

## OMC signs Weipa under-keel clearance contract

by Rob McKay | 01:03PM, 16 Sep 2008

OMC International had signed a three-year contract with the Ports Corporation of Queensland (PCQ) to operate its dynamic under keel clearance (DUKC) system at the Rio Tinto Alcan bulk export port of Weipa, the Melbourne company revealed today.

OMC founder Dr Terry O'Brien said the Weipa DUKC system should be operational by October 1.

He predicted the equivalent of five or six fewer ships would need to leave the Port of Weipa to deliver the same tonnage of bauxite to the Gladstone refinery after that date.

“It is expected that the DUKC technology will deliver significant savings by providing ships with greater certainty of how much cargo they can safely carry,” Dr O'Brien said.

The Weipa system is aimed at enhancing the safety and improve the efficiency of Rio Tinto's large export ships transporting bauxite from the Weipa deposits to the alumina refineries at the Port of Gladstone – and to China, Japan and Korea, which are not constrained by the 12.2-metre Torres Strait draught limit.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority is developing a governance framework for under-keel clearance management systems in the strait.

DUKC is one of two under consideration, with the other being Voyage Management Systems (VMS), a subsidiary of Torres Industries, the parent company of Australian Reef Pilots.

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