Australian Government
Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Media Release

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NEW SYSTEM TO ENHANCE MARITIME SAFETY AND SECURITY

At midnight on 1 July 2009, Australia will implement a new system, known as Long Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT). A culmination of several years of development activity, LRIT will allow ships to be tracked up to 1000 nautical miles off the Australian coast.

This international system was developed and agreed internationally by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and forms part of the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention. It applies to all passenger ships including high speed craft, cargo ships more than 300 gross tonnage and mobile offshore drilling units. Vessels that are limited to domestic voyages trading between Australian ports, pleasure craft and fishing vessels are not part of the scheme.

In the new system it will be mandatory for ships on international voyages to automatically transmit their identity and position at six hourly intervals. Australia will then have the ability to receive these reports when the vessels are up to 1000 nautical miles off the Australian coast.

Mr Graham Peachey, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, said “This initiative will improve our awareness of international shipping movements. The information has direct applications for Australia’s efforts to make shipping safer and more secure, to protect the marine environment and to provide effective search and rescue services at sea.”

The cost to ship owners is minimal as many ships already have the equipment needed to comply with the scheme. Such equipment, however, must be tested to receive a conformance test report.

This new LRIT capability will enhance crew and vessel safety and security, and AMSA recognises the contribution of the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service in supporting the development of maritime domain awareness.

More details about the Long Range Identification and Tracking system can be found at www.amsa.gov.au/LRIT.

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