

# THE GOOD OIL

ISSUE 16 DECEMBER 2008

▶ Welcome to *The Good Oil*, a bi-annual E newsletter designed to keep people in touch with what's happening in the oil spill response area of Maritime New Zealand. Contributions/feedback are welcome and can be emailed to [sophie.hazelhurst@maritimenz.govt.nz](mailto:sophie.hazelhurst@maritimenz.govt.nz).

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Welcome to the end of year edition of *The Good Oil*. As 2008 comes to a close, the team at MNZ's Marine Pollution Response Service (MPRS) wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

2008 has marked another busy year for the team at MPRS. The training of regional responders – a key role for MPRS – has been under scrutiny recently as a review of the format winds to a close.

In this newsletter, you'll read MPRS has been involved in supporting regional council Tier 2 responses in Northland, Bay of Plenty, and recently in both Auckland and Southland, while MPRS General Manager Nick Quinn has taken on an international role in oil pollution preparedness.

Enjoy the read!

## Regional council workshop

Around 40 regional representatives took part in the MPRS regional council workshop in August. The 2-day workshop featured presentations on dispersants, oiled wildlife response, and updates from the regions. Attendees also took part in an exercise which aimed to find out how prepared oil spill responders felt their councils were and how MPRS could help them improve their preparedness.

MPRS is now in the process of addressing the following issues raised at the workshop:

### Training

- Issues raised during the exercise will be considered under the current review of the Regional Responder Training (RRT) course.
- The distance learning package has been placed on the website for use by regional council staff indirectly involved in oil spill response.
- Dispersant testing is now included in the RRT course.



Greg Meikle and Bob Askew test dispersants at the MPRS regional council workshop

### Exercising

- There was a concern with the paper trail required for exercising. MPRS is reviewing this and looking into new ways of meeting the administrative requirements.
- Regional councils have been asked to spread the exercises through the year and not leave them until the last quarter.
- Integration of a training session run by MPRS prior to a regional exercise.

### Tier 3 Support

- MPRS to put together a list of resources required for an Incident Control Centre (ICC) facility.
- National Response Team to continue exercising throughout NZ and assess adequacy of facilities.
- Review the National Response Team (NRT) numbers and positions and assess whether more admin positions should be incorporated.
- Review of the number of trained responders for each region will be included in the risk assessment.

### Equipment

- The current equipment quantity and distribution will be assessed as part of the risk assessment.

### Personnel

- MPRS to investigate the issue of high turnover of regional council trained responders.

### Tier 2 Plans:

- MPRS to review the current information contained in the Tier 2 Plan chapters to ensure that it is meeting the requirements of Tier 2 responses.

## Regional Responder Training

RRT and National Responder Training (NRT) courses continue to attract positive feedback and ensure responders throughout the country are trained and ready for oil spill response.

Between July and December, 88 people took part in six courses at MPRS' Te Atatu site. MPRS has just completed the final course for this calendar year. Training resumes on 10 February, with a fully booked RRT course. The March course is also completely booked.



Regional Responder Training participants help with an oil clean up at Northcote Point, Auckland

### Hands on

The attendees of the most recent course had an excellent hands-on training session with a real oil spill this week.

The spill originated from Wynyard Wharf, Ports of Auckland, during bunkering operations on Saturday.

Due to tide and weather conditions the spill landed on the opposite side of the harbour at Little Shoal Bay, Northcote Point. Course attendees helped out the Auckland Regional Council with beach flushing and oil collection using sorbent booms.

### Training review

After 18 months of the current RRT format, MPRS is nearing the end of a full review of the course, with a new format scheduled to be in place for the start of July 2009. MPRS has received positive feedback from all attendees and presenters involved in the existing course.

The review process has considered the entire training structure of both the RRT and the NRT courses. This has included reviewing what skills a Tier 2 responder needs to respond to an average spill in their region as well as supporting a Tier 3 response.

MPRS is also taking into account feedback received from the responders and trying to incorporate their suggestions where possible.

## Reports from the regions

The regions have been busy with incidents over recent months.

