

Biosecurity: Top of South Marine Biosecurity Partnership Meeting

22 May 2015

Speaking Notes for Annabel Young, Executive Director NZ Shipping Federation

- Coastal shipping is an environmentally efficient method of transportation.
- The ship owners and operators share your interest in keeping ships clean, for the sake of the environment, and to maintain reduced running costs of their vessels.
- Ship operators have a huge vested financial interest in keeping their ships clean, as even light marine fouling on the hull adds significant costs to the fuel consumption and to the speed of a ship. This can be in the order of a tonnes of fuel per day. By light fouling I mean stuff that could be wiped off by hand. For the sake of efficiency, hulls need to be clean.
- Fouling in the sea chest may significantly affect the operation of on-board marine systems by reducing water flow and increasing maintenance of coolers etc. Again, this means that the ship operator has an interest in ensuring that the sea chests are kept clear. In many vessels, particularly ice class vessels, the sea chest water may be recirculated to maintain constant temperatures at intake and the need to keep clear is even more vital.
- Ships are routinely inspected and surveyed in dry docks, this may be at 5 years intervals but varies depending on the ship.
- In water inspections may be undertaken at yearly intervals, particularly for passenger vessels. This allows for underwater hull, propeller blades, thrusters and other parts of to be inspected and cleaned. This is all part of the owner or operator maintaining the operating efficiency of the ship.
- Given the high costs to the operation of a vessel of not controlling fouling, most ship operators already have systems in place to control it. These range from use of marine growth inhibitors such as marine biocides, the use of electricity to produce sodium hydrochloride in the sea water to inhibit growth etc.
- Coastal ships are generally operating on the NZ coast within the EEZ rather than to far flung destinations or ports. Any biosecurity plan needs to reflect this. By way of example, the recent incursion of a leather back turtle in Pelorous Sound reflects the non-ship options for sea life to travel. You should not underestimate the ability of marine organisms to travel by themselves. Nor should you underestimate the possibility that undiscovered organisms are already here.
- Finally, I note that one of my members operates out of Westport so their ship often sits in fresh water as well as salt. What lives in saltwater often cannot handle fresh water and vice versa so this helps keep the ship clean. None the less they also put significant effort into anti-fouling as it is such a driver of cost.
- Ad lib response to comments by other presenters about that “clean vessel passes”, that these are a concern to the Federation and they appear unnecessary given the scope of coastal ship operations.