



# SEA SWIFT TRAINEE PROFILE

*George Dorante*  
Ship Captain

Case studies of transport and logistics enterprises and real-life accounts of how they have benefited from upskilling their workforce.

When George Dorante adds up the decade he's worked for Sea Swift, a Cairns-based shipping company, he's spent three years on land and seven years at sea.

Dorante, 26, from Thursday Island (Waiben), is master of the Malu Chief, a six-crew, 42-metre, 270-tonne ship that hauls fuel and freight to the Torres Strait.

His father had taken young George to sea in his work on a Sea Swift barge. "I liked the job, I liked the industry. It was fun," Dorante says. "I loved the sea."

Dorante joined the company as a trainee out of school, progressing quickly to a coxswain's ticket, then tickets for forklift, dogman and crane on coming of age.

"All I was looking for was experience," Dorante says. "I wanted to do everything. I wanted experience as a deckhand on a range of boats and Sea Swift has got that."

## EVERY DAY YOU LEARN SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

Sea Swift sponsored his Certificate IV in Transport and Distribution (Coastal Maritime Operations), a national qualification developed by the Transport and Logistics Industry Skills Council (TLISC), to become a Master Class 4 ship captain.

As Malu Chief's captain, Dorante manages the ship: its crew, maintenance, route, schedules and customer service: "You're a floating office, at the end of the day."

But when Dorante looks out his office window, he sees a different scene at each day's end, steering the ship through the Torres' tricky reefs and waters.

Often the islands are too small to accommodate a dock, so Dorante drives the Malu Chief up a ramp or beach, dropping the huge cargo hold door to unload.

"People say if you can drive a barge in the Strait, you can drive anywhere. Some landings are just, wow, did I do that? Every day you learn something different."

The passage takes many days, so interpersonal skills are just as important to managing the ship as reading the weather and tides, and careful cargo handling.

Any tension in the crew has to be dealt with immediately. "On a ship, there's nowhere you can run and hide," Dorante says. "You've got to face up to things."

"When that door comes up and you leave the island, they all come to the bridge and laugh about it, because you wake up tomorrow, you see the same bloke."

"You have to set a good example, but do it with a smile and you're laughing!"

For more information about how TLISC can assist, please contact our Workforce Development team:

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