

2008
autumn edition



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The Australian Government has nominated the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service (Hunter Region) for the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea.

The Government's nomination of the Service and its helicopter crew is in recognition of the outstanding bravery they showed while rescuing 22 crew members from the bulk carrier, *Pasha Bulker*, following its grounding in gale force winds and heavy seas off Newcastle's Nobbys Beach in June 2007.

The helicopter rescue involved the winching of each crew member from the stranded ship in severe weather conditions, with all safely evacuated without injury.

The rescue personnel – Pilots, Captain Ian McFadden and Captain Ian Osborne; Crew Chief, Graham Nickisson; Aircrewman, Peter Praniess; and Rescue Crewmen, Glen Ramplin and Nathan Langham – all risked their own lives, with their courage and professionalism widely acknowledged.

The nomination reflects the Government's appreciation and admiration of their selfless work at the scene of one of Australia's major maritime incidents.

According to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority – the national search and rescue coordinator – this rescue involved the biggest airlift from a bulk carrier in recent Australian maritime history.

The Award was instigated by the International Maritime Organization to provide international recognition for acts of exceptional bravery at sea.



Photos Courtesy of Darren Pateman - Newcastle Herald

The Secretary-General of International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), Mr Torsten Kruise who is based in Paris, officially opened the refurbished Macquarie Lighthouse and public display on Tuesday 15 April 2008.

Over 70 guests attended the event including local MP's, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority Board and staff and members of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust. Other guests included individuals who have contributed to the restoration and the public opening; some who will provide input into the continuing success of the Lighthouse's public tours; and some who were there to enjoy the magnificence of one of Australia's most famous landmarks.

Macquarie Lighthouse is perhaps Australia's most well known light and is the first and the longest serving lighthouse in Australia. There has been a navigational aid at the site of Macquarie Lighthouse since 1791, only three years after the founding of the first colony in 1788.

The original light was completed in 1818 and was designed by Francis Greenway, an English architect sentenced to death and commuted to transportation to Sydney for 14 years for his crime of forging a building contract. Governor Macquarie gave Francis Greenway his Conditional Pardon during a picnic on the Macquarie site on December 16, 1817.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority and the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust have been working closely together to refurbish the Macquarie Lighthouse, develop a public display and provide tours of the Light to the public.

This has been an ongoing task with the first phase of the refurbishment beginning in 2005 and while largely complete, maintenance of such an historic monument remains a continuous process.



IALA Secretary-General, Mr Torsten Kruise and AMSA Chairman, Mr Ted Anson AM at the Official Opening of the Refurbished Macquarie Lighthouse and Public Display.



Welcome to the 2nd edition of *AMSAboard*. The year is certainly moving ahead rapidly and the AMSA team have been busy across Australia and overseas with involvement in countless activities that span the world of maritime. The articles that you will see in this edition of *AMSAboard*, emphasise the cooperative spirit of the work that AMSA does and the necessity for us to liaise and work collaboratively to ensure we can provide the best services possible to the seafaring community.



We are very proud to be associated with the Government's nomination of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service International Maritime Organization Bravery Award. Twenty-two crew members were rescued from the *Pashsa Bulker* following her grounding on Nobbys Beach in severe weather at Newcastle in June 2007 and was the biggest airlift from a bulk carrier in recent history.

In April AMSA hosted the Secretary-General of IALA, Mr Torsten Kruise during a week long visit to Australia. While he was here, Torsten kindly opened the refurbished Macquarie Lighthouse and public display. The inclement weather did not stop more than 70 guests joining us for this special occasion. Macquarie Lighthouse holds a special place in Australia's maritime history and there has been a navigational aid on the site of the current Lighthouse since 1791.

We are continuing our close cooperative work both with our colleagues within Australia and with our counterpart agencies around the world. AMSA personnel attended the second Project Review Group for the Indonesian Transport Safety Assistance Program in Jakarta on 30 April and we welcomed staff from BASARNAS (the Indonesian Search and Rescue Agency) who visited AMSA this week. Our engagement with Maritime Safety Queensland and the joint Torres Strait Marine Safety Program continues with AMSA contributing additional funding this year to incorporate further educational material on safe boating practices into the region.

