ANL FLEET HISTORY

ANL

A FLEET HISTORY OF
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL LINE
1957-1999

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The long-awaited
ANL Fleet History, 1957-1999
is now published and available for purchase from the Nautical Association (NAA).

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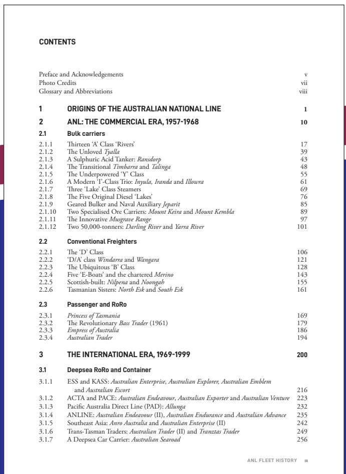
"This fleet history, written and informed by the knowledge, experience and insight of those who sailed on and worked with the ships, weaves the stories of a complex forty-year transition from conventional shipping to modern bulk-handling and containers along with the nation-building role of the ANL, whose flag still flies across the region as a subsidiary of French CMA CGM. The book is lavishly illustrated and will become an essential source on Australia's 20th century maritime history."



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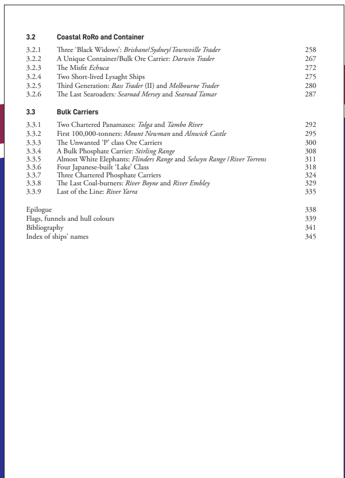

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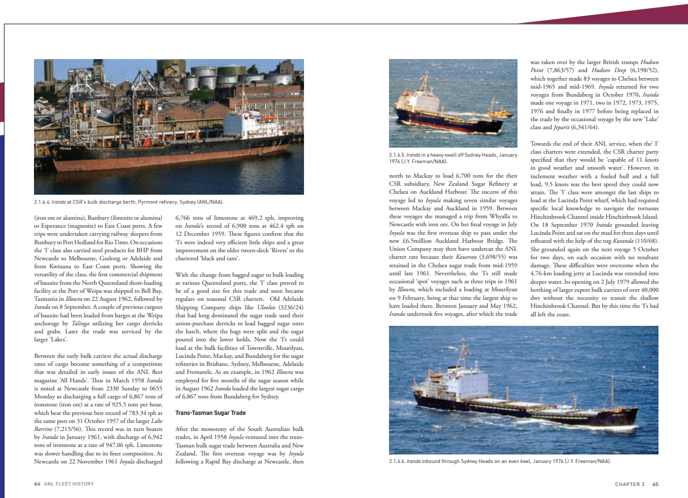

2.1.6.4. *Iranda* at CSR's bulk discharge berth, Pyrmont refinery, Sydney (ANL/NAA).

(iron ore or alumina), Bunbury (ilmenite or alumina) or Esperance (magnesite) to East Coast ports. A few trips were undertaken carrying railway sleepers from Bunbury to Port Hedland for Rio Tinto. On occasions the 'I' class also carried steel products for BHP from Newcastle to Melbourne, Geelong or Adelaide and from Kwinana to East Coast ports. Showing the versatility of the class, the first commercial shipment of bauxite from the North Queensland shore-loading facility at the Port of Weipa was shipped to Bell Bay, Tasmania in *Illowra* on 22 August 1962, followed by *Iranda* on 8 September. A couple of previous cargoes of bauxite had been loaded from barges at the Weipa anchorage by *Talinga* utilizing her cargo derricks and grabs. Later the trade was serviced by the larger 'Lakes'.

