



Maritime safety loophole closed

Efforts to close a loophole in international maritime safety law, that saw a fishing boat sink in the Antarctic while carrying heavy grade fuel oil, will be the focus of a public hearing today in Canberra.

Ships are supposed to be prohibited from carrying heavy grade fuel oil in the Antarctic because of the high risk of serious pollution in the event of an accident. However, the sinking of the fishing boat has made it clear that international maritime safety regulations contain a loophole, allowing ships in the Antarctic to use heavy fuel oil as ballast.

Australian government witnesses will give evidence on this and other changes to international maritime safety standards at a hearing of the Parliament’s Treaties Committee.

Committee Chair, Wyatt Roy MP, said the change should ensure that no one would again get away with risking the sensitive Antarctic environment with heavy fuel oil.

“The proposed changes also extend the regulation of ships’ nitrous oxide engine emissions to cover gas fuel only ship engines, which are becoming popular,” he said.

The proposed changes were agreed to at a meeting of the International Maritime Organisation in London in October last year, and are expected to come into effect in September this year.

Other regulatory improvements under consideration include harmonising regulations on the carriage of radioactive materials in containers so that they are the same for ships, aircraft, vehicles and trains, and improvements in the transparency of certificates issued to ships to show that they are compliant with pollution emissions regulations.

**Public Hearing: Monday 22 June,
Committee Room 2R1,
Parliament House, Canberra,**

11.10am – 1.00pm

Amendments to the Annexes of the Protocol of 1978 relating to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973 and Amendments to the Annex of the Protocol of 1997 to Amend the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto. (London, 17 October 2014)

**Maritime and Shipping Branch, Surface Transport Policy Division,
Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
Australian Maritime Safety Authority**

The hearings will be broadcast through: www.aph.gov.au/live

Copies of the treaties and submissions received can be found at:
http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Treaties

Alternatively, interested parties may email jsct@aph.gov.au or phone (02) 6277 4002

MEDIA CONTACTS		
Media contact:	Mr Wyatt Roy MP	0421 059 438
Background:	Committee Secretariat	(02) 6277 4002