



PROJECT CASE STUDY

CONTROLLED SCUTTling OF VANUATU FERRY 1 (VF1)

END OF LIFE FERRY DISPOSAL UNDER FULL ENVIRONMENTAL AND REGULATORY OVERSIGHT

OVERVIEW

Client: Vanuatu Ferry

Location: Offshore Port Vila, Vanuatu

Lead contractor: Ocean Logistics Limited

Supporting Agencies:

- Department of Environment
- Vanuatu Maritime Safety Authority (VMSA)
- Department of Ports and Harbours

Vanuatu Ferry 1 (VF1) served the people of Vanuatu for many years, carrying passengers and cargo between Tanna, Efate, Malekula, Santo, the Shepherd Islands and other destinations. With the introduction of Vanuatu Ferry 2 and 3, VF1 was retired and laid up in Port Vila for approximately two years.

After unsuccessful attempts to sell the vessel regionally, the owners, in consultation with authorities, decided on a controlled scuttling as the most practical end of life option, subject to strict environmental and safety controls.

Ocean Logistics Limited was engaged as lead marine contractor to plan and execute the tow and scuttling operation under multi agency oversight.

ENVIRONMENTAL PREPARATION

Under the supervision of the Department of Environment and VMSA, VF1 underwent a comprehensive environmental preparation programme over approximately six months, including:

- Removal of all fuels and oils
- Removal or neutralisation of hazardous materials and contaminants
- Cleaning of bilges and machinery spaces
- Documentation and inspection to confirm environmental compliance

Only after the vessel was certified as environmentally safe did the authorities grant final approval to proceed with scuttling.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING AND ASSETS

Ocean Logistics was placed on operational standby for roughly three months while final regulatory clearances were processed.

Planned assets:

- Tug Maungatea – lead tow and scuttling tug
- Tug Arnhem – assisting tug for close quarters manoeuvring

The Department of Ports & Harbours designated a scuttling location approximately 4 nautical miles outside Port Vila Harbour.

Weather window (per deck log):

- Wind: NW 7 kts
- Swell: ~0.7 m
- Visibility: Clear

CUSTOMER & PORT BENEFITS

A total of **18 personnel** participated:

- 5 tug crew (Ocean Logistics)
- 2 OLL representatives (project / safety oversight)
- 3 Environment officers
- 4 Ports & Harbour officers
- 2 VMSA officers
- 2 Vanuatu Ferry officers

Key timeline (from tug Maungatea deck log):

- **1130 hrs** – Operational briefing held onboard Maungatea with all 18 personnel, covering tow plan, roles, communications, and safety.
- **1142 hrs** – Maungatea departed the barge berth.
- **1152 hrs** – Commenced pulling VF1 from the stern, with tug Arnhem assisting on the port shoulder for alignment and control.
- **1200 hrs** – Towline made fast to VF1's bridle; short tow commenced out of the harbour.
- **1230 hrs** – Towline lengthened; tow continued past Ifira Island and out toward the designated scuttling area.

On arrival at the approved offshore position:

- Vessel was checked and held on station by Maungatea and Arnhem.
- **Seawater intake valves and designated flooding points** were opened to allow controlled flooding of the engine room and lower compartments.
- Over approximately **four hours**, VF1 settled progressively, maintaining stability until final submergence at the designated coordinates.

The operation was completed **without incident** and all personnel returned safely to port.

STRATEGIC LESSONS – THE NEED FOR GREEN SHIP RECYCLING IN VANUATU

While the operation was executed safely and compliantly, the VF1 case highlights a structural gap in Vanuatu's maritime infrastructure:

- There is no national slipway or haul out facility capable of taking large vessels fully out of the water for dismantling and recycling.
- As a result, older vessels often remain laid up for years or are scuttled offshore, even when a green ship recycling option would be preferable.

Ocean Logistics' view – informed by this and other projects – is that Vanuatu needs:

- A dedicated slipway / haul out and green recycling facility,
- Where end of life vessels can be:
 - Hauled out safely
 - Stripped of equipment and pollutants
 - Cut and recycled in a controlled, land based environment.


Ocean Logistics Limited is actively proposing such a facility as part of the planned Ocean Marine Logistics Terminal in Luganville, Santo. The VF1 operation is a clear example of why that capability – Green Ship Recycling in Vanuatu – is a logical next step for the country's maritime sector.

A FINAL FAREWELL

Vanuatu Ferry 1 carried thousands of passengers and countless tonnes of cargo, connecting islands and communities across the archipelago.

Ocean Logistics was honoured to manage her final voyage: a controlled, respectful end to service that balanced operational reality, environmental responsibility, and national maritime needs – while pointing clearly toward the infrastructure Vanuatu now needs to build next.

FROM HARBOUR TOWAGE TO CONTROLLED SCUTTLING, WE DELIVER 100% COMPLIANT RESULTS. PARTNER WITH US FOR YOUR NEXT MARITIME MISSION.

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