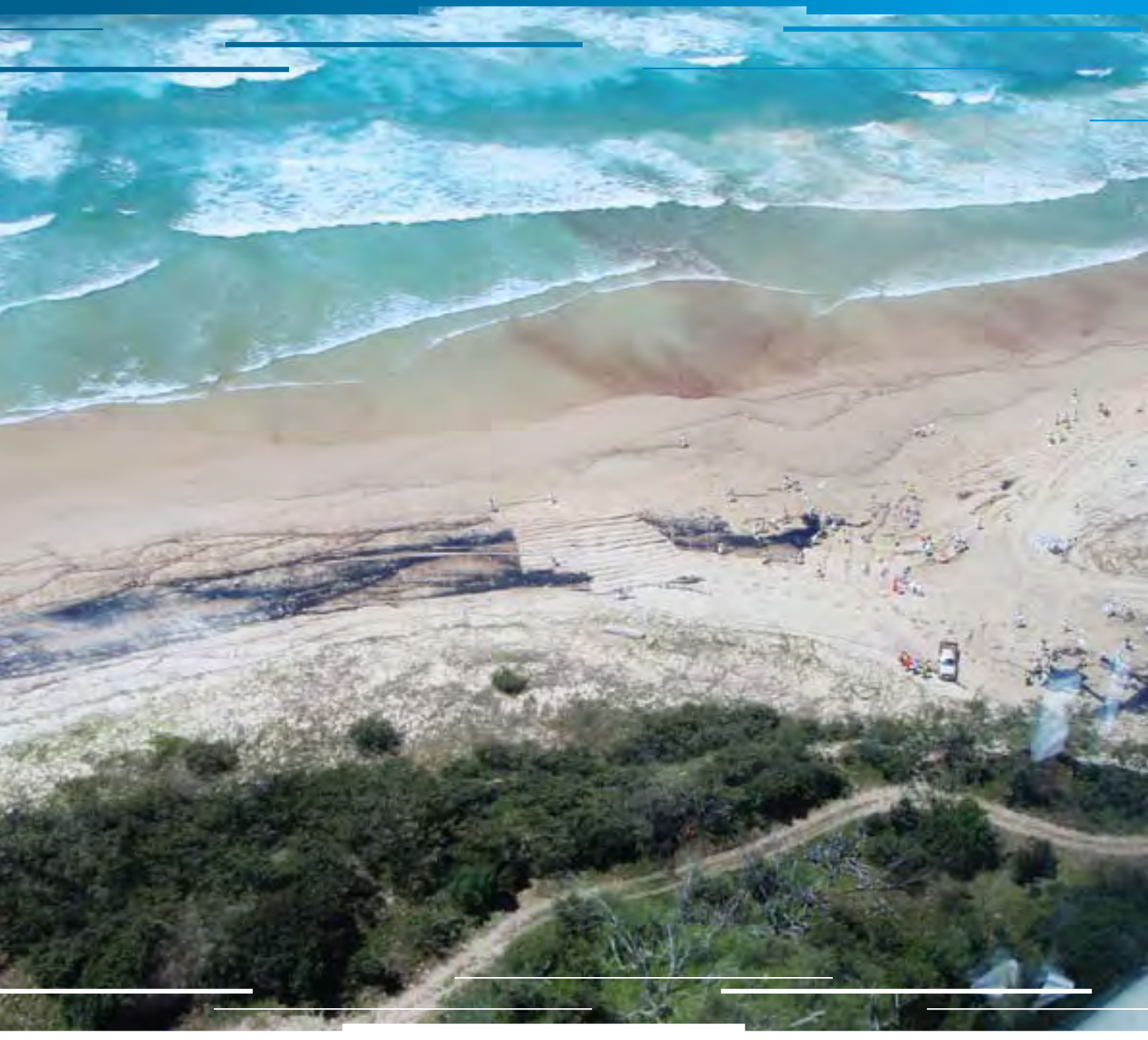


# Seascape

April-June 2009 Volume 6 Issue 2



Moving Queensland forward

## From the helm



**Captain John Watkinson,**  
General Manager,  
Maritime Safety Queensland

I apologise for this edition of *Seascope* arriving late but with the recent oil spill all hands have been on deck, and on the beach, dealing with the disaster and subsequent clean up. However it has given us the opportunity to talk about the spill and provide an accurate perspective of what happened and the action taken by Maritime Safety Queensland.

I must take the opportunity to thank the hundreds of staff and volunteers who became involved in the clean up operation – and some remain involved at this time. The dedication and willingness of all involved has been inspiring and has shown how multiple agencies can work together for a common cause.

