

# OMC wins Port of Weipa contract



significant savings by providing ships with greater certainty of how much cargo they can safely carry," he said.

In addition to providing increased drafts for ships leaving Weipa, the system will also provide larger sailing windows and greater port efficiency.

Additional environmental benefits will include reduction in carbon emissions from fewer overall sailings for the same tonnage and reduced risk of ship grounding.

Since Melbourne-based maritime engineering group OMC first installed its worldleading DUKC system in Queensland's Hay Point in 1993, there have been more than 40,000 safe sailings in ports around the world.

An estimated 70% of Australia's coal and iron ore exports sail on ships with their maximum safe drafts and sailing times determined by DUKC systems.

OMC's system, with its proven 15-year track record, is now in 19 ports worldwide — 11 in Australia. Including three in Queensland ports, three in New Zealand and five in Europe.

The Weipa contract follows separate agreements signed by OMC in the past 12 months with the Federal Waterways Administration in Germany, Portugal and with the Port Kembla Port Corporation in NSW.

The system is supported 24/7 by an experienced staff of engineers, naval architects and software engineering/IT personnel, employed full-time on the development, implementation and support of DUKC systems.

Recent developments have been to take the DUKC on board ships using the DUKC Portable Pilot Unit (PPU) and to integrate DUKC into VTS Systems with DUKC VTS, both of which allow monitoring of UKC in real time during a transit as well as providing a decision support tool for unexpected events such as engine breakdown.

Both these world leading innovations are currently being trialled in Torres Strait.

OMC International has signed a three-year contract with Ports Corporation Queensland (PCQ) to supply its world-leading Dynamic Under Keel Clearance (DUKC) system to the Rio Tinto Alcan bulk export port in Weipa.

Dr Terry O'Brien (pictured), OMC Founder, DUKC developer and former University of Melbourne academic, expects the system to be operational by early October.

The DUKC is a unique maritime engineering system designed to calculate waves, tides, currents and vessel dynamics in real time to produce the safest and most efficient transit of large ships in and out of ports and through shallow, restricted waterways.

The purpose of the Weipa System is to enhance 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.

Dr O'Brien predicts that annually there will be the equivalent of five or six less ships leaving the Port of Weipa to deliver bauxite to the Gladstone refinery.

"It is expected that the DUKC technology will deliver

## Backlog of child case attention on Cape York revealed during suicide inquest

No fewer than 169 child cases on Cape York, predominantly relating to neglect, are currently overdue for attention.

The backlog was revealed during the recent inquest into the suicide of a 12-year-old boy at Kowanyama in 2004.

Child Safety Department's Far North zone director Brenda Campbell told the *Cairns Post* that the lack of allocated resources has led to the hiring of inexperienced personnel, who are unable to carry full caseloads and vacancies.

"Staff feel there is an uncontrolled burden of work to carry," she told

the newspaper, adding: "If we could manage the workloads, the turnover would be reduced."

Ms Campbell gave evidence on the third day of the inquest before State Coroner Michael Barnes, in which the dysfunctional nature of family life in Cape communities such as Kowanyama came under the microscope.

The director revealed that her staff is dealing with an average of 22 cases each — nearly double that in other parts of Queensland.

She said the backlog only contained five and 10-day notifications with the more urgent 24-hour notifications being dealt with "on time".

At Kowanyama alone, she indicated that there are now 35 children on child protection orders, with eight still living in the community, three at boarding schools and the rest removed to Cairns.

Case numbers had increased across the Cape in the past year, she said, with 70 new child orders issued this year.

Sadly, there is no sign yet that the Alcohol Management Plans in Indigenous communities has made much difference.

The only drop in demand was at Kowanyama earlier this year when the wet season rain forced the community to go "dry".

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