



Wunma incident investigated



A Board of Inquiry will investigate the circumstances surrounding a ship abandoned in the Gulf of Carpentaria during a tropical cyclone in February 2007.

On February 7, the 5000 tonne ore barge Wunma was disabled after taking on water during tropical cyclone Nelson. The crew had to be rescued by helicopter, and the ship was later towed safely into the Port of Weipa.

The ship is engaged in transporting zinc ore between Karumba and anchored bulk carriers in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

In early February, when a tropical depression worsened, she was taken fully laden from the Port of Karumba to a position in the Gulf of Carpentaria to ride out the cyclone. Due to water ingress into the ship, propulsion and electrical power were lost. Crew were rescued by helicopter and returned to Karumba via Mornington Island.

With many ships such as the Wunma playing a vital role within Queensland's mining industry, and the regularity of cyclones in the area, the Board of Inquiry will be seeking to ensure the continued safe operation of ships operating in the Port of Karumba as well as other cyclone prone areas across far north Queensland.

The purpose of a Board of Inquiry is to look at the causes and the underlying systemic and operational factors that can contribute to marine incidents.

In announcing the inquiry, the Honourable Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Paul Lucas MP said "while you can't stop cyclones from occurring, it is important that there are stringent procedures and practices for ships that operate in these environments.

"The Board will independently look at all of the facts and make recommendations that will hopefully have safety benefits for the whole of the marine industry operating in far north Queensland."

A report is likely to be made available by the Board in the later part of 2007.

New 'polluter pays' laws introduced

Cleaning up ship-sourced pollution should be the financial responsibility of the polluter. This 'polluter pay' ethos is at the heart of new legislation which was introduced on 18 May 2007.

The new legislation requires all ships 15 m or more in length to have insurance sufficient to pay for potential pollution clean up, salvage and wreck removal.

The insurance policy must meet the following requirements:

- All recreational ships more than 15 m but less than 35 m in length must have an insurance policy that provides A\$250,000 for pollution clean up and A\$10,000,000 for salvage and wreck removal.
- All commercial ships more than 15 m but less than 35 m in length must have an insurance policy that provides A\$500,000 for pollution clean up costs and A\$10,000,000 for salvage and wreck removal.
- All ships 35 m or more in length must have a policy that provides A\$10,000,000 for pollution clean up costs, salvage and wreck removal.

A 12 month transitional period will give ship owners between now and 17 May 2008 to organise appropriate insurance cover. From 18 May 2008 any owner of a boat over 15 m that does not have the appropriate insurance cover could be liable for big fines.

For those ships which cannot reasonably obtain insurance, the ship owner may be able to seek an exemption to the insurance requirement. In such cases the ship owner must apply to Maritime Safety Queensland.

Exemptions will only be granted where the owner cannot legitimately obtain insurance because there is no appropriate form of cover available. Exemptions will not be given because the poor condition of the vessel make it uninsurable.

Maritime Safety Queensland will be writing to the owners of these larger vessels advising them of the new requirements and what they will need to do within the next 12 months to make sure they comply.

For further information contact Maritime Services Branch on +61 7 3120 7428.



Jumpinpin surprise

After enjoying an offshore fishing expedition east of South Stradbroke Island, two gentlemen set for home through the Jumpinpin Bar.

It was a perfect day, with little wind, as they made way in their 5.9 metre bow-rider. The conditions were so calm that donning lifejackets was not considered necessary.

The Jumpinpin Bar, notorious for shifting sands and changing conditions, presented the fishermen with an errant wave which stood up and crashed onto the starboard side. The boat rolled, and both men and a pet dog were thrown into the water.

Luckily some PWC enthusiasts came upon the two men, plucked them from the water and took them safely to shore. The two men received medical attention for minor injuries, but unfortunately their canine friend was lost along with the boat.

