



Supplementary Submission

Senate Inquiry into the adequacy of Australia's infrastructure assets and capability in Antarctica

Answers to Questions on Notice raised at the Public Hearing on 19 October 2017

Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority's (AMSA) supplementary submission is in response to the questions on notice raised at the Public Hearing on 19 October 2017 into the adequacy of Australia's infrastructure assets and capability in Antarctica.

Answers to Questions on Notice

1. Topic: International Maritime Organization – Polar Code

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CHAIR – Mr Morton: I have a particular interest in trying to understand the impact of the implementation of the Polar Code on 1 January 2018 in relation to the icebreaker Aurora Australis. I understand that the code will not apply to warships, naval auxiliaries and vessels owned or operated by a state and used on government non-commercial service, so the CSIRO government owned vessel RV Investigator doesn't have to comply with the Polar Code, but can I confirm that the current icebreaker Aurora Australis will have to comply? What are the changes to the configuration of that ship in the interim while we're waiting on the new icebreaker to arrive?

Mr Moore: The Polar Code has a transition period for vessels and came into force from 1 January 2017. The Aurora Australis was built before that time, but it will have to comply with the requirements of the Polar Code by the first intermediate or renewal survey, which comes after 1 January 2018, as you pointed out. There could be a period between the delivery and the completion of the new one where the vessel will be required to comply with the Polar Code. As you point out, the Investigator does not have to comply with the provisions of the Polar Code.

CHAIR – Mr Morton: Are you aware of the extent of the modifications required for compliance?

Mr Moore: I will have to take that on notice.

Answer: (Australian Maritime Safety Authority)

Necessary approvals relating to the existing ship structure, machinery installations and fire safety/protection systems will be provided by Lloyd's Register in accordance with paragraphs 8(a) and 8(b) of [Marine Order 53](#) (Vessels in polar waters) 2016 without the need for any modification to the vessel.

2. Topic: Pollution Response Initiatives

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CHAIR – Mr Morton: The other issue that I just wanted to raise is in relation to the work that you do to prevent and manage pollution south of 60 degrees. Have there been countries that have operated in the Australian Antarctic territories and waters that have been polluted? What is the extent of that pollution?

Mr Storrie: I would have to take that on notice. We haven't received reports in recent memory of such events. I do recall a collision involving Sea Shepherd vessels which had a small amount of pollution a number of years ago. You may recall that incident. But we can take that on notice and come back to you.

Answer: (Australian Maritime Safety Authority)

In 2010 there was a collision between the Sea Shepherd vessel *Ady Gil* and a Japanese flagged vessel *Shonan Maru No. 2* in the Southern Ocean (170 nautical miles north of Antarctica). The bow of the *Ady Gil* was sheared off during the collision and the vessel sank, with 400 litres of fuel on board.

3. Topic: Search and Rescue - compensation

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CHAIR – Mr Morton: If you could, please. Finally, when you are doing search-and-rescue operations in that region, what arrangements are there for compensation in relation to the costs of those arrangements? Are we obligated to cop the costs if it's a foreign vessel? I think there was an issue with a Russian vessel that struck ice in the December 2013 to January 2014 season. Are there arrangements in place, or is our obligation to assist and not seek compensation?

Mr Storrie: Our obligation is to assist. We don't seek compensation. But, in a similar manner, for Australian citizens and ships in similar situations in other jurisdictions compensation would generally not be sought by those jurisdictions either. So it is a complementary arrangement.

CHAIR – Mr Morton: Could you provide an indication of some of the costs to the Commonwealth in relation to some of the search and rescue you've done? The reason I ask this question is that one of the issues that the committee is looking at is tourism and the like. If it's going to be at our cost, we would like to have an idea of what that cost is.

Mr Storrie: Again, I will take that on notice. Obviously there is a wide variability of events, from search and rescues to medical evacuations and the like and they all come with their own specific costs. But, if you like, we could bring a cross-section of those types of incidents back to the committee.

CHAIR – Mr Morton: I'm not asking for an example of predicted costs. I think it would be wise just to get an example of past costs for particular incidents so it's not a hypothetical.

Mr Moore: We're quite lucky that there have been relatively few search-and-rescue or pollution incidents in the waters we are talking about at the moment. Since January 2016, there has been in the vicinity of about 10 search-and-rescue requests that have been highlighted with our Joint Rescue Coordination Centre that is based here in Canberra. My understanding is that only one of those required any sort of action whatsoever, and the Department of Defence helped out in that regard. That was a medical evacuation. I don't have the details immediately to hand about the cost-recovery arrangements for that one particular incident. But, since January 2016, only one incident has incurred any cost whatsoever.

