



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Transport and Regional Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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Chair: Paul Neville MP

New Inquiry

Inquiry into maritime salvage in Australian waters

The House of Representatives Transport and Regional Services Committee is to conduct an inquiry into maritime salvage services in Australian waters.

Maritime salvage is the act of rendering rescue services to a vessel in danger. Salvage may involve a variety of resources including management and technical expertise, skilled labour, tugs and possibly other vessels and specialist equipment.

Recent examples of ships requiring salvage help in Australian waters are when the 3,500 tonne HMS Nottingham struck rocks two nautical miles east of Lord Howe Island in July 2002, and when the vessel Doric Chariot, carrying coal to India, ran aground in August 2002 on the southern end of Piper Reef, 600 km north of Cairns (near the top of Cape York Peninsula).

Salvage services are usually provided by tugs whose primary purpose is for harbour towage. Salvage capability can also be provided by a range of other vessels, such as off shore oil supply vessels or fishing boats, depending on the nature of the salvage task. Adsteam Marine Limited is the main provider of tugs for harbour towage and salvage in Australia.

The inquiry has been 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 Towage 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.

The inquiry will examine:

- Government responsibility to provide salvage infrastructure;
- The inclusion of a defined level of salvage capability in harbour towage service agreements;
- The provision of relief tugs when salvage tugs are engaged in a salvage operation;
- Minimum standards of salvage tug safety, training and operational capability; and
- The need for public interest obligations to release tugs for marine emergencies.

The committee is seeking written submissions by Friday 8 April 2004.

Submissions can be e-mailed to trs.reps@aph.gov.au or sent to the following address:

Transport and Regional Services Committee
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Further information, including the terms of reference, a discussion paper and advice on making submissions, can be found at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/trs or obtained by phoning the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 2352 or emailing at trs.reps@aph.gov.au