I am very confident that in time the spill will be just a memory and visitors to the beaches and headlands affected will see no evidence that oil was ever present.

On another sad note, recently three fishermen went missing in the waters east of Burnett Heads and after lengthy sea search, the only trace found was a fuel container. This reminds us of the dangers and how unforgiving the sea can be for boat owners who venture into offshore waters and the unexpected occurs. While details are unknown and these will be determined through investigation in due course, I urge all boat owners not to let their guard down at any time when out boating but especially at sea, and to always be prepared for the unexpected.

Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) became a hot topic leading into and after the 1 February

2009 closure of monitoring the 121.5 MHz beacon. As expected most boat owners left it until January to purchase a digital 406 MHz beacon and found that demand far outweighed the stocks available. Maritime Safety Queensland's initiative to introduce compulsory carrying of the 406 MHz model from 1 November 2008 certainly helped alleviate the expected demand closer to the shutdown date but, despite this, many left it too late.

The disposal of the 121.5 MHz is now causing problems for the Australian Maritime Safety Authority with owners dumping them into waste disposal bins without deactivating them first. Unfortunately the 121.5 signal can and may be detected by overflying aircraft and spark a search to find the offending beacon. Battery World outlets will take and dispose of your 121.5 MHz beacon at no charge, so be responsible and take it to a Battery World store.

Easter will be over by the time this edition of *Seascope* reaches you so I hope you had a safe and enjoyable Easter on the water.

### *Safe boating*

**Captain John Watkinson**  
General Manager

**YOU'RE THE SKIPPER  
YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE!**

## EPIRB update

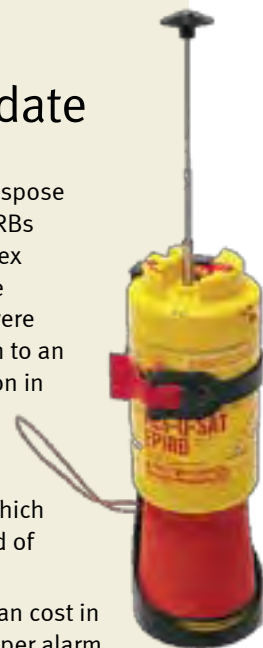
Boat owners are reminded to dispose of superseded EPIRBs responsibly. Energex Helicopter crews were called out in March to an emergency situation in Caboolture only to find a false alarm caused by an old 121.5 MHz EPIRB which had been disposed of in a rubbish tip.

False activations can cost in excess of \$10,000 per alarm, wasting valuable resources which could better be used for real emergencies.

The 121.5 MHz EPIRB has ceased to be monitored by the international satellite system, but can still sometimes accidentally activate, and the signal can be picked up by a passing aircraft. The 121.5 MHz EPIRB has been replaced by the 406 MHz model which has a unique code providing information about the owner. This allows false alarms to be resolved with a radio or phone call, and rescues to be effected more quickly and efficiently. The 406 MHz EPIRB also has the benefit of greater location accuracy. Models with a Global Positioning System are accurate to 120 metres.

Maritime Safety Queensland and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority has made arrangements with Battery World to provide a free EPIRB disposal service to ensure that wasteful false alarms do not happen. Battery World safely disarm and recycle the old EPIRBs.

Boat owners are also reminded that a false distress signal is an offence against marine safety legislation. Please do the right thing and dispose of old EPIRBs correctly.



## Upskilling training for marine surveyors

Maritime Safety Queensland is supporting accredited designers, surveyors and builders to have a good working understanding of the three new standards for vessel construction that were introduced by Amendment List 6 in October last year.

The Uniform Shipping Laws Code (USL) standards for Fast Craft, Fire Safety and Engineering have been replaced by the corresponding sections of the National Standards for Commercial Vessels (NSCV). Maritime Safety Queensland conducted training on these standards across the state.

In preparation of further standards changes that come into effect through Amendment List 7 in October this year, and in recognition that these standards are already available for use in Queensland, Maritime Safety Queensland also organised training last November for the Lloyds Rules for Special Service Craft (SSC).

The National Marine Safety Committee (NMSC) entered into an agreement with Lloyd's Register to conduct workshops on the application of the Rules in relation to NSCV Section C3 – Construction. Queensland was the first state to take advantage of this agreement by engaging Lloyds to run courses in Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

Lloyds Sydney Design Support Office manager Kevin Porter, who led the training, said the course proved both positive and practical. 'The course provided a background to the origin of the Lloyds Register's Special Service Craft Rules, their development and application as well as the use of the supporting software as referenced under the new standard,' he said.

