



Media release

Port Hedland, 7 August 2008

Port Authority uses latest technology in a world-first

Port Hedland Port Authority (PHPA) and OMC International have jointly achieved a world first by successfully using the latest DUKC[®] VTS technology to assist a large bulk carrier safely transit the main channel once it had been refloated after being grounded at Port Hedland last week.

The refloating of the “*Iron King*”, which ran aground on the side of the shipping channel as a result of a steering malfunction, is the first time in the world that the capabilities of the latest DUKC[®] VTS technology have been used in a crisis situation to validate the opportunity to safely transit the channel outside any standard sailing window.

Following the “*Iron King’s*” grounding, PHPA assigned eight tugs to help with the refloat on the next high tide and called Melbourne-based OMC for technical support. And while some 3000km apart, OMC assisted PHPA successfully unblock Australia’s biggest iron ore port.

Dr Terry O’Brien, a former University of Melbourne academic who founded OMC and developed the DUKC[®] technology, said all parties had to work together quickly because of a rapidly closing tidal window.

“Our preliminary under keel clearance calculations indicated that the vessel needed to be refloated in a very short time frame,” Dr O’Brien said. “We only had about two hours to work with however, PHPA acted quickly and was able to refloat and deballast the vessel and, using our latest technology, navigate it safely through to the end of the channel. This ensured the port was quickly unblocked and meant avoiding massive costs to the shipping industry.

“Using the DUKC[®] VTS, the Marine Pilots on the vessel had access to live up-to-the-minute UKC information and feedback throughout the three-hour transit to anchorage.

“This technology was designed to aid decision making during transit and to manage unforeseen circumstances.”

OMC International’s DUKC[®] VTS is a unique tool which provides operators of Vessel Traffic Systems (VTS) with real-time UKC management advice. Based on OMC’s award winning Dynamic Under Keel Clearance (DUKC[®]) technology, the DUKC[®] VTS monitors the position, speed and under keel clearance of deep draft vessels sailing through port approach channels and shallow waterways.



OMC International Pty Ltd

Commercial in Confidence

Since first developed in 1993, OMC's Dynamic Under Keel Clearance (DUKC®) system has successfully assisted more than 40,000 vessel movements in ports around the world and has provided nearly A\$10 billion in economic benefits to ports and port users.

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