

OMC help maximise capacity at Port Hedland

OMC International will deliver two new products to Port Hedland as part of an exciting new 5-year 'Platinum Package' agreement to help maximise port capacity at the world's largest bulk export port, OMC's Executive Director Dr Terry O'Brien OAM announced in November.

Under this agreement, Port Hedland Port Authority (PHPA) will upgrade to the latest

web-based DUKC Series 5 software navigation technology and be OMC's first client to have these new products, Optimiser and DUKC Chart Overlay, integrated into their DUKC Series 5 system. Rollout will begin in 2013.

The Initial DUKC Series 5 system was commissioned as operational in 2011 by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) to ensure

shipping safety in Torres Strait. "This five-year contract will equip Port Hedland with new innovative tools to optimise the number of ships sailing on a tide," said Dr O'Brien, who pioneered DUKC in 1993. "The port authority needs to manage increasing volumes through Port Hedland's inner harbour, further exacerbated by the recent postponement of the Port Hedland Outer Harbour

development by BHP Billiton, and these new technological developments will optimise the capacity of their existing channel. "The growth of our Western Australian iron ore ports and our east coast coal ports will put increasing pressure on the shipping regulators to use tides more efficiently as cargo volumes ramp up".

Cost effective repair and wear protection

In economic downturns, especially of the type and severity currently being experienced in the global market, the focus for users of process plant inevitably becomes repair, rather than replacement, should plant and equipment fail. In such adverse climates, Cap-ex budgets are inevitably squeezed, or frozen altogether, and the pressure is on maintenance engineers to make the best with what they've got.

In normal economic times, the cost and time pressures that process industries are subject to generally dictates that, in breakdown situations, the fastest solution available becomes the preferred option.

However, the larger or more specialist a piece of plant, the less likely it is to be available quickly, so repair then becomes the default option. At lower levels of activity, though, repair becomes the preferred option due to its inherent cost benefits.

As evidence of this, wear protection specialist, Kingfisher Industrial has calculated that the cost of repairing plant and equipment such as transfer chutes, hoppers and silos, feeders and conveyors averages around one-third that of buying new.

"Repair of worn equipment, or perforated pipework is a really viable option at any time, but more so during periods of belt tightening," said John Connolly, MD of Kingfisher Industrial. "Using a combination of ceramic, metallic and polymer lining systems, we have had overwhelming success in protecting equipment and extending the service life of process plant and equipment that, without intervention, would otherwise have been designated as scrap.

"Our experience is that every installation requiring repair or refurbishment using wear protection has its own specific requirements in terms of lining material. There is no 'one-size-fits-all solution', due to the levels of abrasion of different conveyed materials. This contrasts with the procedures in many companies today, where the method of repair with wear protection is almost exclusively based upon applying hard metal deposits using traditional welding methods."

"Although this can work in some instances as a means of extending plant life, it is not cost effective because it does not eradicate the continual problems experienced in many applications."

The case for repair rather than

replacement was underlined recently in an application undertaken by Kingfisher for a major power generator on Braithwaite tanks that held cooling water containing highly abrasive ash. The tanks were 30-years old and considered past their life expectancy. However, as an alternative to costly replacement, Kingfisher consulted with the end user's facilities management contractor and put forward a proposal for refurbishment.

The proposal involved Kingfisher in undertaking a structural NDT inspection, mechanical refurbishment activities and lining of the tanks with the company's K-THANE polyurethane lining system to protect against erosion and corrosion internally.

"We have a tremendous amount of experience of supplying and installing wear protection systems in the power generation market," commented Connolly.

"This was instrumental in our proposing a refurbishment strategy for the Braithwaite tanks project. The effectiveness of the strategy can be judged from the fact that it cost just one-quarter of the alternative of replacing the old tanks with new units."

Suez liferaft service station

Wilhelmsen Ships Service (WSS) has opened a new liferaft service station in Suez, Egypt, which will service vessels transiting the Suez Canal and Egypt's main ports.

Russell Dinwoodie, General Manager WSS Egypt said: "With over 17,000 vessel transits per year in the Suez Canal, this new Liferaft Service Station is an important addition to our global network. Its strategic location will

benefit ship operators by allowing them to utilise our full range of liferaft services whilst waiting to transit the Canal; avoiding costly deviations, uncertainty over service and supply levels and ultimately, making passage more efficient'.

Known as the Highway to India, the Suez Canal connects the Mediterranean Sea at Port Said and the Red Sea at Suez, making it a hugely important

navigation waterway. Suez has four main ports: Adabeya; Sukhna; Elzayeteya and Port Tewfik.

In addition to liferaft servicing, the new service station



will enable customers to carry out liferaft exchanges at the ports of Alexandria, Port Said, Damietta, Safaga and Nuwaiba.

The Liferaft Exchange Programme (LRE) from WSS offers global exchange of out of date liferafts for operational ones, allowing customers to take better control of costs and ensure that their vessels remain fully compliant. Since its launch, the LRE concept has proved to be a market shaper, and is fast replacing traditional liferaft ownership.