



Australian Government

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Media Release

4pm AEDT: 30th December 2013

Weather conditions impact Antarctica rescue

Adverse weather conditions have resulted in the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) vessel *Aurora Australis* moving back into open water this afternoon.

The area where the *MV Akademik Shokalskiy* is beset by ice is currently experiencing winds of up to 30 knots and snow showers.

These weather conditions have resulted in poor visibility and made it difficult and unsafe for the *Aurora Australis* to continue today's attempt to assist the *MV Akademik Shokalskiy*. Further attempts may be made by the vessel in due course to undertake the rescue once weather conditions improve.

The *Aurora Australis* made it within 10 nautical miles of the *MV Akademik Shokalskiy* but is now located in open waters about 18 nautical miles east of the Russian vessel.

At this time, it is also unsafe to attempt to launch the helicopter from the Chinese vessel which was tasked by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority's (AMSA) Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC Australia) to remain in the area.

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

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.

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