



Australian Government

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Ship operator fined for asbestos offences**

The operator of a bulk cement carrier, Alcem Calaca, was fined \$180,000 in the Brisbane Magistrates' Court on 14 July 2006 for failure to maintain a safe workplace by not properly managing the presence of asbestos on the ship.

The prosecution followed an investigation by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), in its capacity as the Inspectorate under the Occupational Health and Safety (Maritime Industry) Act 1993.

The Australian operator of the ship, Queensland Cement Limited, pleaded guilty to offences under the Act which occurred over several months in 2003 when the vessel was registered in Australia.

The operator was found to have failed to take reasonable steps to protect the health and safety of employees and contractors. It was also found not to have put adequate practices and procedures in place to prevent exposure to asbestos. The magistrate took into account the gravity of the risk involved and the fact that 66 persons potentially were exposed to asbestos.

AMSA investigated breaches of the Act in consultation with asbestos specialists who conducted an audit of the extent of asbestos aboard the ship.

AMSA's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Clive Davidson, said that this is the largest single fine of its kind in Australia and that the substantial fine sent a strong warning to ship operators that occupational health and safety issues must be treated seriously and addressed in a timely way.

"The ship had been operating in Australia for some months before it became apparent that material containing asbestos was aboard although this situation was known to the operator prior to coming to the Australian

coast. I expect that this penalty will be a significant deterrent to ship operators not fulfilling their obligations to provide a safe workplace for employees and contractors.”

“AMSA will be continue to pursue ship operators that ignore occupational health and safety requirements, including prosecuting those who deliberately flout the law.” Mr Davidson said.

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