



Australian Government
Australian Maritime Safety Authority

MEDIA RELEASE

2 June 2005

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Another ship fined for Great Barrier Reef Oil Pollution

The owners of the container ship Pacific Quest that discharged oily waste into the Great Barrier Reef in 2002 creating an oil slick more than 70 kilometres long were fined \$180,000 in the Brisbane District Court today.

The prosecution followed a joint investigation into the source of the spill by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), the Australian Federal Police, and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

The Panama-based owners of the ship, Mattrim Marine Inc, had pleaded guilty to pumping oily waste into Reef waters on 25 December 2002 near the Whitsunday Islands group off the Queensland coast.

An international search was undertaken to find the ship responsible for the spill after six ships were identified as having been in the vicinity at the time.

International cooperation was given by the Maritime Safety Authority of New Zealand which sampled oil from Pacific Quest while it visited New Zealand after leaving Australian waters.

Chemical analysis of the oil samples from the slick and from the ships resulted in the identification of Pacific Quest and exclusion of the other five ships as possible sources of the oil discharge.

Satellite imagery of the spill provided crucial evidence for the prosecution by showing the extent of the slick and also helped to eliminate other ships from further investigation.

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

AMSA's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Clive Davidson, complimented the cooperative effort between agencies involved in the successful investigation of the incident.

"The agencies' combined expertise and the greater use of the latest technology with satellite imagery is making much easier the identification, location and successful prosecution of ships that ignore Australia's tough ship pollution laws," Mr Davidson said.

In a similar case, the cargo ship Pax Phoenix was fined \$85,000 in October 2004 for discharging oily waste into the Great Barrier Reef in 2001.

Media Contact:

Tracey Jiggins:

0418 164 901