In total, 31 industry participants have been trained in Lloyds Rules and a further 51 participants attended the Amendment 6 standards training.



Kevin Porter, Manager, Lloyds Sydney Design Support Office delivers training in Brisbane.

## Brisbane Tinnie and Tackle Boatshow

Recent events



The 2009 Brisbane Tinnie and Tackle Show and National 4x4 Show and Outdoors Expo, will go down as a record year, with attendance in excess of 31,000 people.

Maritime Safety Queensland continued its unbroken run of exhibiting at every Tinnie and Tackle show since it began.

This year the concept of 'Courtesy on the Water' interlinked with the statement 'You're the skipper – You're responsible' and the messages were prominently displayed to the public.

Maritime Safety Queensland staff and Brisbane Water Police officers reported a high volume of enquiries from intending boat owners right through to the highly experienced during the event.

Captain John Watkinson, General Manager Maritime Safety Queensland, commenting on the

Courtesy and safety messages featured in this year's banner displays.

themes of the display said, 'We'd like people to take the time to stop and consider everyone else on the water and how their behaviour affects others when boating. Often, simply being considerate to others on the water can improve safety outcomes for everyone.'



## Marine incidents

# *Pacific Adventurer* clean up

Oil from the *Pacific Adventurer* washed up onto the beach at Moreton Island. Photos courtesy of Gary Howard.

On 11 March 2009, a 185 metre container ship, *Pacific Adventurer* was en route from Newcastle to Indonesia via Brisbane. At 3.15am the ship ran into heavy seas approximately seven nautical miles East of Cape Moreton, and reported the loss of 31 of a total load of 50 shipping containers which were being carried on its deck. The ship also reported it had ruptured fuel tanks, and later reported it had lost around 20 to 30 tonnes of heavy fuel oil.

The ship was transiting through international ship navigation lanes and while there were storm conditions at sea they were not considered to be significant enough to prevent commercial shipping movements.

Maritime Safety Queensland immediately set up an incident room at its headquarters in Brisbane and liaised with other affected agencies. The Queensland Coastal Contingency Action Plan, which is aligned with the National Plan, was implemented. Under this plan, Maritime Safety Queensland makes a thorough assessment of the situation and response strategies are put in place.

By the time the spill began washing up on the Sunshine Coast, Bribie Island and the east coast of Moreton, it became clear that the total heavy fuel oil lost was well over 200 tonnes.

The priority aim of the response was to recover the heavy fuel oil as quickly as possible while preserving the long term sustainability of the environment. Environmental experts were called in to advise the best approach to cleaning based on the ecological sensitivity of the area.

Captain John Watkinson, the State Marine Pollution Controller, reported, 'Maritime incidents of this scale are not normal but contingency plans were in place to respond quickly'.

A Maritime Safety Pollution Response team assessed the extent of oil to begin the clean-up operations. The movement of the oil slick continued to be monitored as well as the search for the lost shipping containers.

The use of fixed wing aircraft to deploy oil spill dispersants was considered during the early hours of the oil spill response, but quickly dismissed as unsafe, unrealistic and impractical. The prevailing weather conditions, together with the need to deploy the dispersants as close as possible to the water surface, were major factors taken into account. At the time of the incident seas were between 4-6 metres, with winds at gale force.

Meanwhile, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, Australian Transportation Safety Bureau and Maritime Safety Queensland are conducting a thorough inquiry of the incident.

From the first day a public enquiries hotline was set up which took over 200 calls. The most common type of call was from people offering their assistance either through financial contributions, machinery or people power. >>





## Pacific Adventurer Facts and Figures

### Other agencies involved

- Port of Brisbane Corporation
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Local government authorities
- Queensland Health
- Emergency Management Queensland
- Queensland Fire and Rescue
- State Emergency Service
- Queensland Ambulance Service
- Queensland Police
- Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries
- Queensland Transport
- Queensland Rail
- Department of Main Roads
- Road Tek
- Queensland Tourism
- Australian Maritime Safety Authority
- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
- Department of Public Works
- Queensland Corrective Services
- Royal Australian Navy – issued the minehunter HMAS *Yarra* to search for the containers of ammonium nitrate lost overboard.

