

ACTIVITIES IN STATES AND THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

VICTORIA



SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS

There were no major spills in Victoria during the reporting period.

However there were two major responses mounted following the grounding of the vessel *Devprayag* in Portland and the grounding of the vessel *Mirande* in Port Phillip Bay. The Marine Board and Port operators responded to ensure an effective salvage and pollution response in preparedness should a spill have occurred. In both cases the Marine Board Incident and Pollution Coordination Centre was activated and the Regional, State and National Plans were also activated and the responses were deemed successful.

There were 100 marine pollution incidents reported throughout the State during the reporting period. It was established that 39 spills originated from vessels, although in many cases, the offending vessel could not be identified. Twenty-six of these were identified and one of these incidents involved a chemical spill. A further 26 spills originated from land, with oil being carried into the marine environment by drains or other means. In the other 18 cases, the source was not determined and a further 12 cases did not involve oil. There were three groundings of vessels greater than 24 metres in length and one grounding of a fishing vessel less than 24 metres. One incident involved a bulldozer that created a hydraulic oil spill.

LOCAL TRAINING

During the year over 100 personnel from a wide variety of agencies attended marine pollution training courses and workshops. These included Oil Spill Response Management, Equipment Operators Training, Oil Spill Response Incident Control Training, Fixed Wing and Rotary Wing Aerial Dispersant Training, Oil Spill Response Atlas Awareness Training, Dispersant Monitoring Training, State Marine Pollution Controllers Workshop and a Stakeholders workshop to focus on response issues in Victoria. A number of

debriefs were also held following responses to capitalise on lessons learnt.

Ongoing training to support an incident control system for managing oil spill responses, which included the development of an Oil Spill Response Incident Control System Manual, was also conducted. This was developed under licence to the Australasian Fire Authorities Council to streamline and further integrate marine pollution response with mainstream emergency management arrangements.

EXERCISES

Exercise Overflow was conducted in October 2000. The scenario involved a chemical spill in the Port Phillip Region from a tanker. This was an operational exercise and involved emergency services and marine pollution response agencies. The exercise evaluated the integration of VICPLAN and the Port of Melbourne Emergency Management Plan for a chemical incident. A discussion exercise immediately followed involving local government, emergency services and community members and created some valuable learning in relation to marine chemical spills.

A regional exercise was also conducted in the Westernport Region. This exercise tested a local terminals first strike response capability and how it would integrate with the regional arrangements. It involved the deployment of booms, skimmers and vessels, and personnel from the terminal, local contractors and designated control agency to contain the spill.

OIL SPILL RESPONSE ATLAS (OSRA)

Work continued on the development of OSRA for the Victorian coastline. The atlas now provides details of geographical and environmental features, local infrastructure, coastline access, etc to assist planning, responses and protection of the environment in the event of an oil spill. OSRA was used during the grounding of a bulk carrier in Portland Bay as part of the contingency arrangements should a spill have occurred. The data sets were maintained and additional maps and data sets included. This was achieved with funding support from the National Plan.

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NEW SOUTH WALES



SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS

There were no significant incidents during the reporting period.

The recommendations from the “Response to the *Laura D’Amato* Oil Spill Report” relevant to NSW, were implemented during the year.

LOCAL TRAINING

The Department of Transport conducted a two-day OSRICS Training Course on Lord Howe Island during May 2001, which was attended by 22 residents and Island Board staff.

One Department of Transport officer and one Sydney Ports Corporation officer attended a five-day Incident Control System Course conducted by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Newcastle Port Corporation held a three-day Oil Spill Response Course, which incorporated a tabletop exercise and a half-day equipment deployment exercise.

Shell conducted an Oil Spill Management Workshop and an Oil Spill Response Workshop in June 2001. Fifty five people from Shell and the NSW Fire Brigades attended the workshops.

Caltex conducted quarterly training of their response crew (19 staff), an Oil Spill Response Training Course for their senior managers and shift supervisors, and an Emergency Operations Centre exercise.

EXERCISES

Port Kembla Port Corporation conducted Exercise Jervis Bay 2000 at HMAS Creswell and tested the Navy response and coordination arrangements. The Department of Transport participated as an umpire.

Sydney Ports Corporation conducted a tabletop exercise of the Port Botany Emergency Plan and

Sydney Ports marine pollution response arrangements in June 2001. The exercise involved Sydney Ports personnel, emergency services (Police, Fire, Ambulance) and port lessees. An Oil Spill Management Course was also conducted by Sydney Ports Corporation and attended by 20 people from various agencies.

EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION

New racks for storing the GP500 boom were purchased by Newcastle Port Corporation and Sydney Ports Corporation purchased two new river trucks and 715 metres of fence boom during the year.

NEW OR UPDATED CONTINGENCY PLANS

The NSW Marine Oil Spill Contingency Plan was updated and the opportunity taken to include chemical spill response arrangements. The NSW State Emergency Management Committee endorsed the Plan in March 2001.

The Marine Oil Spill Response District Plans have been incorporated into the State’s District Emergency Management Plans, thus finalising their integration with District arrangements.

OIL SPILL RESPONSE ATLAS (OSRA)

In accordance with the Data Preservation Plan the NSW Oil Spill Response Atlas underwent its annual upgrade. The shoreline birds theme was upgraded using data collected by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and various bird study groups. The locations, habitat usage, numbers and seasonality data for the shoreline birds was improved. Oyster lease locations were replaced by recent survey data from the NSW Fisheries. The coastline and shoreline types were updated with more accurate data.

New themes incorporated into the OSRA were:

- information on shoreline access, beach characteristics and associated facilities;
- oblique aerial photographs of all the major estuaries and river mouths; and
- textual data describing the estuary characteristics.

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SOUTH AUSTRALIA



SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS

There were no major incidents during the reporting period. However South Australian personnel responded to 38 minor incidents.

PROSECUTIONS

The Port Stanvac spill prosecution carried out under the Pollution of Waters by Oil and Noxious Substances (POWBONS) Act and the Environmental Protection Act was completed with Mobil being fined \$50,000 plus investigation costs.

The Gulf of St Vincent incident has been investigated under the (POWBONS) Act but it is not certain if there is to be a prosecution. The case is with the Crown Solicitor. The incident involved heavy fuel oil in the waters of the Gulf. Officers from the Government Investigation Unit, South Australian Police and Marine Group personnel carried out the investigation.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the EPA Investigations Unit to assist the Marine Group investigating oil spill incidents.

LOCAL TRAINING

A total of 44 personnel attended three Advanced Oil Spill Response Courses conducted during the period in Adelaide. A total of 18 personnel attended two Admin Courses both run in Port Adelaide.

A two-day Oil Response Operator Workshop was conducted in Adelaide with State and National Response Team personnel involved. As part of the workshop response equipment was deployed at sea and in the river.

A total of 20 personnel attended an Aerial Observer Course in December. Personnel from AMSA were also involved.

EXERCISES

A total of three exercises were conducted.

- Adelaide - Deployment exercise held on 2 May 2001. Response agencies involved where Metropolitan Fire Service, SES, Ports Corps,

Water Police, Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and Transport SA were the key players. (This was part of the three day advanced workshop).

- Port Adelaide - Tabletop exercise in conjunction with Mobil Birkenhead, which included all response agencies and oil companies. The exercise was held on 25 May 2001.
- Port Lincoln - Deployment exercise held on 30 June 2001. Personnel from the Country Fire Service, Ports Corps, EPA, Transport SA and SES attended the exercise.

The deployment exercises were well carried out. The tabletop exercise revealed issues and highlighted problems when dealing with a spill of Unleaded Gasoline / Products.

The main outcomes from the exercises were:

- Familiarise/educate people with points of contact in case of Response incidents.
- Exercises need to be held in the Whyalla and Port Bonython region to familiarise Marine Group staff as well as local industry people with the deployment of equipment. Such an exercise is planned for 2001–2002.
- Similarly another exercise to ensure port plans are up to date and familiarisation of equipment is also required for Thevenard (an exercise is scheduled for July 2001).
- Regional Port response plans need to be inspected regularly for currency.

EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION

During the year AMSA supplied the following equipment:

- Two new Flexidams and one Foilex skimmer - Wallaroo.
- Two new Flexidams and one Foilex skimmer - Thevenard.

The State / Transport SA bought no equipment due to budgetary constraints.

NEW OR UPDATED CONTINGENCY PLANS

South Australian Marine Spill Contingency Action Plan (SAMSCAP) is to be updated during 2001 and tabled in Parliament.

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TASMANIA



SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS

There were no significant incidents in Tasmanian waters during 2000–2001.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES TO STATE RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

In December 2000, significant amendments to the *Tasmanian Pollution of Waters by Oil and Noxious Substances Act 1987* entered into force which enabled Tasmania to give effect to the national model legislation in relation to the control of ship-sourced pollution. These amendments included:

- Addition of MARPOL Annexure III and IV.
- Significantly increased penalties including penal provisions.
- Powers of detention and intervention.
- Powers for the Tasmanian Minister for Primary Industries, Water and Environment to issue emergency declarations, subject to certain requirements, to overrule State laws for a period not exceeding 14 days if satisfied that urgent action is required and that the relevant State laws are inconsistent with, or hinder, a response to a serious discharge of marine pollutants (either actual or imminent) to State waters.
- Provision for the Crown to be able to immediately incur, and ultimately recover from the polluter, all reasonable cleanup costs involving the actual or potential discharge of a marine pollutant to State waters as a result of a marine casualty.

