

Key ports get oil-spill rapid response kits

While increased shipping traffic through Australian waters a result of the minerals boom has been good news for the economy, it has also increased the risk of oil spills around marine protected areas. To prepare for such accidents, the Federal Government is rolling out new state-of-the-art oil cleanup equipment to ports around the country.



Credit: Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Although oil spills are rare, they can have catastrophic consequences. Incidents involving vessels such as *Pacific Adventurer* in 2009, when 260 tonnes of fuel spilled into the Coral Sea off the coast of Queensland, and *Shen Neng 1* in 2010, when a bulk coal carrier ran aground on the Reef and lost 4 tonnes of fuel, remind us of the huge risks that oil spills present to the environment.

Responding to such incidents quickly and effectively is critical to minimising their impact on the marine environment, industries and communities.

The new cleanup equipment will help authorities to clean more oil, more quickly and in rougher water. The equipment, worth some \$13.5 million, will be delivered to Sydney, Melbourne, Devonport, Adelaide, Perth, Dampier, Darwin, Townsville and Brisbane.

The rollout includes 18 dispersant spray systems, 31 skimmers to recover oil, 13 kilometres of boom to contain oil and six new oil sweep systems.

Mobile wildlife cleaning facilities will also be included, equipping local response teams with the capacity to more effectively treat wildlife affected by oil spills.

According to the recent media statement from the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the new equipment is part of a five-year program to upgrade the nation's stockpile of oil-spill response equipment following the government's review of the *National Plan to Combat Pollution of the Sea by Oil and Other Noxious and Hazardous Substances*.

Source: Minister for Infrastructure and Transport

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