### Other useful information

<b>Health</b>	Queensland Health advised the primary health risk is from skin contact which can be easily remedied by washing with soap and water. While the heavy fuel oil does contain some chemicals which are carcinogenic (cancer causing) this risk is associated with long term regular or continuous exposure, for example in an occupational setting.
<b>Drinking water</b>	The Department of Natural Resources and Water experts advised that it is highly unlikely that the underground aquifers on Bribie or Moreton Islands would be contaminated by the oil spill.
<b>Seafood</b>	The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries conducted extensive seafood testing from each catch in the prawn and crab fisheries which were assessed as safe. Queensland Health advised that the risk of fish and seafood contamination from oil and ammonium nitrate from the incident is low.
<b>Water quality</b>	Water quality tests by the Environmental Protection Agency and Australian Institute of Marine Science found the levels of oil to be below detectable levels and nutrient levels to be extremely low.
<b>Wildlife</b>	The impact of the oil spill on wildlife is low with only a few reports of wildlife being affected. The Environmental Protection Agency continues to monitor impacts on wildlife including clutches of turtle hatchlings on the Sunshine Coast.
<b>Volunteers</b>	There was an overwhelming response on the public enquiries hotline from people across Australia offering assistance with the cleanup. No volunteers were required as many of the local and state government agencies pooled resources to ensure all people were appropriately skilled and coordinated through a central agency.

### For further information

*Pacific Adventurer* oil spill updates: [www.msq.qld.gov.au](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au)  
 Camping and vehicle access to Moreton Island: [www.epa.qld.gov.au](http://www.epa.qld.gov.au)



» 'Many people wanted to express how sad they were about the situation and to ask how they could help', said one of the call centre operators.

Hundreds of people were deployed to the affected areas in a coordinated response to the clean up using a variety of techniques. Manual labour was used to clean up the oil from environmentally sensitive areas and mechanical equipment was used where appropriate.

Swire Shipping donated specialised sand sieving equipment from Dubai which basically sieves through the sand picking up any left over clumps of oil known as tar balls.

On Moreton Island, at the height of the clean up, a mix of more than 350 workers from around Queensland – roadworkers, rail operators and council crews were brought in each day to hand-shovel up to 8000 bags, or 250 tonnes, of contaminated sand a day.

Peter Keyte from the Port of Brisbane Corporation helped to head up operations on Moreton Island to coordinate hundreds of people from multiple departments across all levels of government. For Peter the clean-up operations have been the most challenging of his 20 plus years in the shipping industry.

'The environment here is our first priority and we're making sure that we don't do anything that could make the situation worse' he said.

'This is a huge logistics exercise and we've got a number of limiting factors: we're on a sand island, we're dealing with sand roads, it's extremely difficult to access some places, and we've got to take care not to damage the environment', he said.

Anthony Loveridge from Maritime Safety Queensland worked as a team leader from day one. He said that spirits were high amongst the crew, despite the oppressive conditions.

'The crew are all really into it and they have a sense of achievement because they can see what they've done, and what they've got to achieve. If we let them some would work 24/7,' he said.



Captain John Watkinson said, 'While the clean up crew are hard at the long, tiring job of manually cleaning up the shores, Maritime Safety Queensland will review responses to identify lessons and fine tune contingency plans should this happen again'.

Good progress continues to be made in the oil spill clean-up. Maritime Safety Queensland is working with the ship representatives to ensure a suitable plan is in place to ensure the movement of the *Pacific Adventurer* is carried out safely and without further pollution.

To track the progress of the clean-up go to the Maritime Safety Queensland website: [www.msq.qld.gov.au](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au)





## NMSC Summit Down Under

**P**eter Chennell, Sea Safety Manager for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution in the UK will be the keynote speaker for the Summit Down Under to be held by the National Marine Safety Committee (NMSC) on Friday 22 May on Queensland's Gold Coast.

'Peter brings a wealth of experience as a safety expert, teacher and author, including in his current role overseeing the principal rescue service for recreational boaters in Britain,' said NMSC CEO Margie O'Tarpey.

'He will be speaking about getting the balance right between safer boats and better rescue services.'

Mr Chennell said that he was pleased to be invited to Australia to share his knowledge on recreational boating safety.

'As the number of leisure users increases, the base level of safety knowledge drops,' he said.

'Sadly, many sea users are complacent about the risks involved and some people overlook the simplest safety precautions.'

Ms O'Tarpey also said that the marine industry was facing a range of challenges to be competitive in the world market, and that the Summit would address some of these issues.



UK sea safety expert, Peter Chennell, keynote speaker at the Summit.

'Topics include how to do business smarter in this challenging financial climate, how to address national and international boat building standards and environmental issues such as greenhouse gas friendly fuels.'

'Emerging issues will also be outlined, such as consumer attitudes to boating safety and whether we need a national recreational boat operators' license in Australia.'

'Our Standards Team Leader John Henry and Marine Queensland's Charles Dickson will detail the latest developments for recreational boating standards in Australia while ISO Small Craft Committee Chairman Nik Parker will speak on international standards.'

