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MEDIA RELEASE

NEW PILOT LAUNCH ANOTHER STEP IN BUILDING THRIVING PORT

Services at Lyttelton Port of Christchurch (LPC) have taken another step forward with the arrival of a new pilot launch.

“Having a state of the art new launch is part of our plan to provide the best service we can for vessels visiting Lyttelton,” said LPC Chief Executive Peter Davie.

The 15.6 metre launch is the first of its kind in New Zealand. It features the latest safety and navigational aids and is the best design for the work and conditions in Lyttelton harbour. The same launch design is operating in many Australian and European ports and has an excellent track record.

“Lyttelton Harbour requires a vessel capable of operating in high swells and strong winds and the launch provides a new level of safety for our Marine Pilots who travel on it to meet and board ships at the harbour entrance.”

The new launch is a more stable platform for a Pilot to step from to reach the ladder running up the side of the ship being boarded, particularly in rough sea conditions. After getting onto the ladder and climbing it to reach the vessel's deck, the LPC Pilot provides navigational assistance on the ship's bridge to help it manoeuvre up the harbour and berth at the Port. (Video LPC Marine Pilot boarding a ship: <https://vimeo.com/143076853>)

The new launch replaces the 12 metre ‘Canterbury’ which has been operating at the Port since 1992.

“The Canterbury has given sterling service but our new launch is a significantly more capable vessel. It has a higher helm position with greater visibility, wider side-decks giving safer access for crew, and the ability to self-right and be immediately operative.”

The launch will be named ‘Awaroa’ at a ceremony at Lyttelton Port tomorrow (2pm, 20 February). ‘Awaroa’ is the name Maori gave the northern headland at the entrance to Lyttelton Harbour, called Godley Head by Europeans.

On 9 January this year the ‘Awaroa’ left Melbourne and motored to New Zealand, arriving in Bluff five days later and in Lyttelton Port on 18 January. It is a design by French Naval Architects Pantocarene, and built by Hart Marine Ltd in its Mornington factory in Victoria, Australia. Survey and registration of the vessel have been completed and the launch is now in service.

“Earlier this month (4 February) we officially opened our new \$85 million Cashin Quay 2 wharf which is a milestone in our development. The wharf and our new launch are examples of how we are growing services to meet future demand and ensure Lyttelton Port is the South Island's major international freight gateway.”

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