### Northland

The grounding in August of the wooden-hulled fishing boat **Kumea II** at Waipapakauri on Ninety Mile Beach resulted in an estimated 5000 litres of diesel released into the surf. The Northland Regional Council removed all the remaining 3150 litres of diesel and oils from the vessel.



Kumea II in the surf at Waipapakauri

Also in Northland, the grounding of the **Sea Wyf** in March, as reported in the last edition of *The Good Oil*, has led to MNZ charging the operator under section 68(1) of the Maritime Transport Act – operating a ship without the appropriate maritime document.

## Auckland

In October, the Auckland Harbourmaster team cleaned up the biggest oil spill in city's harbour for 3 years. About 500 litres of black oil leaked into the inner harbour from the Danish-owned island trader vessel **Matua** on 11 October. Marine pollution response coordinator Mick Courtneil, who was in charge of the clean-up, says the spill occurred as a result of an accident during a waste oil discharge to a sludge road tanker at Captain Cook Wharf.



The Auckland Regional Council oil spill response team at work

The response team managed to contain 400 litres of the oil within the confines of the Ports of Auckland – the other 100 litres of oil, which escaped into the main harbour, was contained and recovered before wildlife was harmed.

Fourteen staff from the Harbourmaster's Office and Ports of Auckland, as well as private contractors, were involved in the 5-day clean-up.

Auckland Regional Council, Ports of Auckland vessels and private contractor vessels were used in the clean-up. Mr Courtneil says the clean-up was successful partly because of the quick action and support of Ports of Auckland staff. As usual, when there is an oil spill and the spiller is identified, costs and fines are recovered from those responsible for the spill, he says.

## Environment Bay of Plenty

Work is well underway to remove the wreck of the **San Cuvier** from the Opotiki coast. Two men lost their lives when the fishing vessel was grounded in July during a storm. The wreck was stranded on an inaccessible piece of rocky coastline just east of Opape. With only a short tidal window available each day for salvage work, and the need to airlift all scrap, the removal plan took weeks to finalise. Work began on 13 November and Eastern Bay of Plenty Harbourmaster Brian Spake says it is going "very very well".

All material from the wreck is expected to be removed by Christmas.

During the past 4 months Eastern Bay of Plenty Harbourmaster Brian Spake has regularly checked the coastline near the grounded boat and has seen no signs of contamination. In total about 18,000 litres of liquids were successfully removed from the boat; about 11,000 litres of which was diesel fuel. All loose material has been removed from the boat by the boat's owners.

Brian says the Harbourmaster team had done a great job. "We had two storms before we removed all of it, and we didn't spill a drop."

The stretch of coastline was special to people living and working in the area, with many areas of significant conservation value, including resident wildlife and kaimoana gathering sites, he says.

## Southland

Environment Southland launched a Tier 2 response after the tourist vessel **Waverley** sank in the environmentally sensitive area of Doubtful Sound last week. The tourist vessel hit a rock and sank on the evening of 27 November with 700 litres of diesel on board. Most of the 700 litres came to the surface immediately, resulting in a 1.7 sq km oil slick.

Shoreline and aerial inspections conducted on 29 November concluded that only tiny amounts of diesel were intermittently bubbling up from the wreck and that most of the fuel had dispersed or evaporated.



The oil slick visible in Doubtful Sound

Tourist operators in Doubtful Sound will monitor the waters around the submerged boat and if there is any sign that a larger amount of oil is surfacing, or birds are found to be affected, a response will be mounted immediately, Regional On-Scene Oil Spill Commander Kevin O'Sullivan said.

DOC Wildlife Advisor Pete McClelland said the oil spill from the **Waverley** proved to be "the best case scenario" that could have occurred in a very sensitive environment. "The impact on wildlife has proved to be minimal," he said.

# Scuttling of *Seafire*

Greater Wellington Regional Council has completed scuttling a batch of four unsightly hulks from around the capital's harbour.

The last in the most recent series of vessels targeted for scuttling was recently sent to the sea floor off Whale Island, about 6km north of Whakatane.



*Seafire* being towed from Waterloo Quay Wharf by the *Margaret Phillips*

The 44m fishing vessel *Seafire* was scuttled on 19 October after being towed to the Bay of Plenty from Waterloo Quay Wharf in Wellington.