Lessons

- A lifejacket is not a life saver unless you're wearing it. Legislation makes it a requirement for all persons in an open boat less than 4.8 metres in length to wear lifejackets when crossing designated coastal bars. However, wearing a lifejacket while crossing coastal bars is highly recommended in all boats.
- Crossing coastal bars can be dangerous. Even in the calmest conditions, expect surprises. Before attempting to cross a coastal bar you should:
 - contact your local marine rescue group for an update on bar conditions including tide and weather information
 - if possible, cross on an incoming tide
 - stand off for a period of time to assess the wave patterns and determine deeper areas more suitable for crossing
 - ensure all deck openings, hatches and doors are securely battened down or closed
 - ensure all loose gear is secured.
- When approaching a bar from the sea, increase power to maintain speed within the set of waves, position the boat on the back of the wave – do not surf down the face of the wave. Adjust the boat's speed to match the speed of the waves but do not attempt to overtake the waves.
- The master of a boat has a responsibility to his passengers to ensure their safety when crossing a bar.
- If you regularly take your dog/pet boating, consider its safety. For example, there are lifejackets for dogs available on the market.

Marine incidents and fatalities up: report

Queensland's Marine Incident Report for 2006 details a significant increase in both reported marine incident numbers and the number of fatalities resulting from these incidents.

While it is hoped that the unusually high number of fatalities and incidents in 2006 represents an aberration only, this is not guaranteed.

For 2006, 701 marine incidents were reported in Queensland – an increase of nearly 8.7% on the number of reported incidents in 2005 and previous four-year average of 646.5.

It remains unclear whether the increase in reported incident numbers is due to a greater awareness among the boating public of the requirement to report marine incidents or is a result of a general increase in incidents occurring.

There were 17 recorded fatalities – four more than in 2005. This fatality outcome is significantly higher than the previous four-year average of 10.5 fatalities per annum. All but one of these fatally injured people ended up in the water as an outcome of the incident.

In light of the figures, the General Manager of Maritime Safety Queensland Captain John Watkinson said the onus of responsibility is upon everyone within the state's maritime community to be attentive to opportunities to improve boating safety.

"Maritime Safety Queensland is working closely with industry and interstate marine safety colleagues in developing nationally consistent boating safety policies, standards and initiatives that will deliver safety improvements not just in 2007 but for decades to come," Captain Watkinson said.

Other key findings of this year's report include:

- The most frequently reported types of marine incidents were collisions between ships (134) and unintentional groundings (116).
- 11 people died in incidents involving recreational vessels. These incidents included three double fatalities. A further six people died in incidents involving commercial vessels.
- 20 of the 47 reported fatal and serious injury incidents occurred in offshore waters – up by more than 40 per cent on the four-year average.

A full report can be viewed on the Maritime Safety Queensland website or a copy on CD can be ordered by emailing name and postal address details to: maritime.safety@msq.qld.gov.au



Master Class 5 pilot

Practical approach gains wide approval

In the words of Jeff Osborne, Director and Master at Tangalooma Resort, “Just because they get their ticket doesn’t mean they get the job”. He is one to advocate for the variety of practical experience offered by the recently trialled Master Class 5 pilot, the first of its kind to integrate classroom theory with on-the-job training.

The traditional classroom program of up to nine consecutive weeks followed by an exam has been replaced with 30 theoretical and on-the-job workshops spread over nine months, aimed at broadening students’ knowledge of commercial ship operations.

Candidates are eligible for a licence based on Maritime Safety Queensland examiners reviewing sea time submissions and observing their practical skills during the training process. This aspect, along with other course components, is under review as feedback from various sectors of pilot participants is collated.

Michaela Moss from Maritime Safety Queensland has been working with TAFE assessors, course examiners, managers and the author of the training materials to develop course requirements.

She identifies communicating with industry as a chief issue influencing the program’s success.

“Industry and TAFE have been very willing to participate. With industry showing interest in competency based training, we need to assist the process by being clear about the level of commitment (required) to make it successful,” she said.

“Through communicating across training sectors, we can look at competency based training options such as the traineeship model, which could support industry and the student.”

