

Harbours Department Report

Mike Pryce, Manager

May 2000

1. Harbour Navigation Aids

All navigation aids are operating satisfactorily. Steeple Rock light beacon was repainted.

2. Oil Pollution Response

Six oil pollution reports were received, only one minor oil slick required action.

On 5 April, Harbours Department staff conducted the quarterly oil spill response equipment and stock check, with the divisional accountant assisting.

3. Departmental Activities

On 4 March, Harbour Rangers, Gregory Meikle and Grant Nalder, assisted in ferrying volunteers along the Korokoro foreshore for a rubbish clean-up.

On 30 March, Deputy Harbourmaster, Patrick Atwood, attended the Oiled Wildlife Response training day at the Daly Street Vet Clinic and gave a presentation about Council's role for marine oil pollution response.

On 3 April, Grant Nalder assisted the Wairarapa Division in water testing on Lake Wairarapa. The Harbour Rangers always skipper the stabicraft boat used to obtain samples and ensure that all safety aspects are followed.

On 4 and 5 April, Manager, Harbours, attended meetings of the Tory Channel Navigational Safety Group in Picton. On the first day the group was taken by water-taxi to view some of the affected beaches. On the second day the voluntary shipping lane, overtaking and passing issues and Tory Channel Entrance reporting procedures were discussed.

On 5 and 7 April, Divisional Manager, Jane Bradbury and Communication Department's Mike Bodnar attended a Maritime Safety Authority "Fundamentals of Marine Oil Pollution Response" course at Te Atatu, Auckland. It is important in a significant oil spill response for Harbours Department to have adequate "corporate" support.

On 29 April Gregory Meikle assisted in the DOC rubbish clean up of Taputeranga Island, Island Bay.

4. General Events/Information

Offshore power-boat racing was held on Wellington Harbour on 8 April and on Porirua Harbour on 22 and 23 April. Both events were given formal approval, all safety considerations were discussed with the organisers beforehand, and staff monitored the events when they occurred. All took place without incident.

The frigate H.M.N.Z.S. *Te Kaha* was in port from 20 to 26 April berthed adjacent to the National Museum *Te Papa* as part of Defence Force exhibitions.

Tranz Rail's fast-ferry *Condor Vitesse* completed her summer-season's sailing's across Cook Strait on 26 April and sailed on 29 April for England. She is scheduled to return in December 2000.

During May, the International Harbour Master's Association (of which I am a member) held a Congress in Dubai. Some interesting points were raised, and are included here for the information of Councillors.

- **Milford Haven harbour master issues warning**

Milford Haven Harbour Master Mark Andrews has given a stark warning to other harbour masters to be prepared for incidents in their ports similar to the grounding of the tanker *Sea Empress* in 1996. Addressing the opening session of the International Harbour Masters' Association congress in Dubai, Andrews was speaking publicly for the first time since his acquittal on three criminal charges relating to the grounding. While admitting that being fully prepared for every type of incident or contingency was "easy to say, not so easy to do", he nonetheless urged colleagues to ensure that adequate systems and provisions were in place. These should be not only to cope with a major incident, but also to prevent the incident happening in the first place.

Comment:- Wellington already has in place contingency plans for various types of harbour emergency, which includes close liaison with other agencies with linked responsibilities. Systems are in place to provide constant traffic and weather information, and a constant overview of marine activity enables potential problems to be identified.

- **Owner calls for 'ISM Code' for ports**

Maersk UK chairman Juan Kelly has made a personal plea for ports to adopt a world-wide code of safety and operating standards, similar in concept to the ISM Code for ships. Giving the keynote address at the International Harbour Masters' Association (IHMA) Congress in Dubai, Kelly admitted to feeling like 'a shipping Daniel in the lion's den of harbour masters' when he drew attention to many ports 'random approach to safety'. While commending a number of ports that had taken independent steps to improve operating standards and safety, he referred to the major concerns of ship owners/operators who were required to comply with strict international standards for their ships and were 'sometimes policed by the ports'. However, they did not enjoy similar formalised global protection of safety, competency and environmental standards from the ports themselves.

Comment:- The "worldwide ISM Code for ships" referred to above has itself come in for much criticism recently, particularly when the Maltese-flag tanker *Erika*

broke in two and sank in the Bay of Biscay in December 1999. Whilst New Zealand does not yet have a recent comprehensive mandatory code for “port safety and operating standards”, there is existing legislation in the form of the “General Harbour Regulations 1968”.

Also, there already exist formal marine oil pollution response plans under the Maritime Transport Act. Further Maritime Rules are currently being developed which should update some existing legislation, including formal marine pilot training, etc., Many shore cargo safety aspects in ports are covered by O.S.H. legislation. Operations at oil tanker berths are covered by the “International Safety Guide for Oil Tankers and Terminals”.

However, reputable ports attempt to follow “best international practice” and various audit systems are often used to help attain acceptable levels.

Mike Pryce
Manager, Harbours