Ms BRODTMANN: Thanks very much for that presentation. I want to continue to explore the search and rescue that is going on. You mentioned 10 in 2016. Can you give us an idea of numbers over, say, the last five to seven years. Perhaps we could draw a line under 2010 to 2017. As the chair has mentioned, we are interested in looking at tourism in Antarctica and the impact on the environment, naturally, but also at those who are going down there and getting stranded. We've heard stories of where scientists had to travel for days. There was this huge effort that went into saving some tourists and it took weeks off our research efforts down there. So we are keen to get an understanding of the cost of tourism and the benefits of tourism down there. This is definitely one of them. The waters are difficult. That's why we want to get a clear understanding. If you could do it from 2010 to 2017 that would be useful. If you could include the tourists, yachties and adventurers as well as the medivacs that would be terrific. Thank you

Answer: (Australian Maritime Safety Authority)

In the period July 2010 to June 2017 AMSA responded to six incidents and assisted the Australian Antarctic Division with one incident, south of 60 degrees in the Australian search and rescue region. Four of these incidents involved a search and rescue response and two related to AMSA's obligations to assist with communications and coordination for medical evacuations.

AMSA did not incur any direct costs for these incidents as the assets used were from the Australian Antarctic Division, Australian Defence Force or other Government resources in the region, that do not seek to recover costs associated with search and rescue responses. AMSA is unable to advise on the costs incurred by other entities in responding to these incidents.

4. Topic: AMSA presence in Tasmania

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Senator DUNIAM: Does AMSA have a presence in Tasmania, in Hobart or Launceston?

Mr Storrie: Yes, we do. I can't remember where the office is.

Senator DUNIAM: No, that's fine. Take it on notice.

Mr Storrie: I think it's Hobart, actually.

Senator DUNIAM: Being close to the Antarctic, it makes sense.

Answer: (Australian Maritime Safety Authority)

Hobart and Devonport.

5. Topic: Search and Rescue – arrangements with other Countries

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Senator McCARTHY: In relation to your search-and-rescue arrangements, with the understanding that there are other nations that have air access into Antarctica, do you have, or have you had, any search-and rescue arrangements or missions with other countries?

Mr Storrie: Have we conducted them with other countries? I would have to take that on notice, but there are agreements and working relationships among the search and rescue authorities down in that area. From a preparedness point of view with a direct operation, I can take that on notice.

Answer: (Australian Maritime Safety Authority)

New Zealand and South Africa.

6. Topic: Search and Rescue – international partnerships and arrangements

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Senator McCARTHY: Could you also take on notice whether you have any protocols in terms of partnerships around search and rescue arrangements?

Mr Storrie: Sure, yes.

Senator McCARTHY: Have there been any incidents recently, or even in the last few years, that we should be aware of in terms of those partnerships?

Mr Moore: We do have MOUs in place with all our adjacent search and rescue regions.

Senator McCARTHY: And what would they be, Mr Moore?

Mr Moore: There are a number of adjacent search and rescue regions, some spreading across the Indian Ocean, around the northern side of Australia and down into the Asia-Pacific as well.

Senator McCARTHY: Could you give the committee a list of those MOUs and who they are with?

Mr Moore: Yes. We will take that on notice.

Answer: (Australian Maritime Safety Authority)

The international search and rescue arrangements include protocols outlining how countries communicate and coordinate in response to search and rescue incidents that require neighbouring or regional collaboration. Government agencies active in the Southern Ocean and Antarctic rely on a number of multi-lateral international treaties to set standards that align with, protect and bolster Australia's interests, obligations and capabilities in the region. In particular,

a number of arrangements with international partners, enhance data sharing, capacity building activities, patrols, environmental protection, scientific research cooperation, logistics support and search and rescue capabilities.

There have not been any incidents in the last few years with partners regarding search and rescue arrangements.

Australia has search and rescue arrangements with the following localities:

- New Zealand
- South Africa
- Noumea
- Solomon Islands
- Fiji
- Papua New Guinea
- Indonesia
- Sri Lanka
- Maldives
- Mauritius
- La Réunion.

The maritime search and rescue technical arrangements for cooperation among Pacific Island countries and territories that support international lifesaving in the Pacific Ocean include the following countries:

- Australia
- Cook Islands
- Federated States of Micronesia
- Fiji
- France (French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna Islands)
- Kiribati
- Republic of Marshall Islands
- Nauru
- New Zealand
- Niue
- Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands
- Republic of Palau
- Papua New Guinea
- Pitcairn Island
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands
- Tokelau
- Kingdom of Tonga
- Tuvalu
- United States of America (American Samoa and Guam)
- Vanuatu.