On Scene

Newsletter for the National Plan for Maritime Environmental Emergencies

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New National Plan ensures effective response to maritime emergencies

Australian industry, state and federal governments have endorsed a new National Plan for Maritime Environmental Emergencies.

The plan sets out the cooperative arrangements between governments and industry to respond to maritime pollution and shipping casualty incidents. The plan, managed by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), was reviewed with extensive input from key stakeholders (from industry and government), drawing on their experience with domestic and international maritime emergencies since the last plan was put in place in 2001.

AMSA Chief Executive Officer Graham Peachey said the new plan combines pollution response and the management of maritime casualties for the first time in its 40 year existence. “Following extensive collaboration with industry, state and territory governments, and emergency services, the new plan is designed to integrate more effectively within Australia’s disaster management arrangements,” Graham said. “AMSA thanks all involved in the formulation of the new National Plan.”

A risk assessment, which was the cornerstone of the review, resulted in a boost to National Plan response equipment stockpiles across Australia. “These stockpiles are strategically located in nine ports around the coastline and can be drawn on in the event of an oil spill or a stricken vessel causing pollution in our marine environment,” Graham said. “AMSA invests in a significant training program so people around Australia have the skills to respond to any potential marine pollution.”

Graham also said that the risk assessment resulted in the establishment of emergency towage capabilities in two new regions, under contract arrangements. “These vessels can be called on to respond to marine pollution or to tow ships causing marine pollution. AMSA’s emergency towage vessel in Cairns also patrols and responds to any marine pollution event in the Great Barrier Reef, Torres Strait and Coral Sea under the National Plan.”

The National Plan has been endorsed by federal, state and territory governments and supersedes the 2001 National Plan to Combat Pollution of the Sea by Oil and other Hazardous and Noxious Substances.

AMSA thanks everyone who has assisted during this process and for your ongoing support for the National Plan.

The National Plan can be viewed on the environment section of the AMSA website (www.amsa.gov.au).
Level 1 ETV

AMSA has recently signed a new 10-year contract for Level 1 Emergency Towage Capability within the sensitive sea areas of the Torres Strait, the northern Great Barrier Reef, and the Coral Sea.

AMSA, through the efforts of its Salvage and Intervention section, entered into a contract on 5 February 2014, following a rigorous open tender process during 2013, with Brisbane-based company Australian Maritime Systems Limited.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, The Hon. Warren Truss MP, said that the contracts will provide a Cairns-based emergency towage vessel for Far North Queensland. The vessel's primary capabilities are emergency towage, passive escort, marine pollution response, search and rescue, salvage, and to provide a platform to support the maintenance of aids to navigation within the emergency towage vessel's area of operation.

AMSA Chief Executive Officer Graham Peachey said upon signing the new contract that “This allows AMSA the ability to respond to maritime environmental emergencies in sensitive sea areas of the Torres Strait, the northern Great Barrier Reef, as well as within the Coral Sea both quickly and effectively”.

The new contract provides AMSA with two new-build vessels. The initial vessel, which was already under construction as an Anchor Handling Tug Supply, will be modified for use as an emergency towage vessel for the first two years of the contract from 1 July 2014.

The second vessel is based on an Anchor Handling Tug Supply design, but will be customised even before it leaves the naval architects drawing board to undertake the specific emergency towage role. It is due to come online in July 2016. Both Australian-flagged vessels will be based in Cairns and crewed by Australian seafarers.

Grounding of a bulk carrier in the load port

Recently a bulk carrier completed the loading operation in one of Australia’s bulk loading ports whilst she was at anchor at the designated anchorage within the port limit. The vessel was brought up with two anchors using eight shackles on each. The vessel was loaded with approximately 54,400 MT of iron ore with a sailing draft of 13 metres even keel.

The weather was fine, however, due to the change of tide (the next low tide was expected in two hours after completion of the loading), the vessel experienced a strong tidal flow and this caused the vessel’s anchors to drag.