While interaction and dialogue is important with our colleagues outside of AMSA, the views and concerns of our own staff are also very important. AMSA has recently conducted a Staff Survey to gauge the views of staff. A Staff Consultative Working Group has been established and I have encouraged all staff to liaise with the Group as it is essential that if people have something to say on how to improve the working arrangements in AMSA, they raise their concerns and ideas in a forum where those ideas can be progressed.

In this edition, we also provide a first – a case study of a search and rescue incident. In February 2008, the yacht *Silhouette II* holed her hull off the coast of Byron Bay and four New Zealand sailors were rescued. Due to the distance off shore, the rescue was performed by the bulk carrier, *Alltrans*. The case study provides an overview of the event from a number of perspectives and highlights the complexities of bringing everything together to ensure a safe outcome.

Our staff have been engaged in AMSA business around Australia and in this edition we have included some statistics on ship detentions and beacon activations, to illustrate the pace of activity across the organisation.

In late April, AMSA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Australian Antarctic Division. The MOU includes operational procedures and contact and communications arrangements and acknowledgement of the expertise of both agencies with respect to Search and Rescue operations in the Antarctic environment.

AMSA and the Australian Maritime College have also formalised their strong relationship by agreeing to work together on a range of activities, such as staff exchanges, training and cooperative research projects after the signing of an MOU between the two agencies in April.

Once again, I encourage you to read about AMSA activities and we will continue to update you on the work that we are doing across the sector during 2008, including the agreement by Ministers at the Australian Transport Council meeting to further work being done towards implementing a single national approach to maritime legislation for consideration in July 2008, and the approval of more streamlined arrangements for implementation of national marine safety standards.

Mr Graham Peachey
Chief Executive Officer

Six AeroRescue staff participated in a SAR Aircrew Development Course conducted at the Australian Maritime College, Launceston, and AMSA-ERD, Canberra. A staff member of the South Australia SES (State Air Search Observer Coordinator) and an AMSA-ERD staff member also participated as students.

The intensive two-week course was jointly delivered by staff of the Australian Maritime College and AMSA. Tasmania Police, Rotor-Lift Helicopters and Australian Maritime Systems were also involved.

Participants were required to complete pre-course workbooks and assignments and under-go written examinations during the course. Participants were also required to research and deliver presentations relating to significant SAR events.

The course is conducted in April and October each year and intended for AeroRescue managers, Aircraft Captains and Aircraft Mission Coordinators and other AeroRescue staff progressing to such positions. The involvement of AMSA staff and operational SAR practitioners of other agencies is encouraged as a means of developing inter-agency relationships and joint understanding of capabilities.

Trainees experienced a range of practical activities, these included:

- Familiarisation with maritime communications (GMDSS) equipment.
- Operation of distress signalling equipment.
- Recovery and operation of AMSA de-watering pumps in the course of combating a simulation of flooding compartments in a damaged small vessel.
- Abandonment, survival and rescue procedures in liferafts and lifeboats.
- Helicopter rescue operations.
- Visits to the AMSA Emergency Response Centre and Border Protection Command.



AMSA and AMC sign MOU

AMSA and the Australian Maritime College have formalised their strong relationship by agreeing to work together on a range of activities, such as staff exchanges, training and cooperative research projects. Established in 1978, the AMC is Australia's national institution for maritime education and training, operating as an institute of the University of Tasmania. Graham Peachey and Professor Malek Pourzanjani signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations on 22 April 2008 which outlines a number of areas of cooperative activities. These include staff secondments (including cadetships), visiting seminars, study trips, work experience and opportunities for AMC staff and students to join international delegations where relevant.

AMSA often draws on the knowledge and experience of the AMC in providing briefing for national and international meetings and AMSA is also keen to promote itself as a prospective employer of AMC graduates. AMSA and the AMC already cooperate on a range of activities, and the MOU was seen as an appropriate way to formally acknowledge and encompass the mutual benefits of this close relationship. Graham Peachey is a member of the AMC Board and Professor Pourzanjani is a long standing member of AMSA's Advisory Committee. The MOU will be reviewed annually.



Australian Maritime College, Launceston

Successful rescue of five fishermen off Mackay

In the early hours of Sunday 13 April, the Cairns Dornier was involved in the successful rescue of 5 fishermen off Mackay after they had been floating for more than four hours in the sea.

The Dornier was tasked to respond to an active beacon in the area and it was only due to the diligence of the team on board that the men were spotted in the darkness. The Dornier crew were then able to direct other search and rescue assets to their location to ensure the safe return of the five fishermen to Mackay.



