

Submission to the Senate Inquiry into the adequacy of arrangements to prevent the entry and establishment of invasive species likely to harm Australia's natural environment

Environment and Communications References Committee

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) is a statutory authority established under the *Australian Maritime Safety Authority Act 1990* with the primary role to minimise the risk of shipping incidents and pollution in Australian waters, through ship safety and environment protection regulation and services, and to maximise people saved from maritime and aviation incidents through search and rescue coordination.

AMSA also represents Australia's interests at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and, as such, AMSA's submission is focussed on the IMO work on biosecurity matters, in particular, invasive marine species and the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (Ballast Water Convention) and its global implementation. Australia signed the Ballast Water Convention, subject to ratification, in 2005.

The discharge of ballast water from ships is recognised as a significant biosecurity risk and has resulted in the spread of invasive marine species and pathogens around the world. The IMO has been actively working on ballast water management measures, adopting voluntary guidelines in 1991 and the Ballast Water Convention in 2004.

The Ballast Water Convention aims to minimise the biosecurity risk associated with ballast water by providing uniform international control and management arrangements for the shipping industry. Entry into force of the Ballast Water Convention will occur 12 months after ratification by 30 countries representing 35 per cent of world merchant shipping gross tonnage. As of July 2014, the only outstanding entry into force condition is the tonnage requirement, with 40 countries (representing 30.32 per cent of world tonnage) having deposited an instrument of ratification with the IMO.

Ratification and entry into force of the Ballast Water Convention is one of the main priorities of the IMO during the 2014/15 biennium. In launching the 2014 theme for World Maritime Day "IMO conventions: effective implementation", the Secretary-General of the IMO highlighted the urgent need for entry into force of the Ballast Water Convention to prevent the global spread of invasive marine species via transfers of unmanaged ballast water and sediments.

Turkey, Argentina, Italy and Japan have all recently declared their intention to ratify the Ballast Water Convention before the end of 2014, which will bring the total to 34.20 per cent of the world's merchant shipping tonnage. Further to this, Indonesia, the Philippines, Belgium and Finland have also confirmed that they are progressing towards ratification. These countries constitute more than 2 per cent of the world's fleet, which suggests that the Convention is likely to be ratified in 2015 and implemented globally during 2016.

Ratification and implementation of the Ballast Water Convention will significantly strengthen Australia's arrangements to prevent the entry and establishment of invasive marine species and pathogens. While there have been mandatory arrangements in place in

Australia since 2001, the Ballast Water Convention will require ships to treat ballast water using methods that are considerably more effective at reducing biosecurity risk than the methods that are currently accepted by the Australian Government. The Biosecurity Bill will need to fully implement the Ballast Water Convention requirements to ensure effective implementation of its environment protection requirements and allow Australian accession to the Ballast Water Convention.

The IMO has also recognised the importance of managing hull fouling (commonly referred to as 'biofouling') in managing invasive marine species. In July 2011, the IMO adopted the 2011 Guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimise the transfer of invasive aquatic species (the Guidelines). The IMO requested Member States to take urgent action in applying these guidelines and in 2013 approved the draft Guidance for evaluating the 2011 Guidelines (MEPC.1/Circ.811). The evaluation aims to measure the effectiveness of the guidelines over a five year period to determine if further action to address this issue is necessary.