

THE GOOD OIL

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▶ A Welcome to The Good Oil – an E newsletter designed to keep people in touch with what's happening in the oil spill response area of Maritime NZ. Comment/contributions/feedback are welcome and can be emailed to: julia.lang@maritimenz.govt.nz.

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Oil spill experts from Maritime New Zealand's Marine Pollution Response Services (MPRS) say the grounding of the 40,000-tonne coal carrier Pasha Bulker during Sydney's storm events further strengthened New Zealand's close working relationship with Australian authorities.

Pasha Bulker

The Panama-registered carrier ran aground on Nobby's Beach in wild weather on 8 June as she waited to load 58,000 tonnes of coal from Newcastle Port. She was already carrying 700 tonnes of fuel oil, 38 tonnes of diesel and 40 tonnes of lube oil.



Pollution response crews deploy a boom as the Pasha Bulker looms in the backdrop

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) called upon their kiwi neighbours to offer additional expertise on the ground, both in a participating and observing capacity, during what has been described as Sydney's worst storm event in nearly a decade.



Pasha Bulker beached just off shore

General Manager of MPRS, Nick Quinn, says their team jumped at the opportunity to work with AMSA following a call at the height of the alert phase when the Australians feared up to five vessels could possibly run aground.

New Zealand is part of the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation.

"If NZ had a situation like that, we too would be calling upon our Trans-Tasman neighbours for assistance," said Nick.

"It was great to see our reciprocal relationship swing into action and this reinforces our close ties with AMSA in these situations – the experience is invaluable and the cross pollination of trained responders is healthy for both countries."

Oil spill responders Scott Read and Mark Cavanagh joined Nick at Nobby's beach together with two national response team

members. They were Marlborough Harbour Master Alex van Wijngaarden and Auckland Regional Council's Mick Courtneil.

"The grounding and possible oil spill from the *Pasha Bulker* had been confirmed but there were several other vessels struggling due to adverse weather conditions," explained Nick

"Fortunately, they managed to stay out of harms way which meant we could focus solely on the *Pasha Bulker*," he said.

The team worked in both the Incident Command Centre and with the various field teams deploying environmental protection equipment in support of the response effort. Public interest remained high given the close proximity the carrier was to the beach.

The *Pasha Bulker* was successfully refloated three weeks after the grounding with no harm to the environment.

Special plan to minimise spill risk

A special contingency plan to help minimise the risk from potential oil spills in the Hauraki Gulf is to be completed shortly.

MNZ staff Dayne Maxwell and Alison Lane have been working with representatives from the Northland, Auckland, and Waikato Regional Councils to produce the Hauraki Gulf Marine Oil Spill Contingency Plan, which recognises the special values of the area and the heightened risk of a potential spill on them. The plan has taken about a year to produce.

"This is the second special area oil spill contingency plan that has been developed, and follows a similar one developed for the Fjordland area to help minimise the potential impact of any oil spill," says Nick Quinn, General Manager Marine Pollution Response Service.

"The plans recognise the significant impact a spill would have in these areas, and complement national and regional response plans which are already in place to respond to the threat that this poses," Nick says.

"In particular, this latest contingency plan recognises that there is an increased risk to the Hauraki Gulf due to the number of oil tankers visiting the New Zealand Refining Company at Marsden Point, and the large volume of shipping movements in and out of the Port of Auckland."

The Hauraki plan covers an area from the Firth of Thames, up to and including the Poor Knights Islands, and all the offshore islands in between. This area also includes three regional council boundaries.

The planning process began with an environmental risk assessment in each of the three regions. This involved consultation with regional council staff and other interested parties, such as the Department of Conservation and local iwi, to identify important sites for protection and assess their sensitivity to the impacts of a potential spill.

"Site sheets" are being produced for each area, which include a description and map of the site and any resources that may be at risk. The sheets also identify any operational issues which may

affect an oil spill response operation, and outline the preferred response option(s) for that site.

In addition, the plans include scenario-based planning for oil spills in each of the three regions, such as a large scale wildlife response, a large scale dispersant operation, and an oil spill response on one of the remote islands in the gulf. Procedures for the transfer of oil are also being produced in order to reduce the risk of a spill occurring.

