

# ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENTIFIC ISSUES

## OIL SPILL RESPONSE ATLAS

The Oil Spill Response Atlas (OSRA) provides vital environmental, biological and logistical information to marine spill responders in a useful and effective format to enable a fast and efficient response to oil and chemical spills in the marine environment.

In the 2001-2002 financial year, the National Plan allocated \$200,000 towards the continuation of the OSRA program. For the first time in the program, funding was allocated to the States/NT to update and maintain existing data. Funding was distributed to acquire new spatial datasets and imagery.

The OSRA Toolset was also completed and distributed to the States/NT in this period. The Toolset includes a Theme Manager, Spill Manager, Incident Information and Locate Position tools and a number of other useful functions for spill responders. AMSA conducted three OSRA Toolset training courses around Australia aimed at informing the State/NT OSRA Coordinators. This will allow the coordinators to train additional personnel in the use of the Toolset and Atlas during an incident.

The Atlas has been used extensively in incidents and exercises since its inception in December 1999 and has proven to be a robust and effective decision support tool.

## OIL SPILL TRAJECTORY MODELLING

In near-shore marine environments, the tracking of oil spills likely to impact the shoreline is of prime importance in the effective deployment of oil spill response personnel and equipment to protect environmentally sensitive areas and response planning.

Since the acquisition of the new Oil Spill Trajectory Modelling (OSTM) System, AMSA has provided to State/NT oil spill response personnel various trajectories for incidents and exercises.

The inclusion of live data feeds of wind, sea surface temperature and sea surface elevation data in 2001-2002 further enhanced the capabilities of the OSTM system. This information is provided by CSIRO - Marine Research and the Bureau of Meteorology.

## ENVIRONMENT AND SCIENTIFIC COORDINATORS WORKSHOP

The National Plan, with assistance from Environment Australia, funded the 11th Environment and Scientific Coordinators (ESC) Workshop in Glenelg, South Australia in March 2002.

ESCs from all States and Territories attended the workshop as well as representatives from the oil and shipping industries.

Topics covered at the Workshop included:

- State/NT/industry reports of incidents and exercises;
- Dispersant shelf life testing;
- Community and indigenous liaison;
- Wildlife issues;
- Environment Working Group issues such as the OH&S video and RD&T projects;
- Oil Spill Trajectory Modelling;
- OSRA toolset; and
- Sampling and analysis of oil spills.

The Workshop proceedings can be found on the AMSA web site at <http://www.amsa.gov.au/me/natplan/TOOLBOX/ESCWSP.htm>

## OILED WILDLIFE WORKSHOP

A national Oiled Wildlife Workshop was held in Canberra on 7 and 8 May 2002. Over 20 participants from the Commonwealth, New Zealand and all States except Western Australia and the Northern Territory attended.

A key focus of the workshop was to provide input to the development of National Oiled Wildlife Response Guidelines. The need for national guidelines has been identified following a number of major spills in Australia.

Other topics included managing wildlife response within an overall response structure, wildlife response training and lessons learned from major overseas incidents such as the *Treasure* oil spill in South Africa.