



SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



AMSA Renews OMC Torres Strait Contract

OMC International is to continue providing an Under Keel Clearance Management (UKCM) system for Torres Strait until at least June 2032.

An eight-year extension of the contract, which has been in place since 2011, was recently signed with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) and is to commence in June next year.

AMSA manager of seafarer certification and pilotage Grant Judson said the system, which is primarily used by AMSA-licensed coastal pilots when transiting vessels through a defined monitoring area within Torres Strait, was critical to ongoing safe navigation in the waterway.

“The Torres Strait is an environmentally-sensitive area as well as a vital corridor for global shipping and it’s imperative that we ensure that ships can pass through the region safely,” he says.

“The UKCM system plays an important role in providing pilots and masters with highly-accurate information about how close a vessel’s hull is to the seafloor.

“The UKCM system is designed to support seafarers in keeping ships safe, and significantly reduces the risk of grounding.

“AMSA is pleased to continue working with OMC International to deliver this important service.”

It is understood the system calculates, in near real time, the distance between keel and seabed, before and during vessel transit – taking into account the height of tide, tidal streams, vessel speed and dynamic motions of the ship. This enables pilots and vessel operators to both plan and monitor the safe and efficient passage of ships navigating through the ‘Strait.

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