



## MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 16 December 2011

### **UNDER KEEL CLEARANCE MANAGEMENT (UKCM) SYSTEM DECLARED OPERATIONAL IN TORRES STRAIT**

An advanced web-based system for enhancing the safety of deep draught vessels transiting Torres Strait has been declared 'operational' by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA).

The Torres Strait lies between Papua New Guinea and the northern tip of the Australian continent and is a vital shipping route for the Asia-Pacific region. Numerous large vessels transit Torres Strait and face many challenges to safe navigation due to the numerous reefs, shallow waters, complex tides and strong tidal streams.

The new system is known as the Under Keel Clearance Management (UKCM) system. It allows vessel operators and coastal pilots to plan the safe and efficient passage of deep draught vessels. The system uses accurate vessel information and environmental data from tide, stream, wind and wave sensors.

UKCM systems are often used in ports; however, this is the first time a UKCM system has been implemented in a coastal environment in Australia. The UKCM system complements the recent extension of the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait Vessel Traffic Service (REEFVTS) as one of a number of protective measures implemented by AMSA to enhance the safety of shipping in these environmentally sensitive marine areas.

More information can be found in AMSA's Marine Notice 17/2011 available on the website.

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