Michaela said industry partnerships in trainee-style programs were a good workplace strategy that promoted a progression of skills while gaining underpinning knowledge.

As part of the pilot, skills that are not easily gained in some sectors (such as coastal navigation) have been offered by other operators, emphasising the potential for industry partnerships to drive the program.

Michaela is interested in exploring a more formal arrangement for traineeship-style programs and group training options.

Both she and Lee Durkin, Acting Marine Operations Manager at the North Institute of TAFE, agree that the outlook for the industry would be a strengthened workforce as new workers bring better skills and experience.

Tangalooma Resort is one of the commercial operators supporting the program by offering to make vessels available for training. Master Jeff Osborne operates three high speed aluminium catamarans, holding 350, 200 and 120 passengers, and has several soon-to-be skippers in his deckhand ranks.

While he admitted there have been “headaches” along the way, he believes “all in all, it’s going to be a good course”.

With one deckhand going on board Big Cat Cruises dive charter as part of the course, Jeff has full confidence that the experience has helped to thoroughly prepare him for the role of skipper.

The trip on the Big Cat, from Bundaberg to Newport Waterways Marina and to several dedicated dive sites in between, counted toward the week at sea required in the course and gave students a chance to consolidate the knowledge they had gained from the classroom. It also gave participants a taste of skippering a charter vessel complete with fee-paying passengers. Along the way the students were required to tackle the inevitable unexpected challenges of a coastal passage, providing them with a real taste of life at sea.

“We don’t do much coastal or voyage planning for traversing across Moreton Bay to Tangalooma and back,” Jeff said. “Our boats are mostly suitable for guys to learn radar on, whereas Big Cat Cruises are ideal for teaching coastal navigation.”

By formalising industry partnerships, all students are able to gain experience in the broad range of competencies that are required for a Master Class 5 licence.

Representatives from a range of stakeholder groups agree

that fine-tuning of the program will need to consider aspects such as assessment, and ensuring that examiners are satisfied that candidates have proved their competence in all areas.

Some suggestions include giving the examiners more time with students, and maintaining the oral component as an essential part of assessment to ensure they are 100 percent confident in giving students a licence.

Individualising the course to match training and time frames to those students’ level of experience and knowledge is another point for discussion.

A report from an external provider will discuss various aspects of the pilot program and help to form strategies for improvement that Michaela said could guide the future of the course.

“Feedback has been very positive, as a strategy that promotes marine safety. One of the big outcomes is looking at the things we did well, and acknowledging the systems that need change...and to start to address them.”



Profile – Hydrographic Services Branch

The safe operation of commercial shipping in Queensland ports depends on the continual monitoring and subsequent maintenance dredging of the entrance channels and berths (dredge in Gladstone harbour pictured); many of these operations are supported by the Hydrographic Services Branch.

Top: The hydrographic survey vessel, QG Norfolk.



Taking an in-depth view of Queensland waters

Each day, millions of dollars of Queensland's export earnings depend on water depth. Ships laden with minerals or other valuable commodities steam out of our ports, the pilots confident in the course plotted and the amount of clearance under the keel.

Confidence in pilotage and navigation through the state's ports owes much to the behind-the-scenes work of the Hydrographic Services Branch (Pilotage and Hydrographic Services) of Maritime Safety Queensland.

The unit is responsible, among other things, for the mapping and monitoring of the sea bed and surrounding coastal detail of many of the major ports along Queensland's coastline including Gladstone, Port Alma, Hay Point, Abbot Point, Cape Flattery, Weipa and Karumba.

The work of Hydrographic Services is ongoing – without it, the unseen terrain under much of Queensland's waterways would require guesswork.

Water depths shown on charts, so valuable to mariners navigating up and down the Queensland coast, owes much to the highly skilled work of the surveyors, vessel crew and supporting personnel from the unit.

The continual surveying of port and harbour entrances along the Queensland coast is a critical element in the safe navigation of the thousands of shipping movements each year.