The Summit Down Under opens on the evening of Thursday, 21 May with a cocktail and networking function at the Gold Coast International Hotel.

The Summit is generously supported by Maritime Safety Queensland, Marine Queensland and the Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show. For more details on the Summit, go to [www.nmsc.gov.au](http://www.nmsc.gov.au).

## Surfers crossing Gold Coast seaway

**S**ince the Gold Coast Seaway opened in 1986, surfboard riders have chased the break that forms on the northern wall. Access to this break means having to cross the seaway, and for surfers, the easiest and shortest route is to paddle across.

This practice comes with some dangers, bearing in mind the seaway can be a very busy waterway. Boat owners traversing the seaway need to be vigilant at all times for surf board riders who are difficult to see in most conditions, but even more so if a swell is running. With a low profile, a paddling surfer can easily be lost in the swell, particularly if low early morning or late afternoon sun is also in the eyes of the driver.

The previous Minister for Transport, the Honorable John Mickel, visited the Seaway in January accompanied by representatives of the Surf Riders association to raise awareness of the dangers surfers face when making the trip across the Seaway to South Stradbroke. Mr Mickel urged not only that boat owners be on the lookout for surfers but also for surfers to lookout for their own safety and wear bright clothing to make themselves more visible.





Getting to know you

# 150 years of maritime service

This year marks one hundred and fifty years of Queensland's existence. In 1859 Queensland separated from New South Wales to become a colony in its own right and Sir George Bowen, sworn in as Governor of Queensland on 10 December 1859, set about creating the machinery of government.

The Harbour Master and his staff were placed in the establishment of the Customs Department which was under the control of the Colonial Treasurer for Queensland. As the only contact the emerging colony had was by ship, one of the earliest Government Departments to be established was the ancestor of Maritime Safety Queensland, the Harbour Master's Department. This Department has had a long and interesting existence.

Between 1824 and 1842, while Brisbane was a convict settlement, the only ships allowed entry to Moreton Bay were those authorised by Sydney. Most of the vessels were Government vessels bringing soldiers to serve a term of duty in Moreton Bay, convicts, people to be employed in the settlement, a few official visitors and stores.

In February 1842 the Moreton Bay district ceased to be a penal colony and was thrown open for free settlement. Many ships, which had until then bypassed Moreton Bay, began to call in. Smaller steamships were able to cross the bar at the river mouth and moor in the South Brisbane reach, but larger, deeper draught vessels had to anchor in the bay outside the river bar while passengers and cargo were lightered up the river to Brisbane.

In 1846 Brisbane was declared a Port of Entry. By 1848 the number of ships entering Moreton Bay had increased considerably. The first 200 immigrants to come directly from England arrived on the barque *Artemisia* in Brisbane on 15 December 1848, after a sea journey of five months.

The needs of the settlement, its isolation and dependence on water transport for stores, stone and limestone for building, and the need for exploration, necessitated the state's early entry into boat building.

In 1857, Brisbane people pushed strongly for a channel to be cut through the bar at the mouth of the

Brisbane River so that ships of large tonnage could come alongside the wharves to load and unload without 'the unnecessary annoyance or the expense of lighterage'. Mail to England would sometimes miss the ship in Sydney because of delays at the bar caused by tides and rough weather.

Boundaries of the settled areas moved steadily northward and westward. Ports developed where there was access to the hinterland and safe anchorage for ships. Most of the ports were river ports which suffered from the inconvenience of floods, siltation and difficult navigation. The new state took positive steps to remedy the defects of the ports by dredging, surveying and placing beacons in channels. Gradually trade through these ports increased.

It was recommended that a Portmaster be appointed to take overall charge of the Harbour Master's Department, and the appointment of thirty-one year old George Poynter Heath as Portmaster, with a salary of £400 per annum, was made in January 1862. The Department became known as Department of Ports and Harbors (as it was spelled then). By 1885 the spelling had changed to 'Harbours'.

The first piece of legislation passed to regulate marine traffic along the Queensland coastline was the *Marine Board Act of 1862*. This was an Act 'to Provide for the Better Management of the Ports and Harbors of Queensland and for the Better Regulation of Shipping and to Constitute a Board called The Marine Board of Queensland'.

The Marine Board was to be the Department responsible for preserving and improving ports, harbours and waterways, the regulation of shipping and seamen, the superintendence of lights and other sea or harbour marks, the placement or removal of moorings, and licensing of pilots.

Important ports were established at Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Broadsound, Mackay, Port Denison, Townsville, Port Hinchinbrook and Port Albany.



Coal Wharf at South Brisbane, 1875.