Exercise Manaia, Whangarei

A warm and winterless Whangarei provided the perfect backdrop for MPRS Exercise Manaia, held over two days in May.

The exercise saw around 50 of NZ's oil spill response experts put to the test during the demanding and ambitious dual phase operation, with Northland Regional Council (NRC) staff providing fantastic support hosting and being part of the MPRS team.

The exercise scenario ranged from an initial response to a small localised marina spill, before "escalating" to a large, national response to a tanker spill at the Marsden Point oil refinery.



Pollution response crews deploy a boom in Whangarei harbour

At the height of the exercise, the team were responding to a situation where the damaged tanker had "spilt" around 25 tonnes of heavy fuel oil into Whangarei harbour – posing a serious and significant threat to the local environment and economy – and, of course, generating huge "media" interest.

This saw the media team, comprising Ross Henderson (MNZ), NRC's Jason Dawson and Taranaki Regional Council's Rusty Ritchie tested under pressure.

The team also assisted the National On-Scene Commander, providing advice, support and communications strategies to help manage the media and public interest in the spill.

Despite these challenges, overall the media team worked well together and managed to respond to the various demands placed upon it, and as Ross Henderson pointed out, it was a privilege to work with a couple of real pros in Jason and Rusty!

Regional Council Workshop '07

The annual MPRS regional council workshop was held on 23 and 24 August in Auckland. The interactive workshop provided an opportunity for regions to report back on spills or exercises as well as obstacles they faced – many of which seemed involve legal issues. We thought we'd share some feedback from Horizon's Regional Council participants Jared Halstead and Evan Lloyd. Here's what they had to say!

"Congratulations on another excellent Regional Workshop. As both relative 'newbie's' to marine oil spill preparedness and response, we find them a very valuable experience

Meeting counterparts from other regional councils and learning from the experience of those who have been involved in the oil spill scene for a great deal longer than ourselves makes these workshops well worth while.

Listening to ROSC's from other regions talk about the incidents they have been involved in during the year is particularly valuable as it illustrates how the training is applied in an actual spill.

Of course as usual the extensive networking and "shop talk" at the after match function can often be one of the most valuable parts of the any workshops.

Keep up the good work and we'll look forward to catching up again at next year's workshop."

Jared & Evan
Horizons Regional Council

New Marine Spill Response course structure

Following feedback from Regional Councils and course evaluation forms, the team at MPRS has reviewed its oil spill responder training.

Planning and Training Officer, Toni Pressman-Hyde, said the previous course programme, which involved separate courses over three stages: fundamental, management and field operations, has been refined and updated.

Instead of three separate trips to MPRS for each stage of training, the course content has been merged together and condensed, offering attendees 4-5 days of intensive training which sees them qualify to responder or manager level.

Toni says distance learning packages are being prepared to support the new training structure covering level one introductory material around how and why systems are set up to respond to oil spills.

"Material will also be written for specialist roles at Tier 2 Regional Responder level covering positions such as administration, logistical and GIS-type roles," explains Toni.

"This is to provide in-depth information to those who will fill these roles in a response and will have completed the distance learning course," she said.

People in support roles would also be able to gain an appreciation of field operations through their regional equipment exercises, as well as participating in desk top exercises to experience an Incident Command Centre.

Upcoming Course Dates!!!!

12 – 16 November

3 – 7 December

Meet the media team



Julia and Ross

Many of our *Good Oil* readers will now be aware that the former editor of this newsletter, Steve Corbett, left Maritime New Zealand in June.

Steve's departure has seen Media Adviser Julia Lang take over the majority of the MPRS media/community relations work, assisted by colleague Ross Henderson. Ross joined MNZ from Parliament.

Julia and Ross are both former daily news journalists and have PR backgrounds in local and central government. They will lead Tier 3 media and community relations responses.

Shell Tier 3 Exercise



Picture this: A 182 metre tanker has lost power in rough seas about 4 nautical from the Maui A oil rig in Taranaki...

The tanker is carrying 43,000 tonnes of crude oil, 795 tonnes of fuel oil and 90 tonnes of diesel. The engine room is flooding and the rudder is locked at 20 degrees. One crew member was lost overboard and has subsequently died.

That was the scenario put to Maritime New Zealand when it participated in a response exercise involving Shell, Shell Todd Oil Services (STOS), Shell Technical Services (STASCO) and an overseas vessel owner/operator based in Norway.

