



# Accident Report

Grounding

*Ariki Moana*

25 August 2005

Class C



# NARRATIVE

At 1450 hours on 25 August 2005, the passenger vessel **Ariki Moana** departed from the western shore of Lake Rotomahana on a scheduled scenic sailing trip. On board were the Master, one Crewmember and two passengers.

Shortly after her departure, the vessel was being steered on a broadly north easterly course, parallel to cliffs that were located to the north east of the vessel's point of departure. The Master was at the helm, steering the vessel manually, whilst the crewmember was situated at the after end of the vessel, giving a verbal commentary to the passengers.

As the vessel began to close with the lake shoreline, the Master either became unconscious or for some unexplained reason was unable to comprehend that the vessel was off course and headed for the shore. The Crewmember shouted out to the Master when he observed the vessel was off her intended course. On reacting to the Crewmember's warning and observing rocks dead ahead of the vessel, the Master put the engine astern. This reduced the speed of the vessel. However, it was insufficient to prevent the vessel from hitting the rocks. The vessel's speed on grounding was estimated to be about 4-5 knots. Using the engine, the Master was able to successfully refloat the vessel almost immediately. He checked the hull for signs of any water ingress and found none. The Crewmember, who was acting as a trainee Master, took over the steering of the vessel and completed the trip without any further incident. The vessel returned to her berth at 1540 hours.

## *Manning*

The Master holds a Local Launch Master Certificate and has been employed by the owning company for 15 years. This was his first accident.

The Crewmember holds no maritime qualifications. He was acting as a trainee Master and had been employed by the owning company for a period of about 6 months.

## *Vessel*

**Ariki Moana** is a steel hull passenger vessel with an overall length of 12.39 metres and a gross tonnage of 71. The vessel holds a Safe Ship Management (SSM) Certificate, issued on 25 May 2004 and valid to 19 May 2008. The SSM Certificate enabled the vessel to carry a maximum of 49 passengers. **Ariki Moana** is owned and operated by Waimangu Volcanic Valley Limited. The company runs scenic tours on Lake Rotomahana and has operated the vessel on the lake for 15 years.

The vessel's SSM manual contained a section headed "Structural Breach or Collision" which included a sub-section headed "Damage Below the Waterline."

Damage to the vessel's hull was limited to a 30mm deflection on a steel plate over an area of approximately 10cm, at a point below the chine on the starboard side of the hull. Three ribs were found to be slightly bent.

Following an inspection of the hull, the vessel's SSM company determined the vessel was safe to continue operations.

## *Human Factors*

The Master stated he was in good health and could not explain his lapse of situational awareness that led to the grounding. It had not happened to him before. The Master's last memory of the navigation of

the vessel, prior to hearing the crewmember shout a warning, was about 2 minutes earlier as the vessel idled across the mouth of a hot stream.

The Master stated he was well rested at the time. Earlier in the month he was diagnosed as suffering from transient global amnesia. The Master was advised by the hospital at Rotorua that this condition would not reoccur and that he was not suffering from any cardiac, pulmonary or neurological condition.

After the grounding the Master saw his doctor who referred him to a specialist. He was told that his lapse of situational awareness was not as result of amnesia but was probably caused by sleep apnoea, being a temporary inability to breathe whilst sleeping, resulting in disturbed sleep patterns. The Master was prescribed sleeping tablets to relax him before going to bed. He was told that this would prevent future lapses from occurring.

The Master returned to work about 2 weeks after the accident. He then had a holiday before returning to work. There has been no reoccurrence of the above condition at the time of drafting this report.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Immediately after the accident the Master removed himself from command duties pending further medical tests. This was a prudent measure given the possibility of a reoccurrence.

## SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The company carefully monitor the Master's medical condition when he returns to duty for a period of three months to ensure he remains capable of operating the vessel safely.