NEW OR UPDATED CONTINGENCY PLANS

The Tasmanian Oil Spill Wildlife Response Plan is currently being reviewed and the Tasmanian Marine Resources, Fisheries and Aquaculture Oil Spill Contingency Plan 2001 is being finalised.

Discussions are continuing with the port companies in Tasmania in relation to the development of agreements to formally define the respective roles of the port companies and the State government in relation to ship-sourced pollution response.

QUEENSLAND



SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS

Throughout the year Queensland Transport was active in responding to a total of 68 reported oil spills - an increase of 17% on last years total. While fortunately most of these did not require the mobilisation of significant resources two in particular required positive remedial action by Queensland Transport.

The most serious pollution incident reported in Queensland followed a fire on board the 32 metre motor yacht *Achilles* at the Gold Coast City Marina on 17 July.

The *Achilles* eventually sank spilling up to 22 tonnes of oil. A response team, made up of personnel from Queensland Transport's Gold Coast and Brisbane regions, worked on the cleanup for six days. They recovered all of the remaining oil and 11 tonnes of oily debris.

The Malaysian owned and registered container ship, *Bunga Teratai Satu* ran aground on Sudbury Reef near Cairns on 2 November. Although the ship sustained considerable damage, it did not spill any of the 1300 tonnes of fuel oil on board. However scrapings of tributyltin (TBT) antifouling paint did contaminate surrounding areas of reef and had to be recovered from the site. Contractors working for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority in the months following the incident completed this task and other rehabilitation work



Photo courtesy of the Courier Mail

The Bunga Teratai Satu aground on Sudbury Reef

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at the site. The total cost of the restoration work was approximately \$2 million.

Following the grounding Queensland Transport mounted a full-scale preventative oil spill response operation. This operation involved 45 people from Queensland Transport, AMSA, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, the Port of Brisbane Corporation and Queensland's Environmental Protection Agency. It continued until the ship was successfully refloated on 14 November. While these people had a direct involvement with the response many others, including members of the Queensland National Plan State Committee also had significant roles to play throughout the incident.

The *Bunga Teratai Satu* was finally refloated after 11 days on the reef. The total cost of the preventative oil spill response operation was over \$750,000. Queensland Transport is currently negotiating with the ship's insurance company to recover these costs.

PROSECUTIONS

The year saw three successful prosecutions by Queensland Transport:

- The owner and master of the fishing vessel *Seabreeze* were found guilty of discharging 10 litres of diesel fuel at Mooloolaba in 1998. They were fined \$4000 and \$750 respectively.
- In a similar case involving a spill of 20 litres of hydraulic oil, also at Mooloolaba in 1998, the owner of the fishing vessel *Nizam* was fined \$4500. The master also received a fine of \$1000.
- The year's third successful prosecution was against the owners of the workboat *A J Coyne* who were convicted of spilling 10 litres of diesel fuel at Mackay in January last year. They were fined \$5000.

While the fines handed down for these offences are not large they are consistent and high enough to act as a deterrent to deliberate polluters.

LOCAL TRAINING

The year's training focused mainly on the revalidation skills for equipment operators and shoreline cleanup supervisors but also included

new training for incident investigators.

In total, 135 people attended oil spill response training courses conducted by Queensland Transport at various regional centres throughout the state.

EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION

In June 2001 Queensland Transport took delivery of 17 tonnes of 'Dasic LTWS' dispersant at a cost of \$100,000. The dispersant is destined for new equipment stockpiles at Lockhart River and Cape Flattery. This acquisition, combined with a similar move by AMSA to place 10 tonnes of dispersant in Cairns, has greatly enhanced oil spill response preparedness in the Cape York Region.

NEW OR UPDATED CONTINGENCY PLANS

The oil spill contingency plan for Queensland coastal waters (QCCAP) and the plan for Torres Strait (TORRESPLAN) were rewritten by Queensland Transport during the year. Both documents now incorporate OSRICS. They also include a number of other important changes. Queensland Transport intends to distribute the new plans towards the end of 2001 on completion of further consultation and testing.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS

On 20 February the fishing trawler *Quobba* grounded on a coral reef in the Ningaloo Marine Park near North West Cape. The vessel had stranded high on the reef some six hundred metres from a one kilometre stretch of shoreline mangroves and was moving in rough seas.