On Friday 9th May a 121.5 MHz beacon was detected by the Rescue Coordination Centre, Australia as being active within the Canberra region. The beacon was first detected early in the morning and the Southcare rescue helicopter was tasked with narrowing down the search area. Staff were dispatched from Australian Communications & Media Authority (ACMA) and AMSA provided two staff members to observe the use of direction finding equipment to pinpoint a location. After an hour of searching the beacon was located in the backyard of a home in the Canberra suburb of Kambah. The beacon appeared to have been thrown over a back fence into bushes of a house without the property owners knowledge.



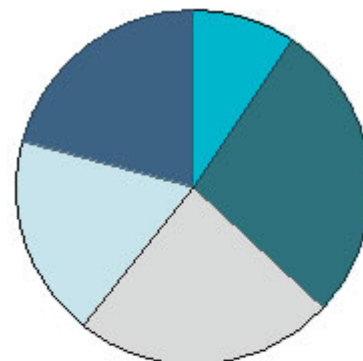
[Click here to view video footage](#)

Given the circumstances surrounding this particular beacon activation and the covert nature of where it was located, it is reasonable to conclude that the activation was a malicious one. It is an unfortunate fact that if distress beacons are not properly secured, they are at risk of being stolen and used for malicious purposes rather than the life and death purpose for which they have been designed. This particular incident emphasises several concerns that AMSA has when distress beacons fall into inappropriate hands - the extraordinary cost in both time and resources in searching for the beacon and those same resources possibly being withheld from a legitimate incident. Additionally, this scenario reinforces the necessity for owners of distress beacons, to upgrade to a 406 MHz beacon immediately and to register their beacon with AMSA to ensure that authorities can quickly determine whether an alert is legitimate thereby responding as expeditiously as possible.

Statistical information provided by the Rescue Coordination Centre – Australia helps to provide an overview of how busy staff are responding to distress beacon activations on top of other distress situations where a beacon may not have been involved.

Of a total of 141 distress beacon activations that needed to be responded to between January and March this year, 33 were actual distress situations. That equates to 108 incidents that were either malicious, inadvertent (beacon has been turned on unknowingly) or the source could not be located.

This statistical data helps to put into perspective the level of activity within the RCC against what is seen publicly with resolved search and rescue incidents.



- Hoax/Malicious
- Inadvertant
- Unknown
- Real Distress
- Real Distress No Beacon involved

Certificate of Appreciation to presented to *Alltrans* crew

AMSA's Senior Search and Rescue Officer (Maritime) Craig Longmuir presented the Captain of the *M. V. Alltrans* with a Certificate of Appreciation on Saturday 1 March 2008, for the ships involvement in the rescue of four New Zealand sailors on 14 February 2008. AMSA's Rescue Coordination Centre requested the *Alltrans* assistance due to its close proximity to the distressed yacht, *Silhouette II* after she had holed her hull 240 kilometres east of Byron Bay. Throughout the duration of the rescue AMSA's dedicated Dornier search and rescue aircraft out of Cairns and Essendon provided top-cover and radio communications. An Australian Defence P3 Orion also provided assistance during this period.

Given the adverse weather conditions during the rescue and the variance in size between the *Alltrans* and the liferaft in which the *Silhouette II* crew had needed to position themselves, the efforts of the Captain to manoeuvre the *Alltrans* to allow the liferaft to come along side exemplified extraordinary seamanship. The crew were able to secure the liferaft near the midship pilot ladder and all four of the *Silhouette II* crew were able to climb the nine metre high pilot ladder to the safety of the deck of the *Alltrans*.

You can read more information about this rescue and see dramatic video footage by visiting: http://www.amsa.gov.au/Search_and_Rescue/Silhouettellcasestudy.asp



Mark Ambroziak, AMSA Mission Control AeroRescue; Captain Mark Gunn, Master *M. V. Alltrans*; Craig Longmuir, AMSA Senior Search and Rescue Officer (Maritime) and Operations Officer Flt Sgt Colin Muller, RAAF P3 Orion Desk

AMSA Surveyors kept busy around Australia

AMSA's system of ship inspections is an ongoing targeted regime and over the last three months, 45 foreign vessels have been detained. During the same period, a number of Australian flagged ships were also inspected, however, none were required to be detained.

