



7 October, 2019

Australian Autonomous Vessel Forum

Post-event communique

Last month, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) hosted a two day Autonomous Vessel Forum in Canberra. It was hosted in partnership with a local defence Cooperative Research Centre that is working on the assurance of autonomy.

The aim of the forum was to explore the challenges, opportunities, risks and priorities for the regulation of autonomous and remotely operated vessels in Australia.

Some 130 experts in automation and digitalisation, from government, defence and the private sector in Australia and around the world, attended. It was our first effort to examine how regulators and industry together can ensure the safe use of the autonomous systems and infrastructure, which is very quickly becoming a part of Australia's maritime industry.

The forum highlighted:

- the importance of collaboration within industry;
- the need to test and trial systems and technology; and
- the vital role a new age of seafarers will have.



Key themes that emerged

1. Success in automation and remote operation is being achieved by **collaboration and partnership**. Continuous and shared learning between industry and regulators is an enabler for this success.
2. The uptake of automation and remote operation is being **driven by environmentally friendly solutions and commercial efficiencies**.
3. Proven and assured technology can improve the safety of personnel, **operations** and protection of the environment.
4. **Understanding each other's risks** and **implementing risk controls** is crucial to safe operations.
5. When defining a safe system, it is necessary to build **assurance** in the **behaviours and functions of systems**, rather than specific technology.
6. There is a need for regulators to **enable testing, trials and safe failure** of both technology and regulation.
7. When they were first formulated, Australian and international rules did not consider remote and autonomous operation. However, **flexibility and objective based solutions** and regulations are needed to allow remote and autonomous vessels to operate.
8. **Adequately trained seafarers are essential** to the success of automation and remote operation. Jobs at sea are changing, with new opportunities emerging in parallel with the advent of new technology.
9. Cyber security is an industry-wide issue. And it is important to **regulate the need to detect, respond and recover** from a cyber-attack.

Next steps

- AMSA will provide additional information, guidance and reference resources on its website.
- AMSA will continue to progress policy and regulatory work on remotely operated and autonomous vessels.
- AMSA will explore the implementation of its policy for the trials and testing of automation and remote operation in Australian waters.
