Chief Executive Officer

Ms Sue Morton
Secretary
Senate Finance and Public Administration
  References Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Dear Ms Morton

Thank you for your recent letter requesting a submission to the Committee's inquiry into recruitment and training in the Australian Public Service.

I wish to advise that the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) is a statutory authority established under the *Australian Maritime Safety Authority Act 1990*. Attached is a background brief on AMSA's organisational structure and function.

As your letter indicates, AMSA staff are not covered by the *Public Service Act 1999* and the AMSA Act provides for their terms and conditions to be determined by the AMSA Board. AMSA maintains a highly specialised workforce of around 240 employees appropriate to our statutory responsibilities with respect to maritime safety, marine environment protection and aviation and marine search and rescue.

Employment opportunities for young people: AMSA's specialised skill and knowledge requirements mean that recruitment to most vacancies is targeted at people who are in second or third career transitions with extensive experience in the maritime or aviation industry.

About 45 of AMSA's 240 staff positions (19%) have been identified as suitable for persons with limited employment experience. The majority of these positions are in corporate support functions (including finance, information services and human resources) or general administration roles.

AMSA currently employs 10 staff aged 25 or under (4.2% of the workforce) which include a mix of graduates and non-graduates. Recruitment opportunities for younger people are expected to increase over the next five years as it is anticipated that at least 13 suitable positions will become vacant due to the incumbent reaching retirement age. It should also be noted, however, that we anticipate on-going employment for each of our existing young people (with the exception of a short-term employee) over the same period.

<u>AMSA's recruitment and training services</u>: Following a review in 2000/2001, which explicitly considered the outsourcing of AMSA corporate services, AMSA decided to maintain in-house provision of all its human resource services, including recruitment and training. This recognised the strategic role of human resource policy in fostering cultural change within the organisation and in consideration of the specialised nature of AMSA's staff skill mix, which an external service provider may not have the capacity to fully appreciate.

Training and development is a priority in AMSA's budget and annual allocations average in excess of $3,000 per employee (excluding salary and salary related costs). Staff spend an average of 38 hours per annum in structured training.

The training and development needs for our employees are identified within AMSA's formal performance improvement system. At regular stages of the performance cycle, managers and staff identify forms of training and development considered suitable to an employee's contribution to corporate objectives. These forms of training and development may be formal (e.g. accredited training, tertiary education etc) or informal (e.g. conferences, seminars, short courses, secondment, allocation of higher duties etc). Our Studies Assistance Scheme provides financial and other support to staff enrolled in appropriate undergraduate or graduate programs of approved study.

<u>Training and Development Programs</u>: AMSA's training and development opportunities fall into three categories:

1. Training provided generally to the AMSA workforce arising from the need to have common expectations or core competencies across the organisation. This includes the induction program for new staff and training in the operation of particular business systems, such as AMSA's Activity Management System where all staff are involved in time recording arrangements for the identification of output costs and internal transfer pricing. AMSA also has entered into formal partnerships with tertiary institutions (including the Australian Maritime College and the University of Adelaide) to provide management training programs tailored to our specific business needs. There also is the usual range of ad hoc training to meet individual skill needs such as computer software applications, presentation skills etc.

2. Structured tertiary academic training and development targeted at specific vocational requirements. AMSA has developed a specific qualification requirement for our marine surveyors, who are responsible for ship safety and pollution prevention inspections of commercial shipping. The Graduate Certificate of Marine Surveying (GCMS) was developed by AMSA as a core-training program for marine surveyors in 1994. It was conducted through arrangements with the Australian Maritime College (AMC) in Launceston. Completion of the GCMS is a requirement for all AMSA marine surveyors.

    Following a review of the GCMS course content in 2001, it was decided to progress a new training scheme, the AMSA Tertiary Training Scheme (ATTS).

This will initially focus on providing tiered postgraduate qualifications in Maritime Policy and Administration, escalating from a Graduate Certificate of Business to a graduate Diploma of Business, to a Masters degree of Business. AMSA is assessing proposals from three tertiary education institutions for future program delivery with a view to the program commencing in 2003. Completion of the ATTS again will be a requirement for all AMSA marine surveyors and the scheme will be designed with sufficient flexibility so as to be available to AMSA management and senior staff as a general management training program.

3.   Structured non-academic training and development targeted at the skills required for specific vocations. AMSA operates the National Search and Rescue School, which provides specialist aviation and maritime search and rescue training primarily for officers in AMSA's Rescue Coordination Centre. In addition, the School provides training to State and Commonwealth Police Forces, the Australian Defence Force, and government agencies and search and rescue officers from neighbouring countries.

AMSA's investment in staff training and development is considered a key platform in our business success. Data on the training and development opportunities provided to AMSA staff is collected and analysed for the purposes of assessment of training outcomes and planning for future activities.

Yours sincerely

[Signed C. Davidson]

Clive Davidson
Chief Executive Officer

27 June 2002

AUSTRALIAN MARITIME SAFETY AUTHORITY

ORGANISATIONAL OVERVIEW

AMSA commenced operations on 1 January 1991 under the *Australian Maritime Safety Authority Act 1990.* It is a Commonwealth Authority governed by the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997.*

AMSA's main areas of responsibility include:

- Participating in the development and implementation of national and international maritime safety and environment protection standards;

- Enforcing operational standards for ships in Australian waters to promote their seaworthiness, safety and pollution prevention;

- Enforcing training standards and competency of seafarers and coastal pilots;

- Providing the national aids to navigation network and navigational systems, including development and application of international navigational safety policy and standards;

- Protecting the marine environment through management of the national strategy for preparedness and response coordination to marine pollution incidents;

- Providing a capability to locate and rescue persons in maritime and aviation distress situations through the 24-hour Rescue Coordination Centre over the internationally agreed Australian Search and Rescue Region of some 53 million square kilometres (one tenth of the earth's surface);

- Providing a maritime distress and safety communications network;

- Providing related services including:

  - Public awareness and education in marine safety and pollution prevention,

  - Administration of Australia's ship registration system,

  - Publication and public access to ship safety and environmental standards.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

AMSA is structured into three business units:

- **Maritime Safety and Environmental Strategy** is responsible for developing technical and operational ship and environmental standards, navigation standards and aids to navigation, and related international relations;

- **Maritime Operations** undertakes ship inspections, marine operations, environment protection through administration of the National Plan and ship safety in Australian ports.

- **Australian Search and Rescue (AusSAR)** operates the 24 hour Rescue Coordination Centre, provides satellite distress systems, maritime safety communications and boating safety education.

The business units are supported by four corporate service bureaus.

- General Counsel providing legal services and shipping registration;
- Chief Financial Officer responsible for financial management, property and services;
- Chief Information Officer provides Information Technology;
- Corporate Strategy undertakes corporate planning, government liaison, public relations and human resources.

STAFFING

AMSA staff are employed under the *Australian Maritime Safety Authority Act 1990* which provides for their terms and conditions to be determined by the AMSA Board.

AMSA currently employs around 240 permanent staff with 170 located in the head office in Canberra and 70 located in regional offices at the major ports of Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Fremantle, Newcastle, Port Kembla, Cairns, Gladstone, Mackay, Darwin, Port Hedland, Dampier and Devonport. The 70 regional office employees include some 40 marine surveyors engaged primarily in ship inspection activities.

FINANCIAL POSITION

AMSA provides its services mainly on a cost recovery basis through statutory levy and fee for service revenue sources.

It also receives Community Service Obligation (CSO) funding from the Commonwealth Government specifically relating to search and rescue, maritime safety communications and boating safety education.