Surprisingly, this scenario was not too far removed from a real response MNZ faced some three years ago when a Pacifica ship lost engines and began drifting towards the rigs. Fortunately, in that case the ships engineers were able to restore power and the vessel resumed her normal voyage.

The exercise allowed MNZ's Director's Advisory Response Team (DAT) together with Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand to pull together, refine roles and test a new Incident Management System. It was extremely worthwhile and concluded after six hours.

For those who are unaware, the intention of the DAT team is to provide the Director with technical, Search and Rescue, pollution response, legal, media and political advice to ensure MNZ exercises it's obligations in the best possible manner and protects both life and the environment.

Taranaki spill

Taranaki Regional Council oil response teams swung into action last week following oil washing ashore along a 10km stretch of coastline west and south of Okato.

The operation was centred on the volcanic-sand beaches that comprise 50% of the affected area. The rest of the area is comprised of tightly packed boulders that are difficult to clean without major disruption to the near shore.

The oil was first reported on Tuesday, 23 October. It had the consistency of tar balls and was thinly spread over a stretch of the coastline from north of Kaihihi Road, near Okato, to Paora Road, near Puniho.

The Council's Compliance Manager, Bruce Pope, says the Council is grateful to farmers in the area who assisted with the clean-up by lending machinery and allowing access over their land.

"Their co-operation, at a particularly busy time of the year for them, is appreciated," he says. "The Council's first priority in an incident like this is to take immediate action to minimise environmental damage.

"Now we are nearly through that vital first phase and Maritime New Zealand are continuing with investigations into the likely source of the oil, and this Council is assisting them."

Samples of the washed-up oil are being analysed and compared with oil samples from two offshore hydrocarbon platforms.

In the meantime, coastal inspections will continue and further cleaning up will be undertaken as and when required if residual oil rises to the surface on sandy beaches, or shifts along the coastal area.

A marine biologist will also monitor the intertidal zone for any signs of adverse effects from the oil.

The cost of the clean-up is expected to total more than \$40,000.

Thanks to council's information officers Rusty Richie & Peter Ledingham for contributing the picture and above text.



Taranaki Regional Council spill teams cleaning up oil off the beach

EARL relationship forged

A secondment opportunity between MNZ's Marine Pollution Response Service (MPRS) and East Asia Response Limited (EARL) has been incredibly worthwhile, say participants.

The innovative move, aimed at increasing the experience and knowledge-base of Maritime New Zealand's Marine Pollution Response Service saw Planning and Training Manager Rob Service leave in March for Singapore while EARL provided experienced equipment technician, Richard Anderson from Southampton, UK, to assist in the delivery of training in New Zealand.

EARL is a leading member of the Global Alliance, a worldwide network of marine oil spill responders who respond to oil spills and are involved with training and consultancy work.

After six months abroad, here's what Rob and Richard had to say about their respective secondments.



Richard Anderson sits down with school pupils at MPRS, Auckland

Richard says: "My role in NZ saw me working mostly with the equipment technicians here at Te Atatu, doing regular maintenance and repairs on the response equipment as well as presenting at regional responder courses.

I have also participated in running exercises around the country. The first exercise that I was involved in was a preventative booming exercise at Wenderholm National Park with the Auckland Regional Council. The aim was to prevent oil from entering the park at the mouth of the river. Deflection booms were put into place and to simulate oil we used grapefruits. This worked well and is a technique I will take back to the UK and put into practice on exercises we run back there.

Other tasks put to me while being out here have been the auditing of equipment in some regions as well as drawing up a plan of the Te Atatu warehouse and proposed equipment shuffle.

I think a lot has been learned in the early stages of this secondment. I think the main differences between the two organisations is the size of the response teams and the equipment stock pile, but this is because MNZ are an organisation for just one country, whereas OSRL/EARL are global. Also, MNZ get involved in an incident a lot earlier, and often before any oil has been spilt. This I found useful as back in the UK the early stages are dealt with by another organisation, and we get involved just before, or once the oil has been spilt. The final difference is the fact that MNZ are a government run

business as opposed to OSRL/EARL being owned by various different major oil companies.

