

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 New Zealand (MNZ). Contributions/feedback are welcome – please email sophie.hazelhurst@maritimenz.govt.nz.

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Greetings and welcome to this issue of *The Good Oil*.

It has been a busy few months at MPRS, with a range of reviews and projects underway. We provide you with some updates on these, including the national oil spill response capability review and the review of the National Response Team.

Also in this issue, we run the first of a new series for *The Good Oil* – a regional profile looking at each of New Zealand's regions in turn, from an oil spill response perspective. We begin in this issue with Northland.

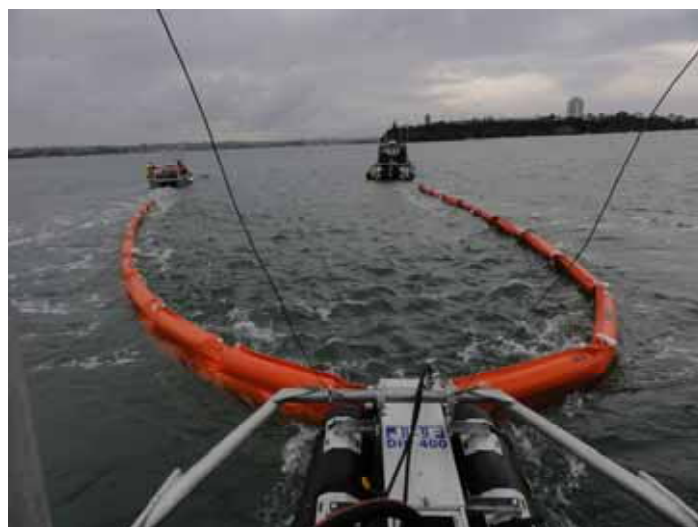
National Response Team workshop

The National Response Team (NRT) gathered in Auckland in May for a three-day workshop.

More than 50 members of the team attended the workshop, which featured briefings and training, including an extended exercise that tested both the management and operational aspects of oil spill response.

Marine Pollution Response Service (MPRS) manager Andrew Berry says the intensive workshop gave NRT members the opportunity to be immersed in oil spill response planning for a few days.

One of the workshop presentations was an afternoon session on lessons from the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, presented by NRT members who were deployed to assist with that response effort. In total, 11 members of the team were deployed to the Gulf,



The operations team deploys a boom in Auckland Harbour

some of them on multiple rotations. The session focused on numerous aspects of the response, including shoreline clean-up and incident management.

Exercise Peregrine was the focus of the second part of the workshop and included both desktop and a practical components. Command, logistics and planning teams worked from a simulated incident command centre at MPRS, while the operations team conducted deployments in Auckland Harbour with equipment from the national stockpile.

Assigned to four vessels, the operations team worked with the NOFI current buster boom, which is designed for use in strong currents and was new to many people. The team completed four successful deployments of the boom.

The NRT is made up of about 60 specialists who are trained in all aspects of oil spill response. The team includes MNZ staff members and other experts from around the country. It sits above a broader team of about 400 trained oil spill responders based around New Zealand's 16 regions.

Capability review

A review of New Zealand's oil pollution and preparedness capability has been completed. MPRS is now working through the process of reporting the results back to all who were involved with the review.

The review focuses on New Zealand's overall capability to respond to oil spills in its marine waters, and will be used to help MPRS draw up an action plan to build capability over the next few years.

"The capability review is going to be an immensely useful tool in developing our national strategy for the next five years," MPRS manager Andrew Berry says.

"The independent review has found that we have the capability to respond to the current risks New Zealand faces," he says. "It also identifies the ways that we can grow our capability to meet changing risks."

Andrew says the full review, and an action plan identifying how MPRS intends to implement its recommendations, will be publicly available in July.

National Response Team review

A review of the NRT is currently underway, led by the former Auckland harbourmaster John Lee Richards.



The NRT in Auckland in May

MPRS manager Andrew Berry says the review will look at the team's composition, availability, command and control, and development of the NRT.