The vessel completed the loading operation upright and on an even keel. Approximately 15 minutes after completion of the loading, the master noticed that the vessel was listing to starboard. The master informed all local parties (pilot and loading master) and approximately 30 minutes after completion of the loading, it was confirmed by the pilot that the vessel had grounded.

All precautionary measures and checks were carried out by the ship’s emergency teams. The vessel sustained minor damage to the bottom keel plate in the form of deformation in ballast tanks three and four. AMSA detained the vessel subject to the clearance by the Class Society in relation to vessel’s seaworthiness. As the investigation report is not yet available, AMSA is unable to make any comments in relation to root causes or lessons learned.
The Newcastle Port Corporation was recently successful in prosecuting two cases for discharges in Newcastle Harbour, which occurred in August 2010 and May 2011.

**Magdalene**

On 25 August 2010, an oil spill was observed in the vicinity of Kooragang Island Berth 4 in the Port of Newcastle. The resultant oil spill response lasted several weeks and included areas in the North Arm of the Hunter River including mangroves, beaches and wetlands (Hunter Wetlands National Park). The response included significant shoreline and wildlife response, with approximately 40 to 50 pelicans being oiled, of which 32 were required to be transported to Taronga Zoo for intensive care and rehabilitation.

It was believed that the spill originated from the Liberian registered bulk carrier *Magdalene*, berthed at the Kooragang Island Berth 4. It was later determined that around 72 tonnes of heavy fuel oil was discharged from the *Magdalene* during de-ballasting, with the oil having entered the ballast tank through a small hole between the ballast and fuel oil tanks.

On 11 December 2013 the NSW Land and Environment Court found the owners of the *Magdalene* guilty of the discharge. The owners were fined $1.2 million (discounted from $1.8 million due to guilty plea, cooperation and paying the $1.7 million clean-up costs).

**Barge R**

Newcastle Port Corporation was also successful in prosecuting the owners of a dredging barge, *Barge R*, operating in Newcastle Harbour, for a discharge of diesel in May 2011. The vessel was fined $150,000, discounted from $250,000.

Under the *NSW Marine Pollution Act 1987*, the maximum fine for a corporation is $10 million and $0.5 million for an individual.

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**NRT Training**

The Marine Environment Division held annual training for team leaders from the National Response Team in Devonport, Tasmania during February. About 70 team leaders from across Australia travelled to Devonport to undertake safety training around aircraft and rotate in groups using equipment used in the event of an oil spill. Devonport has one of nine of AMSA’s strategically placed national stockpiles. Team leaders used the stockpiled equipment on East Devonport Beach and at the wharf. A local primary school received packs containing information about AMSA’s role in protecting the environment. Jamie Storrie spoke to local media, along with Maritime NZ colleague Scott Reid and Gold Coast based team leader Glen Jackson, generating positive media pickup on ABC News 24, Southern Cross 7 and the local paper, The Advocate.
The National Plan training team coordinated another successful training course in November 2013. The Operations Officer course was conducted at the Australian Emergency Management Institute (AEMI) at Mt Macedon, Victoria. Twenty participants undertook the program from Western Australia, the Northern Territory, South Australia, Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales, Maritime New Zealand, the Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre (AMOSC), and China Maritime Safety Authority.

Facilitators contributing to the program included AMSA, AEMI, SA Metropolitan Fire Service, Tactical Maritime Solutions, and Kirkham-Smith consultants.

The Operations Officer course is aimed at providing information and practical sessions for officers who may lead the Operations Section in a marine pollution incident, or who may play a key role in one of the functional units including: shoreline, aviation, marine, wildlife, or waste management.

The course included an exercise scenario that ran for nearly one and a half days, involving a vessel hitting a submerged object with an instantaneous release of bunker fuel and a continuing release as they made for shelter close to the NSW coast. The vessel had 170 persons on board and this was the primary consideration in finding a suitable place of refuge. The vessel lost more bunker fuel when at anchor resulting in considerable impact on the shoreline.

