



Australian Government

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

## Media Release

8:00am, Wednesday 8 January 2014

### Both Antarctic vessels making progress through ice

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority's (AMSA) Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC Australia) was informed early this morning that both the *Akademik Shokalskiy* and the *Xue Long* have managed to break free from heavy ice in Commonwealth Bay, Antarctica.

At about 730pm AEDT on Tuesday RCC Australia received a message from the Captain of the *Akademik Shokalskiy* stating that about three hours earlier cracks had started to open in the ice around the trapped vessel.

A short time later the *Akademik Shokalskiy* began to make slow movements in an attempt to break free from surrounding ice. The Captain reported that at approximately 8pm AEDT they had managed to successfully clear the area containing the heaviest ice and had begun making slow progress north through lighter ice conditions.

Shortly after midnight RCC Australia was advised by the Captain of the *Xue Long* that, at about 9pm AEDT, it too had managed to break free of the heavy ice and is now making slow progress through lighter ice conditions.

RCC Australia has advised the Captains of both vessels to attempt to reach open waters and advise the RCC once clear of the ice field. The *Xue Long* has advised RCC Australia it does not require any further assistance at this time. The *Akademik Shokalskiy* continues to move through the ice field and RCC Australia is awaiting confirmation that it does not require any further assistance.

The United States Coast Guard ice breaker *Polar Star* will continue to head towards the area until it is clear that both vessels are free of the ice field and no longer in danger.

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