John has circulated a questionnaire to everyone within the NRT and has also interviewed a number of key members.

"The review will examine the team's make-up and see where we can strengthen it," says John. "It will also consider whether there is a need for extra recruitment in any particular areas."

The NRT, made up of about 60 specialists from throughout New Zealand, includes oil spill response experts ranging from people who are experienced in command and control, to field staff who are experts in operational techniques.

The team also has other personnel who would be indispensable in the running of an incident command centre, such as administrators, IT experts and finance staff.

Andrew says there is a vast amount of experience in the team, and MPRS is committed to developing its strength and capability.

"Everyone in the team has been involved in oil spill response at either a national or regional level, and many have been involved in international oil spill response. Many also have civil defence experience, which is hugely relevant in terms of understanding how emergency incident management works.

"The review is going to look at what we have in place now and what we may need in the future – and how best we can coordinate and manage that team to ensure our preparedness."

The review is due to be completed by August.

Offshore workshop for industry

MNZ hosted an offshore industry workshop in May, aimed at discussing the interaction between the organisation and industry.

The workshop primarily focused on issues that have arisen from the implementation of Marine Protection Rule Part 200, as well as oil spill response issues.

Representatives from Anadarko, OMV, Origin Energy and Shell Todd Oil Services and AWE all attended, as did representatives of the new Environmental Protection Agency, the Ministry of Transport and the Taranaki Regional Council.

MPRS Response Planning Officer and workshop convener Dayne Maxwell says the workshop provided an excellent forum for exploring oil spill response issues arising from offshore exploration.



Dayne Maxwell

The workshop looked at many different aspects of oil spill response in relation to the offshore industry, and included a discussion of lessons learnt from the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico and the Montara spill in the Timor Sea.

It also looked at progress being made in the development of the new Environmental Protection Agency and the role it will play in regulating the offshore industry.

Dayne says a number of follow-up action points have been agreed on, and he will be working through these over the coming months.

International Oil Spill Conference

Several members of the NRT attended the International Oil Spill Conference (IOSC) 2011, held in Portland, Oregon, in May.

The conference attracted more than 2000 delegates from more than 50 countries – drawn from government, the oil industry and the oil spill response and wider scientific communities. More than 150 presentations were made over the three days of conference proceedings.



Scott Read

MPRS equipment technician Scott Read says the conference also hosted the world's largest trade show of oil spill equipment.

Scott attended the conference with MNZ environmental analyst Paul Vorwerk, MPRS manager Andrew Berry, National On Scene Commander Mick Courtneil and Helen McConnell from Massey University.

The conference presentations covered all aspects of oil spill response, including operations, management and research and development. Presentations were also offered on lessons taken from the Deepwater Horizon spill, as well as the Montara spill, which occurred in the Timor Sea in 2009.

Scott says for him, the highlight was getting the chance to network with some of the world's leading oil spill responders.

"It's always good to get together with other members of the oil spill response community. It truly is a global community and it is really important that we get the chance to see each other on a regular basis.

"I caught up with some new contacts I made while I was working on the Deepwater Horizon spill, and had the chance to hear about the situation one year on – which was really interesting to me."

Scott says the conference was also an excellent opportunity to catch up on recent developments in equipment and technology from leading manufacturers.

MPRS project updates

MPRS online – Work is continuing on developing the online presence for MPRS. An interactive map tool is under construction and will show where New Zealand's oil spill response assets are located, as well as where oil spills have occurred.

Work is also being done to provide online reporting for oil spills and online training material.

If you have any suggestions for material or ideas you would like to see online, contact andrew.berry@maritimenz.govt.nz.

In the meantime, there is plenty of information about oil spill response on the MNZ website: www.maritimenz.govt.nz/environmental.