Participants were rotated through the Operations Officer role and also had the opportunity to lead and work in functional units.
Transport for NSW ran their annual NSW state marine incident exercise, Exercise Sooty Tern, on 15-16 October 2013 at the SES Emergency Operations Centre in Port Macquarie. The desktop exercise was attended by over 70 personnel from across Transport for NSW, Roads and Maritime Services, NSW Port Corporations, emergency services agencies, local government, and volunteer organisations.

The exercise focused on responding to a marine oil spill in the waters and shoreline of the World Heritage Listed Lord Howe Island, located approximately 650 kilometres due east of Port Macquarie. This offered a unique and complex location to test NSW preparedness to respond in a remote location. Lord Howe Island is recognised for its beauty, clean water and beaches. It has the southern most coral reef in Australia and its surrounding waters also have a high proportion of rare and endemic animals, plants and invertebrates requiring unique protection and attention. The exercise provided a rare opportunity to bring together personnel from agencies across NSW to ensure they are ready to work together in the event of an oil spill in this remote, important and environmentally sensitive area.

The objectives of the exercise were successfully met and consequently NSW has:

- improved the understanding and familiarity of key response personnel with the NSW State Waters Marine Oil and Chemical Spill Contingency Plan
- examined the complex issues involved in dealing with an incident in an environmentally sensitive remote location such as Lord Howe Island which has World Heritage status
- tested the overall Functional Area support under the NSW Emergency Management Arrangements.

Feedback from Exercise Sooty Tern was very positive and demonstrated that the exercise strongly supported previous participant training, reinforced learning and assisted with confidence building. Almost 90 per cent of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they would feel much more confident if they were involved in a marine pollution response and that NSW could respond effectively to an incident of this nature at Lord Howe Island.
AMSA assists Pacific countries with gap analyses

Officers from AMSA’s Marine Environment Division have been busy conducting gap analyses of port waste reception facilities around the Pacific, in partnership with the Secretariat for the Pacific Region Environment Programme (SPREP). Annalisse Sly and Alice Fenwick assessed waste reception facilities at Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea from 26-28 February, and Lisa Crowle assessed Suva, Fiji and Noumea, New Caledonia from 3-7 March, assisted by Anthony Talouli from SPREP and Scott Wilson who is on secondment from AMSA to SPREP.

Annalisse and Scott will soon assess Papeete in Tahiti.

The gap analyses for these countries have been organised by SPREP in conjunction with local agencies and the ports, and with the assistance of AMSA. These assessments will inform the development of a Regional Reception Facilities Plan for the Pacific, to enable these countries to meet their obligations under MARPOL to provide adequate waste reception facilities for ships.

Ballast Water Workshops in the South Pacific

A two-day regional training workshop on Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement (CME) of the Ballast Water Management Convention was held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (PNG) during 24 - 25 February 2014. This workshop was the third in a series of workshops on this issue and was organised by the Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP). Other workshops in this series were presented in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in October last year. These workshops were presented as part of the IMO/SPREP Pacific Ocean Pollution Prevention Programme (PACPOL) and in co-operation with the PNG National Maritime Safety Authority and AMSA.

The training was delivered by an officer from SPREP, Mr Anthony Talouli, and an officer from AMSA’s Marine Environment Division, Annalisse Sly. The training included: an introduction to ballast water management and harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens; the International Convention for the Control and Management of ships Ballast Water and Sediments 2004 (BWM Convention) and supporting guidelines; other international instruments, principles and strategies related to the BWM Convention; flag, port and coastal State aspects of ballast water management and implementation of the Convention; and compliance, monitoring and enforcement elements of the BWM Convention. This workshop effectively brought together officers from a wide range of organisations from PNG to discuss the issue of ballast water management in their country.
AMSA welcomes

Matt Johnston
Matt became the new Manager, Marine Environment Standards, Marine Environment Division (MED), in November 2013, following the retirement of Paul Nelson. Prior to joining AMSA, Matt worked for 15 years in the Commonwealth Department of the Environment. For most of that time he was a regulator in the environmental impact assessment area in audit, approval and assessment functions. He also represented Australia internationally at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) meetings of the London Protocol on sea dumping, and worked with AMSA and other agencies during the Montara oil spill. For the last five years Matt managed sections responsible for environmental impact assessments of port developments, and offshore petroleum exploration and production.