Between the early bulk carriers the actual discharge rates of cargo become something of a competition that was detailed in early issues of the ANL fleet magazine 'All Hands'. Thus in March 1958 *Iranda* is noted at Newcastle from 2330 Sunday to 0655 Monday as discharging a full cargo of 6,867 tons of ironstone (iron ore) at a rate of 925.5 tons per hour, which beat the previous best record of 783.34 tph at the same port on 31 October 1957 of the larger *Lake Barrine* (7,215/56). This record was in turn beaten by *Iranda* in January 1961, with discharge of 6,942 tons of ironstone at a rate of 947.06 tph. Limestone was slower handling due to its finer composition. At Newcastle on 22 November 1961 *Inyula* discharged 6,766 tons of limestone at 469.2 tph, improving on *Iranda*'s record of 6,900 tons at 462.4 tph on 12 December 1959. These figures confirm that the 'I's were indeed very efficient little ships and a great improvement on the older tween-deck 'Rivers' or the chartered 'black and tans'.

With the change from bagged sugar to bulk loading at various Queensland ports, the 'I' class proved to be of a good size for this trade and soon became regulars on seasonal CSR charters. Old Adelaide Shipping Company ships like *Ulooloo* (3236/24) that had long dominated the sugar trade used their union-purchase derricks to load bagged sugar onto the hatch, where the bags were split and the sugar poured into the lower holds. Now the 'I's could load at the bulk facilities of Townsville, Mourilyan, Lucinda Point, Mackay, and Bundaberg for the sugar refineries in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Fremantle. As an example, in 1962 *Illowra* was employed for five months of the sugar season while in August 1962 *Iranda* loaded the largest sugar cargo of 6,867 tons from Bundaberg for Sydney.

Trans-Tasman Sugar Trade

After the monotony of the South Australian bulk trades, in April 1958 *Inyula* ventured into the trans-Tasman bulk sugar trade between Australia and New Zealand. The first overseas voyage was by *Inyula* following a Rapid Bay discharge at Newcastle, then

2.1.6.5. *Iranda* in a heavy swell off Sydney Heads, January 1976 (J.Y. Freeman/NAA).

north to Mackay to load 6,700 tons for the then CSR subsidiary, New Zealand Sugar Refinery at Chelsea on Auckland Harbour. The success of this voyage led to *Inyula* making seven similar voyages between Mackay and Auckland in 1959. Between these voyages she managed a trip from Whyalla to Newcastle with iron ore. On her final voyage in July *Inyula* was the first overseas ship to pass under the new £6.5million Auckland Harbour Bridge. The Union Company may then have undercut the ANL charter rate because their *Kawerau* (3,698/55) was retained in the Chelsea sugar trade from mid-1959 until late 1961. Nevertheless, the 'I's still made occasional 'spot' voyages such as three trips in 1961 by *Illowra*, which included a loading at Mourilyan on 9 February, being at that time the largest ship to have loaded there. Between January and May 1962, *Iranda* undertook five voyages, after which the trade was taken over by the larger British tramps *Hudson Point* (7,863/57) and *Hudson Deep* (6,198/52), which together made 83 voyages to Chelsea between mid-1965 and mid-1969. *Inyula* returned for two voyages from Bundaberg in October 1970. *Iranda* made one voyage in 1971, two in 1972, 1973, 1975, 1976 and finally in 1977 before being replaced in the trade by the occasional voyage by the new 'Lake' class and *Jeparit* (6,341/64).

Towards the end of their ANL service, when the 'I' class charters were extended, the CSR charter party specified that they would be 'capable of 11 knots in good weather and smooth water'. However, in inclement weather with a fouled hull and a full load, 9.5 knots was the best speed they could now attain. The 'I' class were amongst the last ships to load at the Lucinda Point wharf, which had required specific local knowledge to navigate the tortuous Hinchinbrook Channel inside Hinchinbrook Island. On 18 September 1970 *Iranda* grounded leaving Lucinda Point and sat on the mud for three days until refloated with the help of the tug *Kuranda* (110/68). She grounded again on the next voyage 5 October for two days, on each occasion with no resultant damage. These difficulties were overcome when the 4.76-km loading jetty at Lucinda was extended into deeper water. Its opening on 2 July 1979 allowed the berthing of larger export bulk carriers of over 40,000 dwt without the necessity to transit the shallow Hinchinbrook Channel. But by this time the 'I's had all left the coast.

2.1.6.6. *Iranda* inbound through Sydney Heads on an even keel, January 1976 (J.Y. Freeman/NAA).