There was some 20,000 litres of diesoline on board and it was considered possible that the hull could breach, spilling the fuel, which would, under the influence of onshore winds and seas, impact almost immediately on the mangroves. It was too rough to consider booming the vessel or removing its fuel.

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Initial response equipment and staff was dispatched from Dampier and later, some 1000 metres of boom was rigged as a barrier around the mangroves. Boom was provided from Dampier, Port Walcott and Port Hedland and personnel from the ports, WA Transport, CALM, Fisheries, Sea rescue volunteers and the Navy assisted in placing and removing it.

The vessel was successfully re-floated without breaching the hull on 25 February. Response costs of \$115,000 were incurred and WA Department of Planning & Infrastructure has claimed restitution from the vessel owner.

Otherwise, there were 19 minor spill reports.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES TO STATE RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

A Marine Environmental Protection Unit has been established within the newly created Department of Planning & Infrastructure (DPI), consisting of a Manager, Training Officer and Technical Officer. This team has been active in improving the State's preparedness and response organisation, particularly in responding to the recommendations of the National Plan review, the subsequent IGA and Exercise 2000.

Liaison with Ports and Maritime Export Facilities is developing in positive way with agreement in principle that they will assist DPI in responding to spills outside of their port boundaries. A State Response Team (SRT) has been formed with its core membership drawn from the Fremantle Port Authority and DPI. This team, comprising of skilled equipment operators and incident management staff, is capable of rapid deployment to any area of the State. The other WA ports, Marine Export Facilities and industry have been invited to participate in regular SRT training exercises.

LOCAL TRAINING

WA Transport conducted 12 National Plan training courses during the year and the first in a series of monthly practical training exercises for the newly formed WA State Response Team was held in Fremantle in May.

The team is mainly drawn from WA Transport and Fremantle Port Authority personnel. However, Dampier, Esperance and Bunbury Port Authorities and a number of industry representatives attended the three-day training exercise. AMSA assisted by providing National Response Team instructors from AMOSC, AMSA and Victorian and South Australian State marine authorities. The instructors oversaw the deployment and use of Fremantle National Plan equipment.

The Dampier Port Authority conducted a major equipment deployment exercise using the National Plan stockpile equipment in June. It was attended by some 80 persons drawn from the State Response Team and 30 agencies and companies in the Pilbara area.

EXERCISES

The fourth National Plan biennial oil spill response exercise was conducted in the Port of Dampier on 4 and 5 September 2000. It was the first national exercise conducted under OSRICS. Several pre-exercise training sessions had been conducted in Dampier and the National Contingency Plan together with the recently revised and reissued Port and State plans were used. Exercise 2000 was considered to have been successful in achieving the majority of its aims and the report raised a number of recommendations for improving the WA response organisation.

NEW OR UPDATED CONTINGENCY PLANS

A consultant has been engaged by several of the ports to produce Oil Spill Contingency Plans (OSCP) that accord with the recently re-issued State Contingency plan. The consultant will also produce an OSCP template that includes the information common to all ports and provides a guide to the port specific information required.

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NORTHERN TERRITORY



SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS

Although there were a few small land based spills affecting the NT waters there were no significant marine pollution incidents in Territory waters over the 2000–2001 period.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES TO NORTHERN TERRITORY RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

Mr Adrian Murray, Executive Director - Transport, NT Department of Transport and Works has replaced Mr David Rolland as the NT Spill Commander. Mr Garry Mayer, Director (Marine), NT Department of Transport and Works has replaced Mr Bruce Wilson as Chairman of the NT Committee.

LOCAL TRAINING

Training was conducted for equipment operators in Darwin, in conjunction with the Spillcon 2000 on water display. Training was conducted by AMSA with assistance from the Darwin Port Corporation (DPC) and the NT Department of Transport and Works (Marine Branch). Participants were from the Northern Territory Emergency Services, RAN, DPC, the petroleum industry, Nabalco (Gove) and GEMCO (Groote Eylandt). A further Equipment Operators Course was conducted in May 2001 by AMSA and involved people from the general public, Coast Care, Work Health and local marinas.

NEW OR UPDATED CONTINGENCY PLANS

The NT Plan is being updated and incorporates the Incident Control System (ICS). It is in final draft and should be released in September 2001. The Darwin Port Plan will be updated on completion of the NT Plan. GEMCO have recently updated their plan to incorporate ICS.