

signal

OMC wins St Lawrence contract

Australian maritime engineering firm, OMC International (Shipping Australia Limited corporate associate member) has won a major Canadian contract for its DUKC electronic navigation system to operate in the St Lawrence River. OMC has recently celebrated the 20th anniversary of its first DUKC system installation at Hay Point in Queensland.

OMC currently provides DUKC systems for a number of ports in Australia and overseas, and also operates the Torres Strait under keel management systems on behalf of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

Executive Director Dr Terry O'Brien OAM stated that "a customised web-based DUKC Series 5 system for the draught-restricted section of the St Lawrence River from Montreal to Quebec City is expected to be operational next year as part of Montreal Port Authority's (MPA) and the Canadian Coast Guard's (CCG) integrated e-Navigation solution for the St Lawrence River, which is one of the world's largest inland waterways."

It is pleasing to see an Australian company leading the world in technology solutions, supporting safe and efficient shipping.



A container vessel navigating the St Lawrence River

Cost of coastal shipping regulation to Australian producers and consumers highlighted at transport regulation reform conference

At the National Transport Regulation Reform Conference in Sydney on 20-21 June, acting CEO Shipping Australia Limited, Rod Nairn, highlighted the difficulties faced by shipping companies in trying to comply with the intersecting aspects of various legislation in the coastal shipping environment. "The unintended or anticipated interactions between the Coastal Trading Act and the Fair Work Act have increased the complication of compliance and driven some international shipping companies completely out of coastal trade," he said. "For those that persist, the increased charges that have to be placed on domestic cargos to pay the Australian wages required to be paid to foreign seafarers makes movement of small volumes of cargo by sea unviable.

"This is particularly disappointing because, from a greenhouse emissions perspective, sea freight is far more efficient on long haul transits than other transport modes and it could be more economically efficient without the regulatory burden. The outcome, unfortunately, is that foreign imports are replacing Australian produce as it is cheaper to import materials from as far away as North America, than to move goods around the Australian coast."

Coastal shipping in Western Australia suffers a setback

Jebsons have withdrawn from the coastal shipping service in Western Australia. Their services commenced in March 2010 offering fortnightly services from Fremantle to ports in the north of the state, and in the Northern Territory. The last service arrived in Darwin at the end of August. The Western Australian Government has indicated that they are interested in proposals for a coastal service but will not be continuing the subsidy in its current form.

Ballast water management will cost ship owners

The Ballast Water Management Convention 2004 is creeping closer to entry into force with 29 per cent of global shipping tonnage now covered by ratification and only 6 per cent still to go. The convention will require ship owners and operators to develop a ballast water management plan, select and install a treatment system and train personnel to operate the system. Their ships will be subject to surveys and inspection to maintain certification. It takes a comprehensive approach to ballast water management covering: reception facilities, water exchange, sampling, sediment reception, treatment technology and risk management.

Australia is a strong supporter of the Ballast Water Management Convention, given the damage caused to the environment by invasive alien species, depletion of fish stocks and the high cost of controlling these effects. However, the cost of compliance will be high.

Implementation will be phased in with the revised schedule adopted at IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee in May, and is expected to be adopted by the IMO in November this year.

New Anti-fouling and in-water cleaning guidelines

On 26 June the Standing Council on Primary Industries (which comprises all Australian State and New Zealand Ministers, who have a responsibility for primary industries), endorsed new Anti-fouling and in-water cleaning guidelines which replace the previous Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council Code of Practice and In-water Hull Cleaning and Maintenance, 1997. Copies of the guidelines are available through the DAFF website.

While the new guidelines still recommend that structures should be removed from the water for cleaning, they recognise that this is not always possible, and