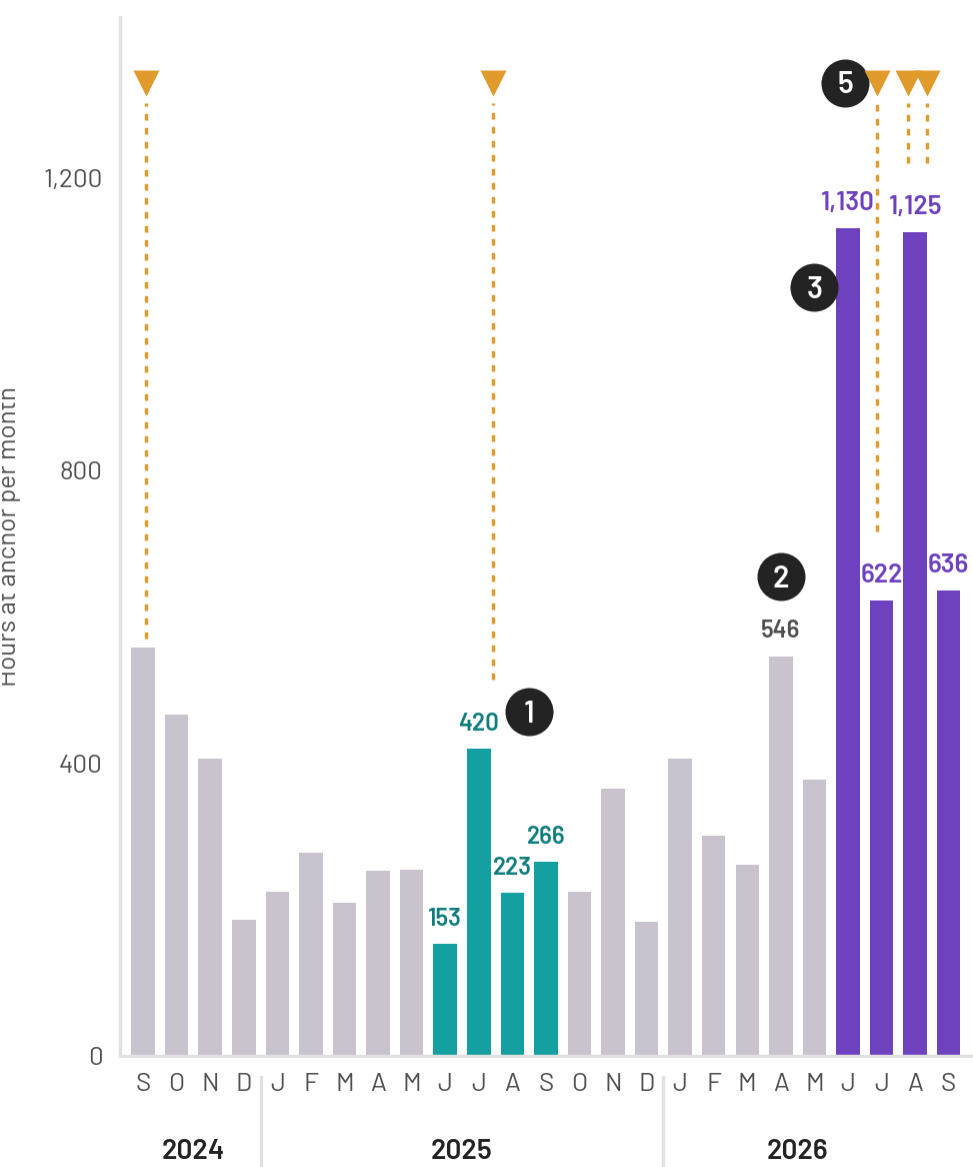


From June to September, container ships waited at anchor **three times as long** as last year, while calls rose **just 8%.**