On the morning of 9 May, the 2004 built, Antigua and Barbuda registered, container ship *Francoise Gilot* grounded in the south shipping channel while leaving Port Phillip Bay. The vessel was under pilotage and no injuries to the crew or pollution were reported. The vessel refloated unassisted later in the morning and was able to steam to the Melbourne inner anchorage under tug escort.

AMSA detained the vessel until an underwater inspection by divers confirmed no serious damage to the hull and the ship's classification society confirmed its structural integrity and safety certification. The ship was released from detention at 4pm on Saturday 10 May after confirmation that no structural damage had been done to the vessel.

More details on ship detentions can be found at: http://www.amsa.gov.au/Shipping_Safety/Port_State_Control/Ship_Detention/



Francoise Gilot grounded in Port Phillip Bay - Photo: JP Colomb

Australian Antarctic Division and AMSA sign MOU

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between AMSA and the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) covering Search and Rescue Coordination in the Antarctic Region was signed by AMSA Chief Executive Officer, Mr Graham Peachey and AAD Director, Mr Tony Press at the AAD Headquarters in Kingston Tasmania on 23 April 2008.

The MOU formalises the relationship between AMSA and the AAD which has been progressively developed over recent years.

AMSA has sought to actively engage with the AAD since 2003. Importantly, the MOU includes operational procedures and contact and communications arrangements, and acknowledges the expertise of both agencies with respect to Search and Rescue (SAR) operations in this challenging part of the world. While AMSA's Rescue Coordination Centre - Australia has expertise in SAR coordination; the AAD has expertise in operating in the Antarctic environment and has knowledge of resources that operate in Antarctica.

AMSA is now focusing upon developing a similar MOU covering pollution response in the Australian Antarctic Territory.



AMSA CEO, Graham Peachey and AAD Director, Mr Tony Press

AMSA's re-branding goes public

AMSA publicly launched its new recruitment and retention brand "The Answer is AMSA" at Canberra's annual graduate careers fair, Tertiary to Work 2008.

The event, held at the AIS Arena attracted over 80 exhibitors from the public and the private sectors with more than 1500 students passing through the doors. AMSA's new display system, incorporating interchangeable panels and an LCD monitor was also rolled out for the first time and will be used at all future careers fairs, boat shows and other AMSA events.



To complement the new recruitment brand, a recruitment portal has also been developed - www.amsa.gov.au/jobs - which will prove a valuable resource for potential employees wishing to join the AMSA team.

On Friday 9 May, AMSA also took part in the Australian Maritime College's Maritime Engineering Careers Fair in Launceston. The day was a great success with many students taking the opportunity to gather information on a possible career with AMSA and a range of other industry representatives.

406 MHz countdown continues - Only 8 months to go!

The countdown continues towards the cut off point for 121.5 MHz distress beacons. From 1 February 2009 only 406 MHz distress beacons will be detected by satellite.

Switch to a 406 MHz distress beacon now.

Advantages of digital 406 MHz distress beacons are that they:

- can be detected faster;
- are more accurate (to within 5km compared to 20km with an analogue beacon);
- transmit vital information which can greatly assist with rescue efforts.



AMSA encourages all 406 MHz beacon owners to register their beacons with AMSA to ensure a more efficient search and rescue response.

Registration is free.

Unwanted beacons can be disposed of at any Battery World outlet around Australia.

For more information or to register your 406 MHz beacon visit: www.amsa.gov.au/beacons

Darwin Seafarers Centre Opened

The Darwin Seafarers Centre was officially open by Northern Territory Chief Minister Paul Henderson MLA on Tuesday 26 February 2008.

During his speech, the Chief Minister was highly appreciative of AMSA's contribution to the Centre through its local representatives Chowdhury Sadaruddin and Doug Robinson.

Both men were a part of the Darwin Port Welfare Committee which was formed in 2003 to develop the Centre. The committee was established under the umbrella of the National Seafarers' Welfare Advisory Council (NSWAC). The Minister has pledged his governments support for a further two stages planned for the Centre including a verandah extension, and more accommodation that will provide space for a larger recreational area.



Also present at the opening were Assistant National Secretary of MUA Rick Newlyn, ITF co-coordinator Dean Summers, Paul Toussaint Jackson from Australian Shipowners Association and CEO of Darwin Port Robert Ritchie.



Australian Government
Australian Maritime Safety Authority

AMSAboard is a maritime industry newsletter based on AMSA's operations.

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