



MEDIA RELEASE

SYDNEY PORTS UNDERTAKES ANNUAL BOTANY BAY OIL SPILL RESPONSE EXERCISE

24 August 2009

Botany Bay is the scene of a simulated oil spill containment exercise today, designed to test Sydney Ports Corporation and Caltex oil-spill response capabilities.

Sydney Ports has responsibility for responding to marine-based emergencies and for controlling, cleaning up and investigating any spills on Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay.

Sydney Ports Chief Executive Officer Grant Gilfillan said the aim of the exercise is to test the response of Sydney Ports to a 'Tier 2' oil spill, or a spill of between ten and 1,000 tonnes of oil.

"The exercise will replicate an emergency response to a simulated steering failure of a crude oil tanker on approach to the Caltex 3 Kurnell berth," Mr Gilfillan said.

"One of the aims of the event is to ensure the containment of any spilled oil, the safe operation of all Sydney Ports plant and equipment and the safe and effective response of both Sydney Ports and Caltex staff involved.

"In addition, the exercise serves to test emergency procedures and boom deployment options to prevent escalation to a 'Tier 3' oil spill, greater than 1,000 tonnes of oil.

"Approximately 20 Sydney Ports marine operations personnel will be involved using a range of oil spill equipment such as containment booms, skimmers and specialised oil recovery vessels.

"The exercise continues a busy year for a number of these highly trained Sydney Ports marine operations staff. Many returned in March and April from Queensland's Pacific Adventurer oil spill clean up having increased their interstate oil-spill response experience.

"As well as conducting regular exercises to ensure we're well prepared for emergencies and oil spills, Sydney Ports also conducts random safety audits to minimise the chance of such incidents," Mr Gilfillan said.

During the 2008/09 financial year, Sydney Port officers carried out 4871 audits on vessels transferring bulk oil, gas and chemicals. There were 106 dangerous goods container terminal audits.

In addition, last year, Sydney Ports responded to 236 reported incidents of marine pollution.

Contact: Peter Zangari 0408 441 010/ 9296 4995