



Media Release

10.30am AEDT: 30th December 2013

Aurora Australis continues towards Russian vessel in Antarctica

The Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) vessel *Aurora Australis* is continuing to make its way to the Russian vessel beset by ice approximately 1500 nautical miles south of Hobart.

The *Aurora Australis*, which was tasked by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority's (AMSA) Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC Australia) to assist the *MV Akademik Shokalskiy*, is currently located about 11 nautical miles from the Russian vessel in the ice field.

The area is currently experiencing snow showers, resulting in poor visibility. The *Aurora Australis* is travelling slowly due to the conditions to ensure the safety of all on board.

It is unknown at this time if or when the *Aurora Australis* will arrive near the *Akademik Shokalskiy* due to weather and ice conditions.

RCC Australia is continuing to monitor the situation. RCC Australia is in regular contact with the *Akademik Shokalskiy* and the 74 people on board are reported to remain safe and well with supplies for several weeks.

If the *Aurora Australis* is unable to reach the *Akademik Shokalskiy*, it is likely the helicopter on board the Chinese flagged vessel that remains in the area will be tasked to evacuate the passengers.

The search and rescue operation commenced on Christmas morning AEDT after the Falmouth Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) in the United Kingdom received a distress message via satellite from the *MV Akademik Shokalskiy*. The distress message and subsequent coordination of the incident was passed to RCC Australia, who is the responsible search and rescue authority for this area.

Updates will be provided when further information is available.

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