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AUSTRALIAN MARITIME COMPANY HELPS IMPROVE GERMAN PORT EFFICIENCY

OMC, a leading Melbourne-based maritime engineering company, has won a major contract to customise its unique navigation technology for a German river system.

Germany's federal Waterways and Shipping Directorate will install OMC's Dynamic Under Keel Clearance system (DUKC[®]) along the Outer and Lower Weser River in North-West Germany.

The DUKC[®] System will cover the estuary port of Bremerhaven as well as the three ports on the lower reaches of the river, Nordenham, Brake and Bremen.

It will be commissioned to improve safety and efficiency for large container ships and bulk carriers moving along the river, particularly through its more shallow sections.

DUKC[®] is a draft enhancing system developed for use in approach channels to ports that have tidally restricted sailings. The system combines static information such as the mapping of the channel bed with dynamic information, like swells, tides and currents to calculate very accurately how deep and how fast each particular ship can safely travel through the water.

The impetus to develop this technology arose from the observation that ships have traditionally relied on a fixed and therefore necessarily conservative allowance for the minimum under keel clearance required to avoid touching bottom. A more scientific approach has the potential to calculate a more accurate and therefore a safer clearance.

DUKC[®] ensures that any economic benefits will never compromise a safe passage. Since its first installation at the coal port of Hay Point in 1993 there has been no touch bottom incidences and DUKC[®] remains the only proven system worldwide which has taken ships deeper.

The economic benefits of the system can be considerable. They include improved cargo loadings, increased times available for ships to arrive or sail and reduced charges for delays.

Founder of OMC and developer of DUKC[®], Dr Terry O'Brien, said the agreement with Germany's Waterways and Shipping Administration came after an open tender process and a rigorous analysis of what the system would deliver.

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Dr O'Brien said DUKC[®] was already used by nine Australian ports, with the company recently bringing the system on-line at the iron and coal hub of Port Kembla.

"Domestically, DUKC[®] has shown its potential to unlock new capacity at Australia's ports, which in the middle of a resources boom is delivering a significant boost to our national exports," said Dr O'Brien.

The four ports in Germany will join the Port of Lisbon in Portugal and three ports in New Zealand as international users of OMC's unique system.

Since first developed in 1993, OMC's Dynamic Under Keel Clearance system has successfully assisted over 35,000 vessel movements in ports around the world and has provided over A\$5bn in economic benefits to ports and port users.

On average, 10 large vessels transit under DUKC[®] advice in draught-controlled situations every day of the year.

Development of the DUKC[®] system was supported by the Australian Government through a Commercial Ready Grant.

Work on installing DUKC[®] along the Weser River has started immediately, and is expected to be operational for the river and all four German ports by late 2008.

For more information, please visit www.omc-international.com

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