WebEOC review – The review of the NRT's incident management system has identified Esponder as a likely replacement. This programme is already used by regional councils and some key government partners. However, it is unlikely WebEOC will be replaced for at least 12 months and in the interim, MPRS is continuing to maintain WebEOC to ensure it is as useful as possible.

If you have any queries about WebEOC or need any assistance in using this programme, please contact eva.maxwell@maritimenz.govt.nz.

Regional council workshop – The annual regional council workshop will be held in Tauranga on 30–31 August.

Regional profile: Northland

This issue, we begin a series of profiles focusing on New Zealand's 16 regions from the perspective of an oil spill response. For the first regional profile, we start at the top – the top of the country, Northland.

Northland at a glance



Map of Northland region
Copyright, Northland Regional Council

Northland has 3200 kilometres of coastline, including 15 harbours.

According to the Northland Regional On Scene Commander (ROSC), James Harvey, the region is also home to 17 Tier 1 sites. Of these, the New Zealand Refining Company at Marsden Point is the largest, but there are also 11 vessel refuelling facilities and five companies that carry out vessel bunkering operations around the region.

The majority of Northland's commercial shipping activities are based at Port Whangarei, Marsden Point and the refinery facilities at Marsden Point. On average, there are 85 oil tanker visits and 100 non-oil tanker ship visits to these two facilities each year. A further 110 visits per year are made to the Portland cement outloading facility and a largely transient fishing fleet, whose numbers vary between 30 and 50 vessels operating from facilities in the upper Whangarei Harbour and in other Northland harbours. There are also an average of 30 commercial cruise ships visiting the Bay of Islands each year.

With a recent significant upturn in timber exports to Asia, shipping activities at Northport have made Whangarei Harbour a very busy area. There are also numerous cargo ships travelling up and down the east coast of Northland, to and from the big ports in Auckland and Tauranga, and several thousand recreational vessels add to the risks.

A large quantity of oil spill response equipment is stored, mainly near the refinery and port at Marsden Point, with a smaller

amount kept in the Northland Regional Council (NRC) workshop in Opua, Bay of Islands.

“On average, we have about 35 reported oil spills each year,” says James. “These range from bilge discharges and small refuelling accidents to vessel groundings and vessel sinkings, but, thankfully, over the past several years we have not had a large spill to deal with.”

Key oil spill response personnel

Northland ROSC **James Harvey**

Northland has two back-up ROSCs – the Regional Harbourmaster, Jim Lyle, based in the Bay of Islands and Peter Wiessing, the NRC Kaitaia Area Office Manager.

Northland NRT members:

- James Harvey (operations)
- Peter Wiessing (Shoreline Clean-up Assessment Team)
- Pete Thomas (operations)
- Mike Swords (operations)
- Mike Swanson (operations)
- Jason Dawson (media and community relations)



James Harvey



Peter Wiessing



Pete Thomas



Mike Swords



Mike Swanson



Jason Dawson

Trained oil spill responders

Northland has an experienced and well-trained team of about 60 people, ready to respond to a marine oil spill at any time.

This team is largely made up of NRC staff, but also draws on expertise from personnel at the New Zealand Refining Company, North Tugz, Northport Limited, the Department of Conservation and wildlife agencies such as Whangarei Native Bird Recovery Centre and the Ornithological Society of New Zealand.

Regional and national equipment familiarisation and scenario-based desktop exercises are held regularly, to ensure the response team maintains a high level of knowledge and expertise.

Recent spill responses

James says while there have been no significant spills in recent years, the team is regularly called on to deal with Tier 2 incidents. As an example, he details an accident at a Whangarei boatyard that required the clean-up of an estimated 40 litres of engine oil.

The oil had escaped from a damaged fishing vessel, which had toppled from its cradle while being removed from the water for repairs. Sorbent booms and pads were used to recover most of the oil and a small amount of dispersant applied on oil that had escaped the containment booms.

Response costs were recovered from the boatyard owner, who subsequently charged the vessel owner.