The valves were opened at 11.45am...



Now 30m below the surface, the *Seafire* is to be used as a dive wreck.

The *Seafire* follows three other Wellington hulks sent to the bottom – the *Atlantic Elizabeth* in February and the *James Cook* and *Szap 8* in December last year.

To obtain permits for scuttling, Greater Wellington was required to first prepare the vessels by removing all oils, contaminants and floatable material.

Wellington Harbourmaster Mike Pryce says the next project is likely to be *Venture 2*.

Currently berthed at Miramar Wharf, *Venture 2* had a starring role in Peter Jackson's 2005 remake hit *King Kong*. Mike says it is hoped the vessel will end up as a dive site off Mana Island, with the scuttling proposed for late January.



And by 2.38pm there was only bubbling water on the surface where she had been...

## Environmental risk assessment

In October 2008 nearly 15 kilometres of Taranaki shoreline was oiled following the oil spill from the offshore oil installation **Umuroa**. Cleaning up the oil was fairly straightforward, although hard work. However there was intense public concern about the impacts that the oil may have had on the environment.



MPRS Response Planning Officer Dayne Maxwell photographs oil on the Taranaki coastline

Immediately after the spill environmental staff from MNZ and the Taranaki Regional Council swung into action to do an impact assessment and to work with the local community to set goals for the response.

The day after the oil washed ashore the response team was on the beach getting a guided tour of the oiling from the council cleanup crew. The initial assessment involved assessing the extent of the oiling, the shoreline features and the values in the area that might have been impacted.

The following week meetings were held with a group of locals, who represented the local iwi, farming and surfing communities and acted as a key link with the wider Taranaki community.

Using the local knowledge in the group the team was able to pinpoint the various cultural, ecological and social values in the area. Based on this information a plan was established to monitor the water, sediment and kaimoana. Monitoring of kaimoana continued for several months after the spill to make sure there was no long term contamination.

Another task for the environmental team and the group was to select the standards that would be used to measure whether the beach was clean enough to call a stop to the official spill response. These included criteria such as remaining oil not being able to stick to fur or feathers, no contamination of shellfish and no risk of people slipping on oily rocks as they used the beach.

This was a great example of how the community and the spill responders need to work together. By combining specialist oil spill knowledge with local savvy the environmental team was able to understand the unique values of the area and develop a plan that fitted the site and the ways that the community used their local environment.



MNZ and Taranaki Regional Council staff on the beach

## International news

- On 21 June, the **MV Princess of the Stars** capsized off the coast of San Fernando in the Philippines, with 825 passengers on board. Only 52 survived. Search and rescue efforts were temporarily suspended when it was discovered the ship was also carrying a cargo of pesticides, including the acutely toxic endosulfan – a global ban under the Stockholm Convention is currently under consideration due to its high toxicity. The 402 containers on board the ferry were eventually recovered by divers in October, after which time body retrieval resumed.
- In October, Gibraltar and Spanish emergency services conducted a night-long rescue mission in gale force conditions to evacuate 31 crew from the stricken bulk carrier **MV Fedra** which ran aground and hit the southernmost tip of Gibraltar on 10 October. The ship was pounded by waves as she lay pinned at the base of sheer cliffs on Europa Point. Shortly after the Liberian-flagged ship was ripped in two by the waves. About 150 tonnes of fuel was spilt into the sea, washing up along Gibraltar's western coastline.
- In November, the world premier of the film *Black Wave* was held in the Alaskan town of Cordova. The documentary tells the story of the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in Prince William Sound in Alaska. Director Robert Cornellia hopes to have the film included in the Sundance Film Festival in January, and it could be on New Zealand screens later next year.

## Congratulations Nick

Congratulations to Nick Quinn, who has been appointed to chair one of the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) important technical working groups.

In a first for New Zealand, Nick, who heads MNZ's Marine Pollution Response Service (MPRS) in Te Atatu, was elected chair of the IMO's Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response/Hazardous Noxious Substances Technical Group.

New Zealand has been an active member of the IMO since 1960 and is currently involved in various initiatives aimed at reducing the global environmental impact of shipping activity.



MPRS General Manager Nick Quinn



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