Hours at anchor before berthing, by month

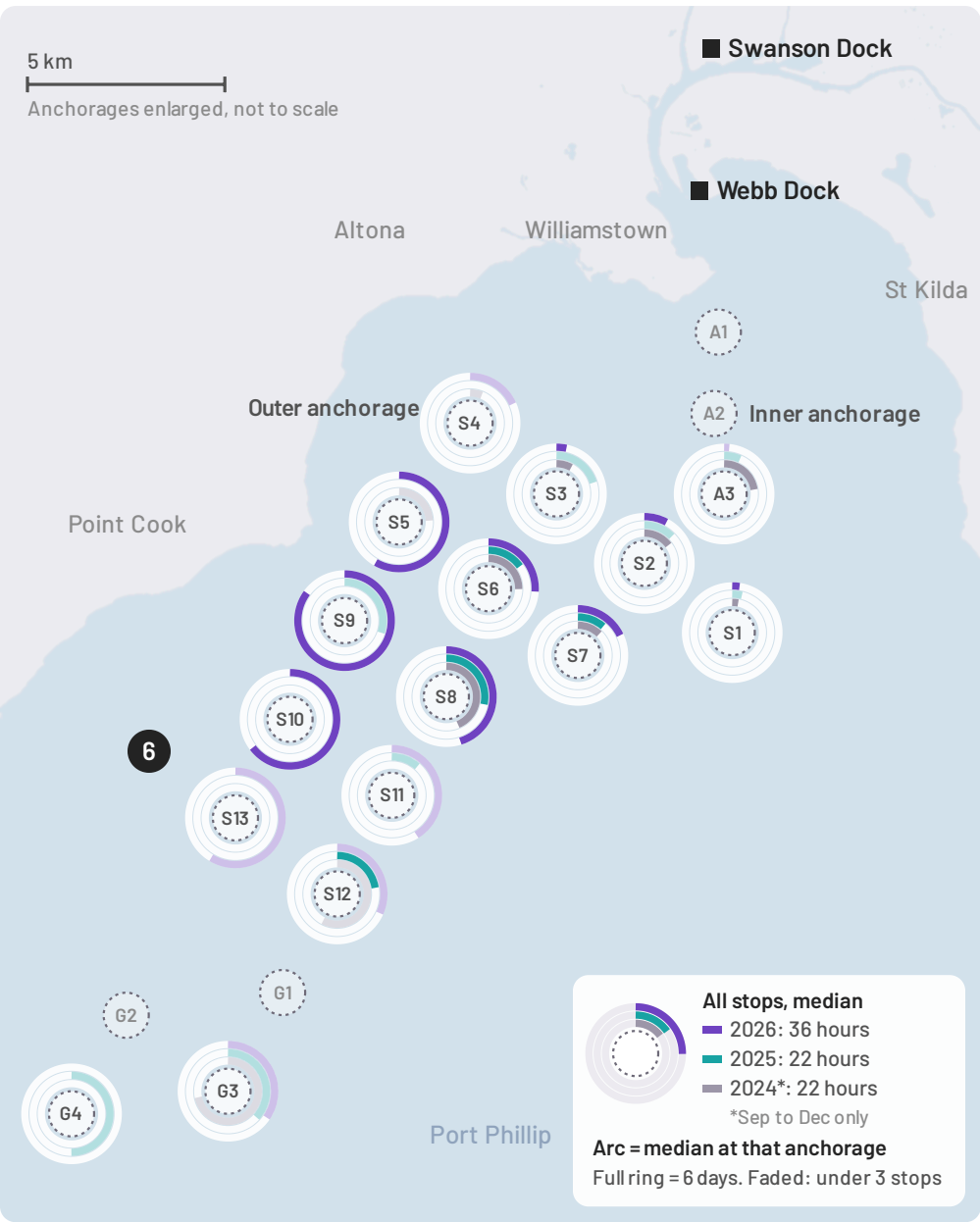
Melbourne's three container docks, in the month the waiting happened.

■ Jun to Sep 2025 ■ Jun to Sep 2026 ■ Other months ▼ Typhoon event



Median stop at each anchorage, by year

Container ships on the way in. Dotted circles: the port's designated anchorages.



OBSERVATIONS

- 1 A steady 2025.**
 - 150 to 420 hours a month. June to September: 1,061 hours, or 44 days.
- 2 April 2026 broke the pattern.**
 - 546 hours, the most since September 2024.
 - Arrivals were evenly spaced: only 6% of ships came on days with five or more arrivals.
- 3 June and August passed 1,100 hours.**
 - The two highest months since September 2024.
 - June to September: 146 days at anchor against 44, on 8% more calls. 48 waits over 12 hours, against 13.
- 4 A four-day schedule understates lateness.**
 - On the port's first published ETA, about four days out, 14 of 41 matched long waits arrived 12+ hours late.
 - The real yardstick is the carrier's proforma. We're adding liner schedules to measure against it.
- 5 Upstream congestion lines up, but isn't proven.**
 - Fog from 27 March, then heavy volumes, pushed Shanghai berth waits to 2 to 7 days by early June.
 - Three typhoons from mid-July took Shanghai and Ningbo to about 10 days by 1 September.
 - At least seven Melbourne services call there, and ships take two to three weeks to get here. August arrivals were the most bunched since September 2024.
- 6 Longer stops, across more anchorages.**
 - Median stop: 36 hours in 2026, against 22 in 2025 and late 2024.
 - S5, S10 and S13 went from unused to 84 to 93 hours.

Which shipping lines lost the most time at anchor, and which terminal were they waiting for? [Message us](#) for the breakdown.

Read this honestly

Waiting inside the bay only.

We count from when a ship reaches the anchorage to when it's alongside. Ships that waited offshore before entering aren't counted, so this understates the wait.

1. Container ships 120 m and longer at Swanson Dock and Webb Dock. 2. Long wait: over 12 hours at anchor before berthing; late: arrived 12+ hours after the first ETA the port published for the call; 7 of 48 long waits couldn't be matched. 3. Map: stops of 2+ hours in a designated anchorage before berthing; positions from the Harbour Master's Directions, symbols enlarged; records start September 2024, so 2024 is a part year. 4. One ship held after an engine problem in November 2025 is left out. 5. Typhoon events closed Shanghai and Ningbo, dated in China: Bebinca, Pulasan (Sep 2024), Co-may (Jul 2025), Bavi, Dolphin, Saudel (2026).