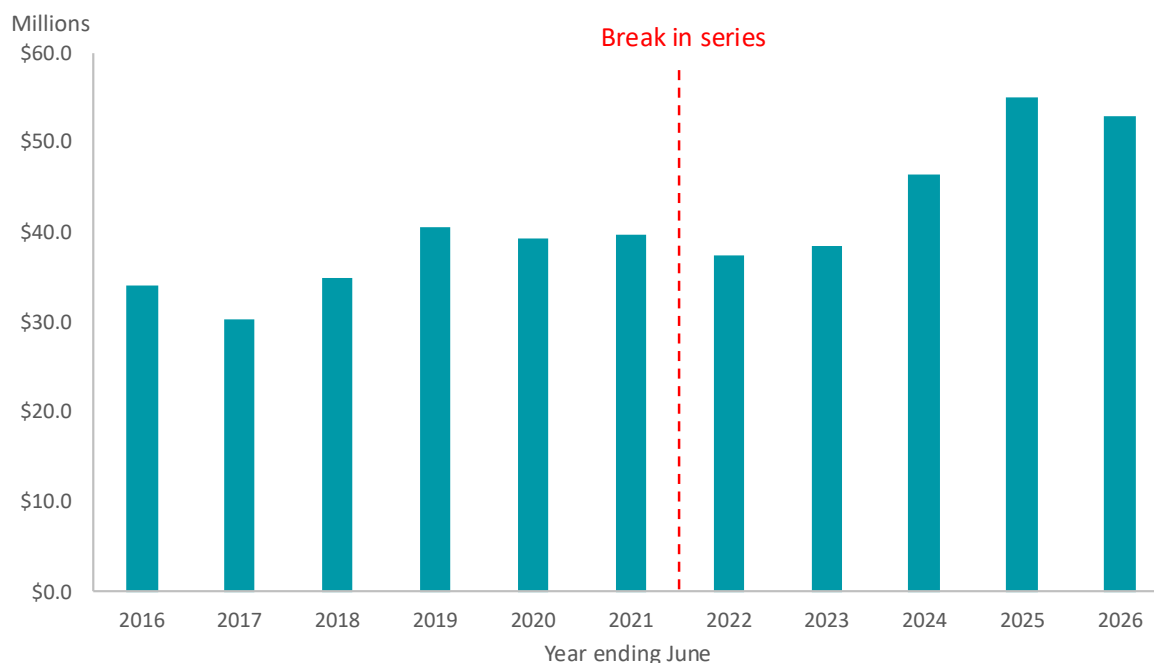


⁴ ABS. Seasonal adjustment for the new complete Monthly CPI. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/information-papers/seasonal-adjustment-new-complete-monthly-consumer-price-index-cpi>.

Revenue for prescribed services

Figure 3 shows total revenue reported by Darwin Port over the period from 2015-16 to 2025-26. A break in the series occurs in 2021-22, when Darwin Port reclassified and removed revenue generated from the sublease of port land as this is not a prescribed service (revenue from this source is included in prior years where received). This means revenue in prior years is not directly comparable but is included for information purposes and the comparison of revenue trends during that period.

Figure 3 Total revenue for prescribed services, 2016-17 to 2025-26



Note: Revenue in 2021-22 and subsequent years is not directly comparable with prior years due to removal of revenue from the sublease of port land, which is not a prescribed service

Total revenue for prescribed services was \$53.0 million in 2025-26, a decrease of 3.9% from 2024-25.

As shown in Figure 4, the decrease was due to a reduction in revenue from pilotage (down 8% to \$13.5 million), berthage (down 6% to \$9.3 million) and port dues (down 10% to \$8.3 million). This was offset by growth in revenue from wharfage (up 1% to \$19.5 million) and land entry (up 14% to \$2.3 million).

The decrease is consistent with statistics on Darwin Port's website showing total trade, total gross registered tonnage and vessel visits were lower in 2025-26 compared with 2024-25.

Wharfage continues to be Darwin Port's largest source of revenue in 2025-26 at 37% followed by pilotage at 26% and berthage at 17% of revenue.

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Figure 4 Revenue by prescribed service, 2015-16 to 2025-26



Note: The data in Figure 4 is not comparable with information provided in prior reports due to Darwin Port's reclassification of Bladin Channel Large Vessel Levy revenue from port dues to pilotage. The Commission has revised the data series to ensure comparability, that is, revenue from the Levy is now fully included in pilotage in all years. Data on land access charges is omitted from Figure 4 as the data is not comparable across years.

Further information

Past price monitoring reports (from 2019 onward) and further information about the ports access and pricing regime, including the Commission's 2023 Review of the Port Access and Pricing Regime, is available on the Commission's website: <https://utilicom.nt.gov.au>.

More information on port charges, trade statistics and revenue for the Port of Darwin is available on Darwin Port's website: <https://darwinport.com.au>.