Recent exercises

A large-scale, multi-agency exercise was held on Bream Bay's sandy beaches last year. NRC ran the exercise, which involved members of the NRT, MNZ, the Department of Conservation and local industry.

The scenario was a 9000 litre oil spill from the bilges of a passing ship, which had come ashore at Ruakaka.



James Harvey teaches raking techniques during the Bream Bay exercise

Mock dispersant operations were run using a local helicopter company. Heavy machinery was used to remove 'oily', assisted by about 25 people using rakes and shovels.

James acknowledges that it is vital for Northland to be thoroughly prepared for oil spill response, as it is home to the Marsden Point oil refinery and a large volume of commercial shipping also passes through its waters.

He says there have been a number of recent overseas events where oil has affected shorelines similar to that of Bream Bay. "Given the potential risks of oil impacting somewhere along Bream Bay from an oil spill – either from a ship or from the



The decontamination tent set up during the Bream Bay exercise

refinery itself – it makes perfect sense to carry out a beach clean-up exercise there."

James says the exercises are a valuable training tool for all those taking part and add to the already considerable experience of local oil spill responders.

Plans for the next year

James says a large-scale equipment deployment exercise – based on a scenario that will see a continuous discharge of fuel oil from a berthed ship's damaged fuel tank – is planned for later in the year.

The scenario will involve oil continuing to leak from the vessel for some time, until the balance of oil within the damaged tank is transferred to another tank.

"Our immediate operational actions will be to deploy a 200 metre length of RoBoom from a pre-designated site, to limit the extent of the spreading oil.

"Oil contained within the boom is to be recovered using a Terminator skimmer. In conjunction, the oil recovery vessel **Taranui** will be deployed to simulate recovery of oil that would have migrated upstream before booms could be deployed."

James says there will also be a desktop exercise centred on a small tanker grounding in the harbour – but those details remain top secret for now.

"We'll also be continuing to work with industry to get all the Tier 1 site plans finalised and approved," he says.

Contact details

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NRC's environmental hotline: 0800 504 639

Taranaki exercise

Shoreline clean-up, wildlife recovery and communications were key areas tested in a Taranaki oil spill response exercise near Oakura on 12 May.

Staff from the Taranaki Regional Council, National Oiled Wildlife Response Team and other organisations were involved in planning and operational response during the one-day exercise.



Beach pre-cleaning during the Taranaki exercise

More than 30 people took part in the exercise, which was based on a scenario of 600 litres of crude oil coming ashore along two kilometres of coastline between Oakura and the Tapuae Marine Reserve, near New Plymouth.

An incident control centre was set up at nearby Corbett Park.

Regional On Scene Commander Bruce Pope says that when responding to an actual marine oil spill, the response team could be working at a remote location anywhere along Taranaki's rugged coastline. "So it's good to test our systems in an



Wildlife recovery efforts

exercise like this, to make sure we can establish essential communications from anywhere in the region," he says.

A shoreline assessment of the area likely to be affected was carried out before the oil reached the shore, to identify sensitive areas. To prepare for the manual shoreline clean-up, a stretch of

the beach was pre-cleaned by pushing driftwood and other material above the high tide mark with a tractor.

Sawdust was spread along 500 metres of the beach to simulate the oil spill. Two clean-up teams shovelled the 'oiled sand' into containers, which were transported on quad bikes to a temporary storage area, in readiness for being transferred to the New Plymouth landfill.

In the scenario, oiled birds were reported offshore and along the affected coastline. Two wildlife teams, made up of people from Massey University, Taranaki Regional Council, the Department of Conservation, Ornithological Society, Forest and Bird and New Plymouth District Council were briefed by Helen McConnell from the Massey Wildlife Response Team.

