



Australian Government

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Significant fine for dumping of plastic bag**

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority recorded another successful prosecution in the Brisbane Magistrates Court yesterday.

The owners and the master of the Russian registered container vessel Khudozhnik Zhukov were fined a total of \$23,000 for an illegal discharge of plastic garbage that polluted the beach at Teewah Village, near Noosa, Queensland in February 2005.

They had pleaded guilty to offences under the Commonwealth Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983.

A member of the public (fisherman) found one large plastic bag bearing an Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) numbered seal in the water near Noosa North Shore Beach. It was one of three bags used by AQIS officers to seal meat products found aboard the Khudozhnik Zhukov during an inspection in early February 2005.

Each bag was sealed with a numbered plastic tie, which was used by officers from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, assisted by AQIS, to identify the vessel.

AMSA's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Clive Davidson, praised the initiative of the fisherman who notified authorities about finding the plastic bag.

"Australia has strict laws against ship-sourced pollution, and the discharge of any plastics into the sea is absolutely prohibited," Mr Davidson said.

"Most garbage pollution found along the coastline cannot be traced to its origin, but fortunately in this case it could. The community can be confident that instances of this type of pollution are taken seriously by the

relevant authorities and by Australian courts and we strongly encourage reporting.”

“This is a significant fine for a single plastic bag and emphasises the importance placed on protection of the environment by both AMSA and the presiding Magistrate who indicated the potential environmental harm from the plastic bag near the World Heritage Fraser Island. It sends a strong message to the ships trading to Australia that thoughtless pollution of our pristine maritime environment will not be tolerated.”

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