



MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 9 January 2012

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONDS TO CHRISTMAS ISLAND OIL SPILL

Yesterday, the general cargo vessel MV *Tycoon* broke its moorings in Flying Fish Cove, Christmas Island. Severe weather has caused the vessel to founder today, spilling oil and phosphate very close to shore.

The crew of 15 was recovered with assistance from the Royal Australian Navy and the Australian Federal Police.

Significant damage had been reported to the hull of the vessel. There is pollution evident today, in the form of phosphate in the water and oil on nearby beaches. The weather is currently preventing any pollution response measures from being implemented and may do so for at least the next 24 hours.

Arrangements for the deployment of shoreline response experts from the National Response Team are currently being arranged.

The MV *Tycoon* is a Panamanian-flagged, 85 metre general cargo ship. The master has reported that there are approximately 102 tonnes of intermediate fuel oil, 11,000 litres of lubricant oil, 32 tonnes of diesel oil and approximately 260 tonnes of phosphate onboard the vessel.

The incident was initially managed by the Christmas Island Harbour Master. In accordance with the *National Plan to Combat Pollution of the Sea by Oil and other Noxious and Hazardous Substances* (the National Plan), AMSA has sent a pollution response expert to the scene to manage pollution response. AMSA has also sent a marine surveyor to provide expert advice and support to the Harbour Master in managing the ship casualty. They arrived on Christmas Island on a chartered flight at 10:30am AEDST today and are providing technical expert advice on-scene.

Several government agencies are working together in response to this incident including:

- Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Art and Sport
- Australian Transport Safety Bureau
- Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

The next update will be issued at 2:00pm AEDST, 10 January. Incident images are available on the AMSA website at www.amsa.gov.au/media.

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