

MARINE SHIPPING INCIDENT

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park - Douglas Shoal

INFORMATION SHEET 2

What happened and when?

At 5.10pm on Saturday 3 April 2010, the 230m long bulk coal carrier *Shen Neng 1* ran aground on Douglas Shoal, around 92km north east of Gladstone. Bound for China, the ship had left the Port of Gladstone carrying approximately 68 000 tonnes of coal. There was also approximately 950 cubic metres of oil on board.

Douglas Shoal is one of about 2900 coral reefs and shoals in the Great Barrier Reef.

Who is involved?

The grounding of the ship *Shen Neng 1* has required a coordinated response across many Australian and Queensland Government departments in accordance with the *National Plan to Combat Pollution of the Sea by Oil and other Noxious and Hazardous Substances* and the *Queensland Coastal Contingency Action Plan*. Maritime Safety Queensland is the lead operational agency with support from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) and environmental advice and operational support from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) and Queensland agencies. AMSA and GBRMPA are coordinating an investigation into the incident.

The GBRMPA is coordinating a scientific panel. Panel members will assess information gathered. The panel will advise on environmental issues related to the grounding and impact site.

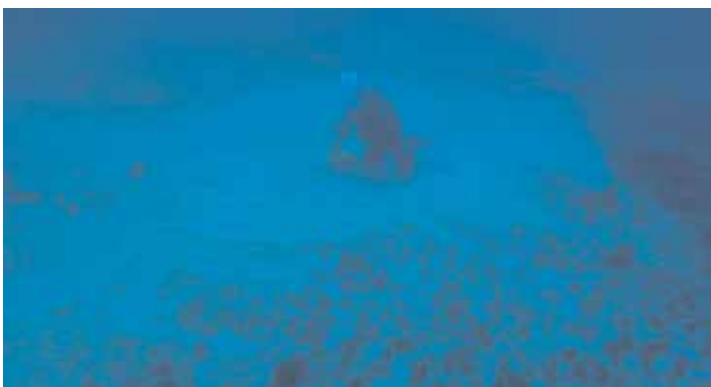
What is the latest information?

After transfer of some of the oil on board the *Shen Neng 1* to a bunker barge, salvors assessed the ship as safe for refloating and transport. At approximately 8pm on Monday 12 April the *Shen Neng 1* was refloated from its position on the Douglas Shoal and transferred to Barren Island in the Keppel Island group. Further assessments are being conducted as to the ship's condition.

Initial environmental inspection team

An inspection team comprised of staff from the GBRMPA and the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management have undertaken initial assessments.

The initial inspection team have found scarring in the



Diver at edge of scar



Diver over grounding scars

immediate vicinity of the vessel's impact with the shoal. A scar of 20-30m in width and approximately 100m long is present. The team has also found long and wide sections of scarring across the shoal. Initial inspections have also been conducted on the site where the vessel was eventually

stabilised and found an area of 250m x 100m with significant impact. These initial inspections indicate the impact site is large and the damage extensive, covering a length of approximately 2.5 kilometres. This includes large areas where the coral and sea bed structure has been completely crushed.

The initial inspection team has found evidence of anti-foul paint residue across an extensive area of the impact site. Anti-foul paints are used to coat the bottom of ships to prevent sealife such as algae and molluscs attaching themselves to the hull, thereby slowing down the ship and increasing fuel consumption. Samples of this paint residue have been collected and will be analysed further to determine their content and toxicity.

Further assessment

The Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) vessel *RV Cape Ferguson* is en-route to the site. This vessel has equipment and capabilities to undertake a more thorough and complete assessment of the site.

It is still very early days and this AIMS research will provide a more complete picture of the impact and extent of damage.

Reports of oil

Oil residue has been found on the shoreline of North West Island. It is believed to be a light coverage of remnant oil from the original spill from the vessel shortly after its grounding. It is a very narrow band of weathered oil in the form of small tar balls.

The multi-agency task force involved with managing the *Shen Neng 1* grounding and its associated environment impacts have previously developed contingency plans for oil spill response to affected shorelines.

The appropriate Queensland agencies will now implement responses as per this contingency plan to manage the cleanup of the affected shorelines.

Clean up of North West Island is scheduled for today (14 April 2010). On ground investigations of neighbouring islands will also be undertaken today to ascertain if any oil residue is present on these shorelines.