The work of hydrographic surveyors also feed into calculations that determine the volume of export material loaded in each ship. By knowing the exact depth of water at a particular point of the tide, ships can be loaded to suit the predicted departure time. The deeper the water at a particular time, the more can be loaded.

During his 21 years working as a hydrographic surveyor with Maritime Safety Queensland, Ray Martin, the Manager of Hydrographic Services, said he has witnessed technology revolutionise the methods used


and the accuracy achieved when surveying underwater terrain.

He said the development of Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) such as GPS and sophisticated sonar equipment has cut the manpower and time needed for surveying. And with Queensland's vast waterways, the savings have been significant.

"In the old days, up to as many as 10 people would go out as a survey party for six months to survey an area. The survey party could include two surveyors, vessel master, several deckhands and leadmen - we'd even have a cook on board," he said.

"In places like Weipa, it would take up to a week to set up solar panels for the microwave navigation systems and to establish tide gauge networks before we could even start surveying.

"Now we can arrive on the site and start surveying straight away. Roughly speaking,



productivity has probably improved by about 40% with the technology we have today.”

Mr Martin said that older sonar technology sounded the ocean bottom through a 30 degree arc beneath the boat. Today’s multi-beam sonar technology scans through about a 130 degree arc with sonar coverage very much dependant on water depth.

Computer imaging can transform the processed multibeam data received, into a virtual painting of the ocean floor, down to small seabed detail. If needed, sounding data can be transformed into computer-generated 3D ‘fly-throughs’ that take the viewer on a journey through underwater canyons and hilltops.

“What took us about thirty survey runs to gather soundings in the Weipa South Channel, now takes only six,” said Mr Martin. “And the equipment on board the vessel corrects for the pitch, roll, yaw and heave of the vessel. When you survey offshore with these sonar systems, in relatively rough conditions of a one-and-a-half metre swell, you need this equipment to ensure the quality of the captured data.”

With capabilities to deliver underwater mapping with such accuracy and speed, Hydrographic Services often receive requests to assist in ad hoc or emergency underwater searches.

For example, when two fishing ships were discovered missing from their moorings in Mourilyan Harbour after Cyclone Larry in 2006, Hydrographic Services were despatched. The harbour was closed because of the potential risk presented by collision with the submerged wrecks, while the main channels were scanned with the full array of underwater surveying technology. The search came up empty and the port re-opened. Eventually the two boats were found grounded in mangroves. If large collateral, such as a ship’s anchor or a container, is dropped in a port entrance channel or port approach and presenting a navigation hazard, subsequent delays caused by port closure can cost millions of dollars. Hydrographic Services can determine the location of such hazards quickly so they can be removed.

Occasionally, the branch’s services are

called upon to assist Queensland Police in criminal investigations or to assist emergency service agencies with searches for lost aircraft and sunken vessels.

Surveying history repeats

Hydrographic Services is the custodian of hydrographic survey information dating back to the 1800s.

This information, available in various digital forms, is highly sought after for historical research. It is also an important tool for studies and modelling for vessel simulators, environmental impact studies, and future port development in a number of Queensland ports.

The Royal Australian Navy uses data from Hydrographic Services to supplement its own information to update admiralty charts along the Queensland coastline.

Maritime Safety Queensland’s Spatial Services Unit integrates the data into its Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database, which is used to produce the popular Beacon-to-Beacon Directory and various boating safety charts.

Vessel traffic system turns 10

Ten years ago Queensland launched the world’s first internationally recognised mandatory ship reporting system.

REEFVTS is a joint initiative of the Queensland and Australian governments, which seeks to improve navigational safety in the Torres Strait and Great Barrier Reef, reducing the risk of shipping incidents and associated pollution and environmental damage.

A ceremony to mark the tenth anniversary of the launch of REEFVTS (previously REEPREP) was held at Hay Point in May.

The ceremony was officiated by the Honourable De-Anne Kelly, MP,

Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services, and Mr Bruce Wilson, Director-General of Queensland Transport, who presented certificates of appreciation to Vessel Traffic Service Operators past and present.

