



MEDIA RELEASE

29 May 2003

Immediate Use

SEARCH FOR MAN AFTER FISHING VESSEL AND MERCHANT SHIP COLLIDE OFF TOWNSVILLE

Australian Search and Rescue is coordinating an air and sea search for the 55-year-old captain of a fishing trawler involved in a collision with a 70,000 tonne bulk carrier at about 12.10am this morning north-east of Townsville.

Two Queensland Rescue helicopters and up to eight vessels including a Townsville Water Police launch and Australian Volunteer Coast Guard boat, are searching for the missing man.

The collision occurred at a position 35 nautical miles (64kms) north east of Townsville.

The sunken vessel's 62-year-old male deckhand was rescued by a Townsville Water Police launch at around 4am this morning.

He was suffering mild hypothermia and advised that the missing captain was last seen in the fishing vessel's wheelhouse shortly before the collision.

The bulk carrier was en route from New Caledonia to Townsville. The ship advised authorities in the Great Barrier Reef of the collision.

The weather in the area is moderate with 20 to 30 knots south-easterly winds.

Further information:

Ben Mitchell

0418 164 901