Sally Pinder
Sally joined MED as the newly created Business Coordination and Quality Officer in November 2013. Prior to joining AMSA, Sally worked for six years with a local law firm in the areas of HR and operations, training and project management. Sally’s background is in information management and technology. She brings with her 15 years’ experience in legal, business and HR administration. Sally’s role primarily focuses on business support and quality management for MED.

Trish Malone
Trish joined the MED team as the Response Planning Officer in December 2013. Trish has been an employee of AMSA since 2005. Prior to joining MED Trish was the Registrar of Ships for five years and was the Office Supervisor with Marine Operations and Qualifications in the Ship Safety Division. Trish also has 13 years’ experience with the NSW State Emergency Service with on the ground operations, Incident Management Team and Incident Controller experience. Her role will primarily be to assist with the development and maintenance of operational policies and procedures and the management of the National Response Team and National Marine Oil Spill Contingency Plans. Trish will also coordinate AMSA and offshore industry consultations, and respond to marine pollution incidents.

Familiarisation training in Devonport

Members of the National Response Team (NRT) and the AMOSC Core Group undertook equipment familiarisation training in Devonport Tasmania from 12-21 February. Attendees undertook nationally-recognised training in working safely around aircraft, attended information sessions on the use of dispersants, and utilised National Plan equipment. Participants worked with shoreline and offshore booms as well as skimmers, rope mops and helicopter- and vessel-based dispersant spray systems. In all, over 70 NRT and AMOSC Core Group personnel attended the 3 sessions conducted over a week and a half. The training was reported widely in local media and attended by AMSA CEO Graham Peachey.
AMSA has recently implemented the National Environmental Maritime Operations (NEMO) system to manage its pollution and salvage incidents. NEMO is a web-based customisable incident management system based on Noggin OCA (Organise, Communicate, Act), which captures information from multiple sources in a variety of formats to provide a real-time common operating picture during an emergency event. It delivers information management and decision support tools which will assist AMSA and the states/Northern Territory during National Plan activations. Through a system of predetermined dashboards, the system has been tailored to present specific incident information to different user groups.

The first development phase of NEMO was rolled out in May 2013 to deliver basic pollution and marine casualty event logging capabilities to support AMSA’s Pollution and Salvage Duty Officers’ tasks. This first phase of the system includes logging and documenting incident-related information; integration with the NEXUS Search and Rescue system for the automatic delivery of pollution and salvage notifications from AMSA’s Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC Australia); and external web portals for pollution asset management, pollution reporting by the public, and trajectory modelling request management.

This basic capability will now be built upon during a second development phase to include more defined incident management functionality to provide response-specific tasks and processes during the activation of a response to a major event. It will also be upgraded to extend access to the NEMO system to external National Plan stakeholders to allow them to utilise NEMO for managing events within their jurisdictions.

By opening up the system to external stakeholders, the next rollout of NEMO will greatly assist AMSA provide the catalyst for a common operating system with incident response capabilities across many National Plan stakeholders. This will result in AMSA gaining improved situational awareness of events occurring outside its jurisdiction and assist in engaging earlier in any response process. The next rollout of NEMO is expected to be completed by 30 June 2014.
Training:
The Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre (AMOSC) has an exciting expanded training program for 2014, aimed at industry oil spill responders at a tactical and strategic management levels. In response to industry’s need, and building on the core accredited training courses, AMOSC now offers:

- specialised courses in:
- shoreline clean up and assessment,
- aerial surveillance (of oil spills),
- oiled wildlife response – management, and
- oiled wildlife response – rehabilitation.