“It was great to catch up with all those associated with ReefVTS and discuss its progress since implementation,” said Robyn Newton, a current Vessel Traffic Service Officer at REEFVTS.

In December 2006, the system was significantly upgraded to a Coastal Vessel Traffic Service (REEFVTS) supported by satellite-based position reporting by ships transiting the region.

REEFVTS provides ships with information about potentially conflicting traffic movement, navigational information to assist on-board decision-making and maritime safety information.

The ability of REEFVTS to compile and maintain a near real-time traffic image of ships transiting the region has been instrumental in improving situational awareness for ships in the Great Barrier Reef.

Left: Robyn Newton, a Vessel Traffic Service Officer at REEFVTS, is presented a certificate of recognition of the service’s anniversary by (from left) Hon De-Anne Kelly, Bruce Wilson, and John Watkinson, General Manager for Maritime Safety Queensland.





Spilcon 2007

Conference delegates were offered the best advice and latest information about oil spill prevention and response techniques at the "Spilcon" conference held in Perth recently.

The conference, the 11th of its type and hosted by Western Australia's Department of Planning and Infrastructure, featured an exhibition of response equipment and service providers and a static and on-water display of oil spill response equipment on the Swan River.

The theme for the 2007 conference "Global, Regional, Local", was reflected by the number of international and national delegates who attended.

Maritime Safety Queensland officers assisted in the on-water display, drawing upon experience gained from coordinating the 10th Conference in Brisbane in 2004.

Stop press

Six oil spill response personnel from Maritime Safety Queensland were deployed to Newcastle in early June to assist with the salvage efforts at the scene of the stranded bulk carrier Pasha Bulker. The carrier ran aground during a storm and heavy seas.

At the time of printing, Maritime Safety Queensland personnel were preparing as part of the "first strike response team", ready for the first attempt at refloating the carrier.

The attendance of the Maritime Safety Queensland personnel is provided as part of a coordinated national pollution response plan.

BELOW: Display operators from Maritime Safety Queensland L to R – Gavin Ruffell, Peter Finn, Andy Russell, Ash Titmarsh.



Trailer sailers go bay-to-bay

Over the Labour Day long weekend, trailer sailing enthusiasts once again gathered for the annual Bay-to-Bay Race in the Great Sandy Strait from Tin Can Bay to Urangan.

The race was run in idyllic conditions with a fleet of over 180 yachts of every description participating. As usual, the yachts and crews rested overnight at Garry's Anchorage, on the

western side of Fraser Island, before setting off for the final run to Urangan Boat Harbour.

The event, sponsored by the Hervey Bay Yacht Club, is supported by Maritime Safety Queensland, supplying the launch QG Andrew Petrie as a safety vessel. No incidents were reported, and a great time was had by all.



New Marine Information Bulletins

Marine Information Bulletins cover important information for the maritime industry, and are also available on the MSQ website under 'Publications', or by contacting your local Maritime Safety Queensland office. The latest bulletins include:

- Electrical standards and licenses – Recreational craft
- Electrical standards and licences – Commercial craft
- Passenger Vessel Accommodation Standards

Contacting Maritime Safety Queensland

To contact the editorial team of Seascope either email us at: seascope@msq.qld.gov.au with 'Dear Editor' in the subject line, or post your letter to:

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Upcoming events - 2007

JULY

- 11-12 National Marine Safety Committee Marine Skills Industry Forum, Brisbane
- 17-19 Crocfest, Thursday Island

AUGUST

- 20 Maritime Safety Queensland Industry Forum, Cairns
- 29-Sept 2 Brisbane International Boat Show, Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre

MarineSafe regional meetings

AIRLIE BEACH

- 23 July
- 3 September

BRISBANE

- 1st Tuesday of every month

Mackay	07 - 4944 3700
Whitsundays	07 - 4946 2200
Townsville	07 - 4726 3400
Cairns	07 - 4052 7400
Weipa	07 - 4069 7165
Karumba	07 - 4745 9284
Thursday Island	07 - 4069 1351