



The Good Oil

Issue ten

June 2006

Welcome to The Good Oil – an e-newsletter designed to keep people in touch with what's happening in the oil spill response (OSR) area of Maritime New Zealand. Comment/contributions/feedback are welcome and can be emailed to: steve.corbett@maritimenz.govt.nz.

Latest news

- 1) Exercise Hard Rock certainly lived up to its brief to test Maritime N.Z.'s readiness for a major incident and so put a heap of people under real pressure during the first week of May. The scenario started with a Security alert and unfolded to reveal a SAR operation and Tier 3 Responses in Marlborough and Wellington.

It was the first time that the Tier 3 National Response Team (NRT) and the NZ wildlife deployable container were mobilised and MPRS General Manager Nick Quinn hailed this a success.

"There are some areas that need tidying up, but the evaluation of how the team stood up for the first time and related to the Tier 3 exercise has been very favourable. The enthusiasm and motivation displayed individually and collectively as a team throughout the exercise, bodes well for an actual Tier3 incident."

An exercise debrief will be written in two parts - one assessing efficiency and the second assessing effectiveness. Once this report is released, direction on NRT training and team maintenance issues will follow.

The OSR part of the exercise was blessed with good weather and The Sounds provided a spectacular backdrop to those recovering the sawdust and those lucky enough to get out and watch them.

The exercise again proved that the greatest asset you can have in a crisis is leadership and teamwork supplemented by individual skills and experience. You still need focus and sound processes but the ability to work together is paramount and the best reason for doing this type of exercise.



Director Maritime NZ Russell Kilvington also praised the exercise.

"However one tries, exercises can't simulate real life in full. If you don't want 'to play', it's easy to say that the exercise scenario is silly, state things like "we wouldn't respond like that in the real thing", or just refuse to engage but I saw none of this behaviour.

"What I did see was people turning out for a simulated emergency at 4am in the morning, after two (deliberately) long and gruelling exercise days without a grumble, knowing that this can be the reality of life - and often is.

"I'd like to thank everyone involved for their commitment and application. This contributed greatly to the exercise's success."

- 2) I shot over to Darwin to fill in at an AMSA OSR Management course. Despite spending more time on planes and in airports it was very enjoyable and worthwhile. It was a well-run course with a good deal of emphasis on media relations. The rescued Beaconsfield miners provided a rich source of discussion – as did recent sporting fixtures! Most folks I met had a NZ story to tell and one guy had even been involved in the *Wahine* salvage.
- 3) Those of you who were at the Regional Council Workshop at the end of last year will remember an excellent presentation from AMSA's Trevor Gilbert on Hazardous Substances. These photos of *Hyundai Fortune* illustrate some of the dangers he spoke of.



- 4) Environment Canterbury are asking the Environment Court to consider raising the amount that spillers can be fined as part of Court action following two spills from the Panama flagged vessel *Antares*. Around 400 litres of LFO spilled into Lyttelton Harbour in 2004. EC legal counsel said the fines were set six years ago and it was time they were raised while defence for the owners argued that existing fines were a deterrent and spills were taken very seriously.
- 5) In a clear reminder of the challenges faced in pollution prevention in the Islands, the Fiji Ports Corporation is still trying to find the owner of the fishing vessel *Eleven* after it ran aground in Suva Harbour. The whereabouts of the captain and crew is unknown, as officers found the vessel deserted when they boarded for inspection.
- 6) A 38,906 dwt bulk carrier *Ocean Seraya* foundered on the Indian coast after being driven on to rocks during a violent storm in May.

All 21 crewmembers were rescued with the exception of the second officer, who is still missing and a serious oil pollution threat exists after the bulk carrier broke in two.

An estimated 37 tonnes of bunker fuel escaped, causing an oil slick along Goa's Polem beach.

Smit Salvage was called in to assist on salvage and pollution control. Their tug *Merouis* went to the scene while efforts to contain the spread of oil concentrated on the use of booms and extracting all oil and oily waste from the tanks. Smit reported that as at June 15, all the bunker fuel has now been removed.



They are now completing the final skimming of oil traces in the cargo holds and engine room and floating on the surface of the water.

- 7) And finally just to prove it ain't over 'til it's over...

Divers with underwater cutting torches and a crane operator on a barge are dismantling the tilted wreckage of *Selendang Ayu*.

The vessel broke in half after grounding off Skan Bay in a 2004 Bering Sea storm.

An estimated 335,000 gallons of fuel oil and marine diesel spilled from the vessel fouling local bays.

Workers cleaning oil off the last six miles should be done in around two weeks while the vessel's owner has paid out about US\$100 million for the clean-up so far.

Three beaches will not be cleaned because they are too steep and difficult to access but the state has asked the vessel's owner for a monitoring plan. If the oil is not cleaned naturally in a few years they may be asked to clean up those areas too.

Comms lessons

- 1) The media often ask us to face our critics but would you choose to go up against N.Z.'s most iconic figure? That was the lot of Everest conqueror Mark Inglis when he copped flack from Sir Edmund Hillary. I thought he coped extremely well – he didn't try and duck the issue and was available, he communicated his key messages, he had external champions supporting him, he expressed sympathy for the dead climber's family and most importantly he took ownership of the issue by offering to meet with Sir Ed to talk through the discussion. An unenviable position to find yourself in, especially considering the gloss it took off his own remarkable achievement, but I'd call it a points victory for the Inglis corner.
- 2) Remember that the media make money for their advertisers by telling as interesting a story as possible in order to gain the largest audience as possible so reporters often need you to say things they can't say themselves. Take the opportunity to get your message across in a way that suits you AND the media.

Quotable quotes

"I'm not sure I want popular opinion on my side -- I've noticed those with the most opinions often have the fewest facts."

Bethania McKenstry

"A newspaper consists of just the same number of words, whether there be any news in it or not."

Henry Fielding

"I've slept with worse!"

Peter Osgood after winning the FA Cup and taking it home with him.

Thanks for reading Issue 10 of The Good Oil

Steve

Some information sourced from Lloyd's List.