

23 October 2002

Immediate Use

NEW SAFETY TRIAL: SATELLITES TO AUTOMATE SHIP REPORTING IN THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

Ships transiting the Great Barrier Reef are being urged to participate in a world-leading automated ship reporting trial starting tomorrow.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority in conjunction with Maritime Safety Queensland is calling for ships that sail through the Reef to take part in the trial, which will use INMARSAT-C – a global satellite communications network – to provide a near real time picture of shipping activity in the region.

There are about 6000 ship movements through the GBR each year.

The INMARSAT-C terminals on ships participating in the voluntary trial will be remotely programmed to send automated position reports every 15 minutes to REEFCENTRE – the ship reporting base at Hay Point, near Mackay. Ships will not incur any costs associated with this trial.

The system will provide REEFCENTRE with more accurate information on the presence and movement of vessels and help identify potentially dangerous areas being transited. It will also provide the first ever near-real time picture of shipping in the Reef.

Under the current reporting arrangements, ships must report their position to REEFCENTRE every 8 to 16 hours depending on the speed of the vessel.

A preliminary trial of the system involving 80 vessels from 20 shipping companies began last November and proved highly successful.

Most ships transiting the reef are required to have INMARSAT-C transceivers on board as part of their internationally mandated Global Maritime Distress and Safety System requirements.

AMSA and Maritime Safety Queensland have been contacting ships that use the Reef asking them to participate in the trial. Other ships wishing to be involved should contact Kerrie Abercrombie on 07 3253 2641 or Benny de Melo 02 9282 0712 at AMSA.

The 350,000 square kilometre Great Barrier Reef was the first region to be designated a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area by the International Maritime



Organization.

Further information:

David Gray

02 6279 5888

0418 164 901

Ben Mitchell

02 6279 5093

0418 164 901



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