In conclusion, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here and have gained many different skills and techniques to take back to the UK. I think that I have also been of some use to the team out here too. Now the relationship between MNZ and OSRL/EARL is established I believe that it will only become stronger over the next 12 months, aiding response techniques around the world."



Rob Service and friends in Singapore

Rob says: "I was seconded to the Training and Consultancy Department at the Singapore Office of OSRL/EARL for a period of six months from March of this year.

On average I spent every fourth week away from Singapore working somewhere in South East Asia on a training or consultancy project. The work locations varied considerably and ranged from comfortable hotel venues in major cities through to oil terminals in remote locations and offshore oil fields.

The size and scale of operations on one offshore oil field in particular was impressive. The BP West Java field is located some 30 nautical miles North of Java in Indonesia and extends over an area more than 100 x 50 nautical miles. However, the most impressive aspect of that operation was the almost 200 platforms scattered over the area.

While most of the work I was involved in was similar to that which I am responsible for in my role with Maritime NZ, there were some significant differences. Most of OSRL/EARL's clients are oil and shipping companies rather than government agencies, and the cultural and geographic environments were very different to those I was accustomed to in New Zealand. There are also significant economic, cultural, political and religious differences between many countries in the SE Asian Region and so legislative and other requirements can often be quite different.

Working for six months in a commercial operation in South East Asia has certainly provided me with a different perspective of the marine pollution response business and a greater appreciation of the issues and problems that developing countries face.

New approach to incidents

Computer software, designed specifically for better managing maritime incidents by allowing responders to type in 'real time' information from remote locations, is nearing completion.

The Incident Management System (IMS) has been designed around several standard maritime packages and customised by GIS software developers, Critchlow.

MNZ says there were three drivers for the system – the need for good trajectory modelling tools for oil spill and Search and Rescue (SAR), the need for information management within an incident, and the need for a common operating picture between the various parts of MNZ involved in managing marine emergencies.

IMS will essentially provide an 'open book' to decision makers about all aspects of an emergency as it unfolds, without having to rely on regular verbal updates from responders at the scene.

The software packages that have been applied to the complete IMS system are OILMAP, SARMAP and WEBEOC.

OILMAP and SARMAP

These are two software packages designed by Applied Science Associates, Inc. They use live weather and tidal information overlaid on good hydrographic data to model trajectories for floating objects. MPRS' interest is modelling oils spills, and so the system also incorporates a large database of oil types. This give MPRS one program to not only model where the oil is going, but also gives information on what is happening to the oil as it weathers.

Overall MPRS now has a very powerful tool that can be used for real oil spills as well as for training scenarios, It can also run backwards to help identify sources of oil spills, and as a stochastic model to give probabilities of oiling of areas.

WEBEOC

This is the part that gives great scope for information management and for information sharing. Being web based, all a user needs is internet access and a secure login. They can then access information that is shared between users and get the most up to date picture of the incident. This is ideal for sharing information between say the Incident Command Centre (ICC) close to the incident and the Director's Advisory Team (DAT) based in Wellington. If the DAT need an update they can log on and see the latest sitreps, plans etc without having to make a phone call.

Or if personnel are flying to an ICC, they can check the details from their laptop while waiting for a connecting flight. Obviously there will always be a need for phone calls and discussions, but many people will be able to see the latest information as the need it, simultaneously.

As soon as this part of the system is finalised, MNZ will test the software extensively. This will then be followed by training key personnel.

Te Atatu



A pupil examines different types of oil in the classroom at MPRS

World Maritime Day celebrations

Te Atatu school children got a fresh insight into challenges to our maritime environment when they visited Maritime New Zealand's Marine Pollution Response Service (MPRS) in September as part of World Maritime Day celebrations.

Pupils from Matipo School and Peninsula Primary learned first hand about environmental protection and oil spill response in New Zealand by participating in various interactive activities.

World Maritime Day is celebrated every year by Maritime New Zealand (MNZ). The theme was set by the International Maritime Organization. This year's theme is *Responding to environmental challenges*.



LEVEL 10, OPTIMISATION HOUSE
1 GREY STREET, PO BOX 27006
WELLINGTON, New Zealand

TELEPHONE +64-4-473 0111
FACSIMILE +64-4-494 1263

www.maritimenz.govt.nz

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