

Ms Janet Holmes
Secretary
House Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport Regional
Development and Local Government
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Holmes

Coastal Shipping Policy and Regulation Enquiry

Thankyou for your letter of March 26 to Mr Robin Gray, in which you invited comment from us on these matters. We offer the following:

- 1.1 Challenger TAFE includes the WA Maritime Training Centre – Fremantle as one of 12 Centres of Specialisation from which we offer a total of 48 accredited courses. We provide a range of maritime-related programs from Recreational Skippers Tickets for recreational vessel operators to Ships Masters and in Marine Engineering from Marine Engine Driver 2 to Engineer Class 1. We are therefore closely involved with the Australian Marine Safety Authority and the Western Australian Department of Planning and Infrastructure for regulatory processes and course delivery standards.
- 1.2 Training is governed by the standards set by both the AMSA and DPI, which in turn are influenced by international and national standards against which we are audited. The 2007 review of the Maritime Training Package as part of the Department of Education, Science and Technology governs our funding and academic qualifications and for this, we are audited against the Australian Quality Training Framework.
- 1.3 *Term of Reference 2* - From our point of view, the policy and regulatory arrangements for coastal shipping suffer from the dual responsibilities and in some cases, overlaps between AMSA and in Western Australia, DPI and comparable agencies in other states. The dual responsibilities cause confusion in the industry, particularly in the areas of overlap and in turn, leads to duplication, frustration and additional administrative work for us as a Registered Training Organisation with the obligatory audits. The National Standards for Commercial Vessels has been a good concept, but despite the considerable and ongoing time and money that its development has involved, one could be excused for doubting that it will come to pass. Perhaps AMSA should assume responsibility for coastal shipping as well as its current responsibilities.
- 1.4 *Term of Reference 3* – There is an existing and intensifying shortage of ships masters and engineers which has extended to include lecturers for these programs and this has seriously affected us. Lecturers have been attracted

back to the industry by the much higher salaries and better conditions (\$120 000 is common, against \$65 000 for a lecturer, anticipated to rise to about \$75 000 when current teacher negotiations with the Western Australia Government conclude). As a government institution that operates within the provisions of the WA Teachers Agreement, there is very little the College can do to compete with this situation and certainly not quickly. At present, our staff of 25 for Maritime Operations and Marine Engineering programs is operating with a shortage of five lecturers. The college has embarked on some initiatives in an effort to attract and retain additional staff and this will include an industry workshop in May.

- 1.5 We are aware of the significant projected expansion of interstate shipping and in the number of new vessels associated with the oil and gas industry. Both will require the training of additional skilled personnel, which is a lengthy process and a factor we urge the Inquiry to address closely.

In view of our close association with the industry, the importance of the training issue in the face of an extreme shortage of teaching staff and the very low number of Registered Training Organisations that are authorised to provide this training, we have arranged for Ms Jean Menzies, Program Manager Fishing and Aquaculture and me to make a presentation at the public hearing in Perth on May 8.

Capt Robin Gray, Program Manager, Maritime Operations and Marine Engineering is very knowledgeable of the regulatory issues and their implications for training, but unfortunately will be away that week. He will make a written submission and we will arrange for him to attend another centre to present his views.

Yours sincerely

Kingsley Waterhouse
Director, Maritime
April 10 2008

