

7 – NATIONAL MATTERS

National Matters Update by Australia

Australia presents an update on national matters of relevance to the work of IALA.

Vessel Traffic Services (VTS)

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) is the national competent authority for VTS in Australia. The establishment of VTS to contribute to the safety and efficiency of navigation and the protection of the environment by mitigating the development of unsafe situations continues to increase, with 28 VTS now authorised under national law.

Following adoption of IMO Resolution A.1158(32) *Guidelines for Vessel Traffic Services* by the IMO Assembly in December 2021 and the suite of IALA revised recommendations and guidelines specifically related to VTS, Australia's regulatory framework for VTS was amended on 1 July 2022 to allow providers to:

- Operate in accordance with the *Guidelines for Vessel Traffic Services* adopted by IMO Resolution A.1158(32) as if the Guidelines were mandatory; and
- Establish and operate the vessel traffic service in accordance with the normative provisions of IALA Standards 1010, 1040, 1050 and 1070.

Australia / New Zealand Satellite Based Augmentation System (SBAS) Project

The Australian and New Zealand Satellite-Based Augmentation System (SBAS), named SouthPAN, turned on its three Open Services on 26 September. This follows the signing of a contract between Geoscience Australia (GA) and Lockheed Martin Australia. There is detailed technical information on the service, including a fact sheet, at <https://www.ga.gov.au/scientific-topics/positioning-navigation/positioning-australia/services-and-tools>.

As the take up of SBAS-enabled GNSS receivers commences and gains momentum in our sector, we can expect to see many safety and efficiency benefits. The benefits include enhanced PNT at sea, improved hydrography, improved positioning of aids to navigation, oil and gas pipeline surveying and manoeuvring of large cruise ships in confined waters etc.

The service is fully funded by both the Australian and New Zealand governments. Australia and New Zealand are developing a IMO submission (along with the EU and Trinity House, UK) that requests IMO to develop a performance standard for SBAS enabled GNSS receiver.

AToN maintenance

Australia's AtoN maintenance function has been outsourced for over 20 years. The current contract ends in June 2024 and Australia is currently out to market to sustain the service. In addition to AtoN maintenance we are also tendering for an emergency towage vessel that will have the dual function of being the AtoN workboat.

A key challenge will be the remote nature of many Australian AtoN sites, and the harsh marine environment in which many are located. Once the procurement is complete, Australia would



be happy to share our specification for the maintenance service with any councillors who may find it useful.

Australian Maritime Safety Authority Heritage Strategy

The AMSA [Heritage Strategy](#) is a public document that describes how AMSA will care for the 62 heritage AtoN properties under its remit. The inaugural strategy was published in 2018, and AMSA has recently reviewed and improved the document. The new version includes updated sections on the impact of climate change and a commitment to survey Australia's network of around 500 AtoN for heritage values. AMSA is also publishing comprehensive [management plans](#) for the Commonwealth listed sites that it is responsible for.

Hazardous substances

Australia continues with a programme of works to remove hazardous substances (lead and asbestos) from the classic lighthouses in our network. This has necessitated the full refurbishment of several iconic heritage lighthouses – in many cases the first time many have seen such attention since they were built around 100 years ago.

We continue to see delays in materials supply and a tight labour market is adding to cost pressures. We have also experienced a reluctance from contractors to absorb all the traditional risk in large contracts (EURO 2-3 million) and a particular desire to share the risk of price fluctuations for materials.

Mercury baths in heritage AToN sites

In October 2021, an earthquake in Victoria, Australia highlighted the risks of maintaining mercury baths at AtoN sites. It took over 3 weeks to clean the resulting small leak and confirm the property was safe to access again. Finding an alternative to mercury remains a high priority, but the need to maintain the heritage fabric of the building rules out many of the simpler options (such as removing the lens and using LED alternatives).