Each of these ‘additional qualification’ courses are run over several days out of both the centre’s Geelong and Fremantle training hubs. The full training calendar for 2014 can be found at:


For course costs and bookings, please go to our online booking system at:


Oiled Wildlife Response (OWR):
AMOSC will become the coordinator for Oiled Wildlife Response (OWR) for AMOSC members, with several key milestones being achieved late in 2013. There are now 2 x 20ft purpose built OWR containers owned by AMOSC for member companies to access during an OWR incident. One container is held at Fremantle and the second container is located at Geelong. Each container, custom designed and built by Dwyertech in New Zealand, is capable of cleaning up to 500 oiled wildlife over a five-day period and has been modified for Australian conditions. The containers are fully road transportable and able to be quickly established in the field. The containers have been commissioned and are available for non-industry use through National Plan arrangements.

In addition to the OWR containers, AMOSC and Apache Energy Limited are working with the Department of Parks and Wildlife (WA) to create a common strategic OWR plan underpinned by several regional plans for Western Australia. This work is being funded by eight AMOSC member companies and will benefit industry and government alike. The plans will hold details around food sourcing for the injured animals, water for cleaning, and suitable OWR sites in the WA areas.

AMOSC will work with several OWR specialist providers to build the WA capacity for industry—this will be a medium term focus for medium term outcomes to be met.
AMOSC welcomes Jo Prescott, who joined the team late in 2013 in a part-time, ongoing capacity as administration assistant. Jo is based in AMOSC’s Geelong office.

AMOSC will also welcome Dr. Siân Herrington in April 2014. Siân, who will join the team on a six-month contract as Technical Officer, will be based in AMOSC’s Fremantle office. The focus of her work will be on scientific and environmental oil spill response projects.

International events during 2014

AMOSC continues to strengthen its links with the international oil spill response community by contributing to overseas forums and conferences. Some of the stand outs for the year include:

Petroleum Association of Japan - Oil Spill Symposium, February 6-7

In its 15th consecutive year, the theme of this year’s symposium was Organizational and Technical Developments Following Recent Oil Spill Incidents. AMOSC General Manager Nick Quinn was invited to speak at the symposium covering Industry Oil Spill Arrangements in Australia, where he focussed on (exploration and production) response preparedness since the Montara spill. Nick joined a range of speakers from a variety of organisations including Oil Spill Response Limited, the International Tanker Owner’s Pollution Federation, Japanese government departments, and Oil Spill Response Organisations (OSROs) from Finland and Vietnam.

International Oil Spill Conference (IOSC), May 5 – 8

The IOSC has as its aim to create a global colloquium for public, government, academia, industry, and response organisations to address all aspects of oil spills impacting the environment, and to promote international sharing of best practices and lessons learned from oil spill incidents.

Environment Canada – 37th AMOP Technical Seminar on Environmental Contamination and Response, June 3-5

This year’s seminar includes special sessions on Diluted Bitumen/Pipeline Spills, and oiled wildlife response. Environment Canada has accepted AMOSC’s proposal for a paper and speaking session on Developing an Oiled Wildlife Response Model for Australia. AMOSC looks forward to discussing this piece of work with colleagues from around the world.
Key information for effective oil spill planning and response in WA will soon be available online. The Department of Transport (DoT) is expected to soon launch its brand new Oil Spill Response Atlas (OSRA) Web Map Application (WMA). For the first time, the layers of OSRA will be able to be viewed and accessed via a secure portal on the DoT website by both internal and external users granted a secured password and login.

OSRA WMA will be launched on Geocortex and will provide users with a number of functional tools similar to those found in the OSRA toolset. Users will be able to import shape files and layers such as oil spill trajectory models, use basic search and identify functions to locate areas of interest, draw points, lines and polygons with coordinates as well as produce basic query reports and pdf maps. The mobile functionality will greatly assist in the ability to relay information accurately and timely between the field and incident management without the need for a sound understanding in ArcGIS programs.

