125 Metre Expedition Yacht

A 125 metre expedition yacht, three Australian visits, and a New Year's Eve mooring that failed

Vessel	Private expedition yacht of about 125 m, name withheld, carrying a helicopter and submersible, with up to 52 crew
Client since	2009 (signed agency agreement)
Australian visits	2012, 2013 and New Year's Eve 2014 to 2015, plus Torres Strait, Darwin and Solomon Islands support
Ports	Cairns, Thursday Island, Darwin, Hobart (prepared), Sydney, Lord Howe Island, Honiara
ASY role	Australian port agent: clearances, berths, pilots, fuel, logistics, provisioning, crew and guest services

The client

She is one of the largest and most complex private yachts ever to cruise Australian waters. At about 125 metres, with a helicopter, a submersible and a crew of up to 52, every arrival involves more paperwork, more agencies and more moving parts than most commercial ships of her size.

The relationship began in 2009, after Australian Superyachts left copies of its Great Southern Route cruising guide with the yacht. A captain made contact, the purser followed with questions about crew visas, and a signed agency agreement came in October 2009. Over the next six years ASY looked after the yacht on three major Australian visits.

The problems we solved

1. A diversion five days out

The problem: In February 2013 the yacht was inbound to Hobart. ASY had the arrival prepared: primary agent with a local sub-agent, crew list corrected, quarantine pre-arrival lodged and clearance at anchor approved. Five days out, the captain wrote: "We have been diverted to Cairns."

What we did: ASY rebuilt the whole arrival on the other side of the country in days. Customs paperwork was moved, quarantine was refiled, every shipment in transit was re-addressed, and pre-funding was capped so the yacht carried no extra cost for the change.

The result: The yacht arrived in Cairns with everything in place, as if Cairns had been the plan all along.

2. Clearing a 125 m yacht at dawn, by helicopter

The problem: The yacht needed to arrive off Cairns at first light and be away again quickly. Officials would not work at dawn or travel out to the anchorage, and a pilot still had to be put aboard.

What we did: ASY obtained the Regional Harbour Master's approval to transfer the pilot by the yacht's own helicopter. Richard Morris flew out with the pilot at dawn, and officials cleared the yacht by meeting her tender at a marked pontoon at 0830.

The result: The yacht cleared in, bunkered about 500 cubic metres of fuel, took on supplies and sailed again in about 36 hours, with a crew change at Thursday Island the following day.

3. Keeping the provisions on board

The problem: A yacht of this size carries a very large and very expensive store of food. Under the quarantine rules of the day, much of it could have been seized or destroyed on arrival.

What we did: ASY secured confirmation from the Department of Agriculture of new rules introduced in March 2012, which allowed food to stay on board under quarantine direction.

The result: The provisions stayed aboard. Richard described it at the time as "a major change … welcome news for all our superyacht visitors."

4. Fresh provisions to the Solomon Islands in under a week

The problem: After a Torres Strait transit, the yacht needed fresh provisions in Honiara. Sending food into the Solomon Islands requires import permits, fumigation and export certificates, a process that normally takes three working days on its own.

What we did: ASY organised the permits, treatment and paperwork in Australia and the Solomon Islands and air-freighted the provisions from Sydney.

The result: The provisions were delivered on 4 May 2013, in under a week. The yacht's chef reported that the provisions were cleared and delivered quickly.

5. A mooring that was not meant for a 125 m yacht

The problem: For New Year's Eve 2014 the yacht wanted the Point Piper Buoy, the premium mooring on Sydney Harbour. The buoy had been put out to tender with a 90 metre limit, and bids had already closed.

What we did: ASY made the case for a late bid for a 125 metre yacht and had it accepted.

The result: The yacht won the mooring for the busiest night of the year on the harbour.

6. The buoy that failed on New Year's Eve eve

The problem: The yacht picked up the Point Piper Buoy on 30 December 2014. Within hours the mooring failed: a shackle pin had come undone on the seabed. A 125 metre yacht was now loose on the harbour the day before New Year's Eve.

What we did: The yacht's bridge team caught it early. ASY worked with the captain and the Harbour Master to have the yacht safely anchored on three anchors, obtained approval for her to stay at anchor for the celebrations, and recovered the mooring fee.

The result: The yacht spent New Year's Eve safely at anchor with her guests, and the client received a full refund for the buoy. The Port Authority thanked the crew "for the diligence of your bridge watch team in noticing it so early and the professional manner in which you dealt with it."

7. Logistics across a continent

The problem: Before Sydney, the yacht needed a new 9 metre dive tender and 19 pallets of stores delivered to her in Cairns. After New Year's Eve she needed her annual class and radio surveys, a large fuel load and provisions before sailing for Honiara.

What we did: ASY trucked the tender and stores from Sydney to Cairns, cleared as ship's spares in transit. In Sydney it arranged the Lloyd's Register annual survey and radio survey at short notice, about 432 cubic metres of duty-free fuel by barge, and provisioning by crane at Glebe Island.

The result: The yacht sailed from Sydney on 11 January 2015 surveyed, fuelled and stored, on schedule.

Also handled

- Crew visa sponsorship and crew list corrections against passports within hours, avoiding a costly alongside clearance.
- Reconciling 50 crew out and 52 crew in at Thursday Island with a new crew list stamped by Customs.
- Contractors landed at Thursday Island under the superyacht visa program.
- A Darwin stay managed remotely with a local agent on the ground, extended by propulsion repairs.
- Guest concierge in Sydney: opening night at the opera, a private Opera House tour, restaurant bookings and crew transfers.
- A Lord Howe Island excursion between New Year's Eve and departure.

Visit timeline

When	Where and what
2009	Agency agreement signed; crew visa sponsorship for the captains
Apr to May 2012	Cairns: first full Australian call, clearances, fuel, provisioning
Feb 2013	Hobart arrival prepared; diverted to Cairns five days out; dawn helicopter clearance
Mar to Apr 2013	Darwin, then Torres Strait transit and provisions to Honiara
Jun 2013	Second Cairns call
Dec 2014 to Jan 2015	Cairns, then Sydney New Year's Eve, Lord Howe Island, surveys and departure for Honiara

In their words

> *"Thank you for everything, you are a tremendous help!!"*
> Chief Stewardess, 125 m expedition yacht, 30 December 2014

> *"Many thanks for the quick response to our questions!"*
> Chief Officer, 125 m expedition yacht, 2012

> *"Thanks for your help in facilitating the visit to Cairns."*

Department of Agriculture, Cairns, 26 February 2013

> *"All we need is a realistic picture of costs before committing to a transaction."*
> Captain, 125 m expedition yacht, 2013. The principle behind ASY's upfront pricing.

What this shows

This yacht needed an agent who could plan in detail and still re-plan fast: a different port with five days' notice, a dawn clearance by helicopter, a mooring that failed on the eve of New Year's Eve. In every case the yacht kept to her schedule and her guests saw none of it. That is what Australian Superyachts does.