

Media Release

SAFEGUARDING THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT- ANNUAL BOTANY BAY OIL SPILL RESPONSE EXERCISE

6 September 2010

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

Sydney Ports has responsibility for responding to emergency situations 24/7 and has an experienced team of over 100 marine operations personnel at its disposal to ensure the safety of port users and protecting the environment of Sydney Harbour and Port Botany.

Sydney Ports Chief Executive Officer Grant Gilfillan said the aim of today’s exercise was 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.

“One of the aims of the event was 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,” Mr Gilfillan said.

“In addition, the exercise served 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 and 16 Caltex staff were involved using a range of oil spill equipment such as containment booms, skimmers and specialised oil recovery vessels.

A number of these highly trained Sydney Ports Marine Operations crews have lent their vast emergency response experience to recent interstate spills including the response to the Montara/West Atlas Oil Spill in North Western Australia and currently assisting the cleanup of an oil spill in Newcastle port.

“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 2009/10 financial year, Sydney Port officers carried out 4272 audits on vessels transferring bulk oil, gas and chemicals. There were 242 dangerous goods container terminal audits and last year, Sydney Ports responded to 308 reported incidents of marine pollution.

Last financial year 2009/10, Sydney’s Ports also saw over 11 million tonnes of Oil imported and exported through the dedicated berths at Kurnell in Botany Bay and Gore Cove in Sydney Harbour, an increase of three per cent on the previous year.

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