The OSRA WMA is not intended to replace the full capability of the ArcGIS OSRA, but to provide DoT and WA responders with a user friendly, functional and accessible alternative to assist in oil spill planning and response. OSRA WMA will be a secure platform to protect data from being extracted and provide assurance that datasets provided to DoT will remain controlled and for the use of oil spill response. The release of OSRA WMA will
encourage the coordination of oil spill response resources and allowing the option for a central hub to collate information vital for WA responders.

**WA oil spill response coordination training**

Between October 2013 and January 2014 the DoT Oil Spill Response Coordination (OSRC) Unit conducted three one-day deployment exercises with Geraldton, Esperance, and Bunbury Port Authorities. These one-day deployment exercises were tailored to suit each location with a combination of personnel from the port authority and key stakeholders in these regions. A total of 55 personnel attended these exercises. 

DoT is working on a long-term project towards the production of several instructional videos covering common oil spill response equipment, practices and techniques used in Australia. Since its compilation in 2013 several copies of WA's State Response Team Ro-Boom deployment video have been made available to stakeholders. The video is now available through the DoT WA web site (www.transport.wa.gov.au).

WA's annual exercise, to be run and hosted by Fremantle Port Authority, is scheduled for 26-28 November 2014.
What’s happening in Victoria

Status of VicPlan
The Victorian Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (DTPLI) is continuing its review of the state’s plan for marine pollution and casualty responses (VicPlan); to ensure that is reflects best practice response arrangements and aligns with the National Plan and Emergency Management reform arrangements. The former Regional Contingency Plans will now also be incorporated into the main VicPlan. VicPlan will be circulated to subject matter experts from across government agencies and industries, including AMSA in March 2014.

Regional and state Exercise Cuttlefish
More than 50 people attended Exercise Cuttlefish, a strategic exercise held in October 2013 to test the state’s capability to respond to marine casualty/marine pollution emergencies. This discussion exercise examined how Victorian authorities, in collaboration with industry, would manage a scenario involving a stricken ship, leaking oil while drifting toward the coast of Phillip Island. Senior representatives from agencies including DTPLI, Transport Safety Victoria, the fire services, Victoria Police, Oil Response Company of Australia (ORCA), AMSA, Patrick Ports Hastings, and salvors Svitzer Australia wrestled with the scenario as it unfolded over three hours, in front of an attentive audience. The outcomes of the exercise have been documented and will inform the development of new guidelines for managing marine casualty incidents in Victoria.

Exercise Pinguino, held by Phillip Island Nature Parks (PINP) on 13 November, was the first in a series of two exercises designed to test the Parks’ preparedness for a significant oil spill impacting on the region’s sensitive species and environment, including the iconic Little Penguin population. This discussion exercise, involving more than 70 Nature Parks Staff, and other agencies such as DTPLI, Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI), AMSA, Country Fire Authority (CFA), and Bass Coast Shire Council, evaluated and informed participant’s awareness of the PINP Oil Spill Contingency Plan and how it would be implemented. The outcomes from the exercise will be used to further develop the plan.

Training and exercises in 2014
Victoria will run additional training and exercises in 2014, including:
- Incident Controller 24-28 March
- AIIMS 2-3 April and 9-10 April
- Logistics 26-30 May
- Shoreline Clean-up and Refresher 23-27 June.

DTPLI are working with the CFA, AMSA and AMOSC to develop an accredited Safety Officer course for marine pollution incidents.

DTPLI are liaising with NSW for a possible cross-border marine pollution exercise in the Gippsland region in May 2014. This exercise is yet to be scoped out.

Staff Changes, Marine Pollution Team
Welcome:
Linda Evans – Manager, Marine Pollution

New look for Marine Pollution Team
The Marine Pollution Team is now sporting its new response uniform. This was the first phase of a rollout of response personal protective clothing. The second phase includes role-specific personal protective equipment.
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