



Australian Government

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

**MEDIA RELEASE**

6 October 2004

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **HEAVY FINE FOR GREAT BARRIER REEF OIL POLLUTER**

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) today welcomed the \$85,000 fine imposed on the owners of a ship that discharged oily waste into the Great Barrier Reef in 2001.

The fine was handed down this morning in the Cairns District Court after an investigation into the source of the spill by AMSA.

The owners of the cargo ship *Pax Phoenix*, Sanzo Enterprises of Panama, pleaded guilty to deliberately pumping oil into Reef waters on 2 and 3 September 2001 near Holbourne Island in the Whitsunday Islands group off the Queensland coast. Aerial surveillance determined the slick extended for about 79 kilometres.

AMSA's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Clive Davidson, said the significant fine sent a strong warning to vessels that ignore Australia's tough pollution laws.

"We are using the latest technology in advancing pollution prosecutions with satellite imagery helping to identify and locate ships that ignore Australia's ship pollution laws," Mr Davidson said.

AMSA undertook an extensive investigation involving the identification of seven ships that were in the vicinity of the slick. These ships were boarded and oil samples from a number of tanks on each ship were obtained.

Chemical analysis of the samples from the slick and from the ships resulted in the positive identification of the *Pax Phoenix* as the source of the oil.

The owners were charged under the Commonwealth *Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983*.

The slick was cleaned up by Queensland Transport, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and AMSA before it reached any land within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

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