The teams captured the 'oiled birds' on the beach and took



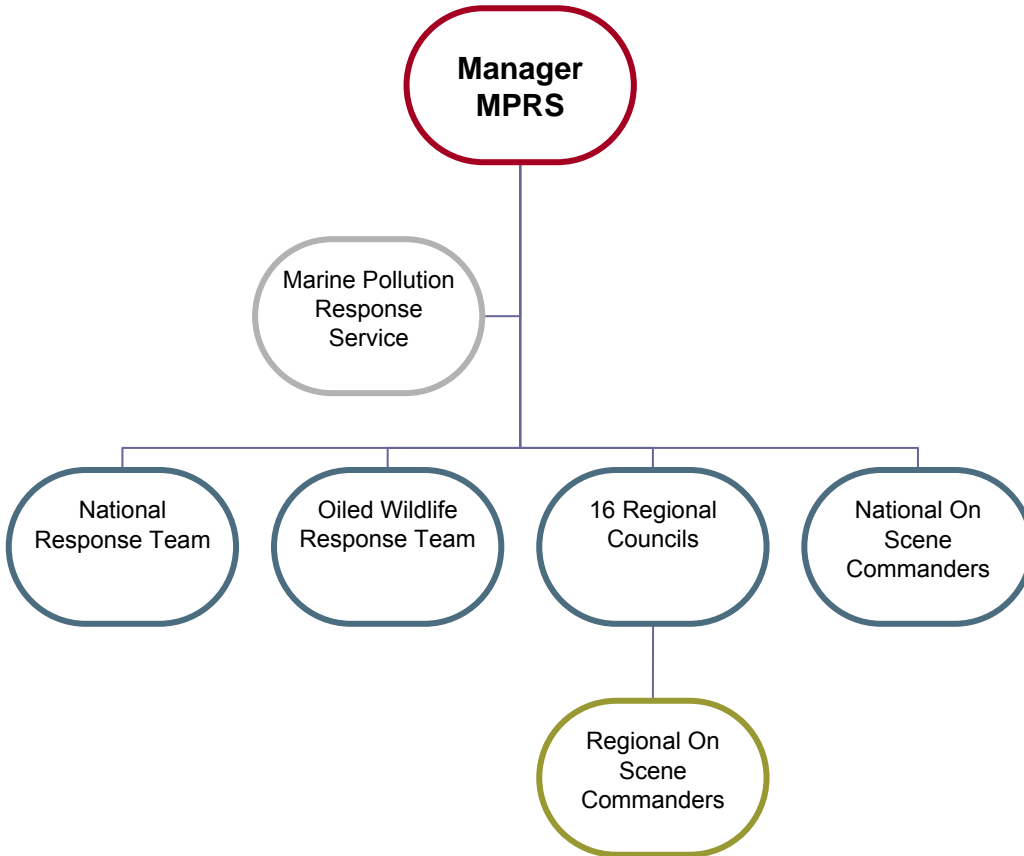
Shoreline clean-up

them to the mobile wildlife centre to be stabilised ahead of being transported to a treatment centre.

Helen McConnell says working in the same area as the oil responders doing the beach clean-up was good experience for the team, and allowed the wildlife response to be fully integrated with other response actions.

Bruce Pope says the Massey wildlife team added an extra dimension to the training exercise. "We often exercise with specialised staff from sectors such as the oil industry," he says, "but it's important to involve all of the key players in our response training."

MPRS – scope of activity



MPRS manager Andrew Berry has developed the diagram shown above as a way of communicating the scope of the team's key activities.

Andrew says the diagram aims to map out where MPRS's responsibility lies and what the team's main relationships are outside MNZ.

"The key points to it are the importance of the NRT as a group to be developed ready for a marine oil spill; the role and importance of the relationship with the National Oiled Wildlife Response

Team; and the critical role of councils in our activity, especially through the ROSCs.

"Finally, as the tool shows, the relationship with the country's NOSCs – we currently have four – is also key to our overall activity and oil spill response capability."

Andrew says all of these relationships are critical to MPRS's delivery of 'Excellence in Response'. Each forms a critical link in the response MPRS would mount and this requires preparation, development and exercising.



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