

Introduction

- 1.1 Australia is an island nation with a large coastline. Consequently, it relies on maritime shipping for many of its export and import products. In particular, Australia's resource mining community must rely on safe maritime passage to deliver its goods. A proper level of salvage capability is one of the most important requirements for maritime safety; both the safety of seafarer's lives and the safety of Australia's environmentally important coastline and sea area.

Inquiry background

- 1.2 The inquiry was requested by the Federal Minister for Transport and Regional Services, the Hon John Anderson MP, following a report by the Productivity Commission (*Economic Regulation of Harbour Towing and Related Services*). That report made recommendations that could have a direct effect on the provision of maritime salvage services and salvage coverage in Australia.
- 1.3 The committee takes a keen interest in transport and regional service issues, and it has shaped strategic thinking on a number of aspects of transport.
- 1.4 Some significant works by the committee on surface transport includes inquires into maritime issues that lead to the reports *Ships of Shame* and *Ship Safe*.

Conduct of the inquiry

- 1.5 The inquiry was advertised nationally in January 2004. It received 26 submissions and four exhibits.¹
- 1.6 The submissions, exhibits and verbal evidence provided the Committee with a variety of views and a good source of possible recommendations. The evidence came from industry representatives, legal practitioners, and State and Australian government departments and individuals.
- 1.7 In addition to the evidence before the Committee, it conducted an industry round table in Melbourne and carried out inspections in three major ports.

Structure of the report

- 1.8 Chapter 2 discusses the differences between emergency response and salvage. There is considerable confusion, not least in the industry, over the use of the terms emergency response and salvage. Some evidence to the Committee has suggested that they are separate whilst others have suggested that they are different components of the one service.
- 1.9 Chapter 3 looks at the need for salvage capability in Australia, the areas in which salvage tugs should be located and ways to fund this.
- 1.10 Chapter 4 discusses legislative and jurisdictional issues. It provides background on the international and Australian legislative and jurisdictional environment in which salvage is conducted.
- 1.11 Chapter 5 looks at three issues that have stood out to the Committee as needing careful thought and long term planning. These are:
 - Security
 - Salvage Personnel
 - Places of Refuge

1 Listed in Appendices A and B.