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Task Number 2

Author(s) / Submitter(s) Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Australian VTS Award

# Summary

This document provides information about the inaugural Australian “VTS Award”.

# discussion

Warren Bath (Vessel Traffic Services Operator, Hay Point VTS) was announced the successful nominee for the inaugural Australian VTS Award in July 2020. A copy of the media release is at Attachment 1.

Warren was nominated for coordinating the response action of allied services, including tugs, port pilots and helicopter operators, when reports came through of a bulk carrier drifting 20 metres off the berth at Hay Point at 1am on 21 April 2019.

Warren’s quick response ensured the vessel was brought back alongside within three and a half hours with no damage to the bulk carrier, other ships berthed at the port, the offshore terminal infrastructure or pollution event.

In assessing the nominations, the VTS award selection panel – comprising representatives from Australia’s VTS authorities and AMSA - was of the view that all nominations adequately addressed the criteria for nomination and were of a high calibre. Two other nominations have been highly commended:

* Port Hedland VTS were commended for their swift response to action local rescue assets to rescue four people clinging to the upturned hull of their recreational vessel.
* Todd Stewart and Ricky Blake from Brisbane VTS were commended for their timely assistance to call on ships anchored in the vicinity of a search mission to help widen the search area, resulting in the rescue of three people lost at sea.

***About the Award***

The Australian VTS Award was launched in December 2019 to recognise an outstanding contribution by a VTS to the safety of life at sea, safety and efficiency of navigation and protection of the marine environment which is beyond their normal operational scope.

The overarching purpose of the award is to raise the profile of VTS authorities, personnel and the important services they provide among stakeholders and wider industry.

The contribution may relate to a particular event or a contribution over a period of time, for example:

* An event showing how a VTS helped to:
* prevent an incident from developing
* prevent an incident from developing into an accident
* prevent an accident from developing into a disaster
* prevent the consequences of incidents, accidents and disasters
* How the VTS helped another agency with a successful response activity (e.g. pollution response).
* Leadership and innovation that contributes to significant enhancements to the service provided or to the national or international framework for VTS.
* Demonstrated improvements to safety and/or efficiency, safety culture and delivery of service through performance monitoring.

Nominations for the 2020-21 Australian VTS Award open on 1 October 2020***.***

The award is open to VTS authorities, VTS centres and individuals employed by a VTS authority.

Any person or organisation can nominate candidates for the Award. Award nominations relate to the calendar year. That is, the reason for nomination should have occurred during the period 1 January to 31 December.

Judging of nominations is undertaken by a Selection Committee taking into account the purpose of the award and criteria based on the information contained in the nomination and supporting documentation. The Selection Committee is comprised of AMSA and a nominee from each of Australia’s VTS authorities.

Further information about the award is available at [*https://www.amsa.gov.au/news-community/news-and-media-releases/vessel-traffic-services-recognised-inaugural-awards*](https://www.amsa.gov.au/news-community/news-and-media-releases/vessel-traffic-services-recognised-inaugural-awards)*.*

# Action requested of the Committee

The Committee is requested to note the information provided about the inaugural Australian “VTS Award”.

**Vessel Traffic Services recognised in inaugural awards**

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development Michael McCormack has congratulated Hay Point Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) Operator Warren Bath on winning the Australian Maritime Safety Authority’s (AMSA) inaugural VTS award for his coordination of an incident involving a bulk carrier.

Mr Bath was nominated for the award after coordinating the response action of allied services including tugs, port pilots and helicopter operators when reports came through of a bulk carrier drifting 20 metres off the southern-most berth at the Port of Hay Point at 1am on 21 April 2019.

Within ten minutes of receiving the call, the ship had turned 90 degrees to the berth and was in danger of being damaged and causing damage to its surroundings.

Mr Bath’s quick response ensured the vessel was brought back alongside within three and a half hours with no damage to the bulk carrier, other ships berthed at the port, the offshore terminal infrastructure or the environment.

Two other nominations have been highly commended.

The Deputy Prime Minister said all nominees went above and beyond to keep people using their local waterways safe.

“Vessel Traffic Services are a key part in keeping Australia’s maritime industry moving and keeping vessels safe on the water,” Mr McCormack said.

“Each nominee kept their cool under pressure, combining quick thinking with swift action to save lives.

“Our waterways are safer places thanks to each nominee.”

Port Hedland VTS were commended for the successful response to a call from the bulk carrier Cape Reliance reporting people clinging to a drifting upturned boat approximately 10 miles from land. The strong currents were rapidly pushing the capsized boat and the desperate men further out to sea.

The VTS coordinated police and marine rescue crews, including a pilot boat and marine pilot transfer helicopter from the port, to assist with the search and rescue.

Four people were rescued within two hours of the initial report, after spending nearly seven hours in the water.

Todd Stewart and Ricky Blake from Brisbane VTS received commendations for coordinating local vessels to assist in the search for a sinking recreational craft about nine miles off Caloundra Headland in the middle of the night on 9 June 2019. They called on ships anchored in the vicinity of the search mission to help widen the search area.

Incredibly, the master of a tanker in the area radioed VTS and reported seeing people in the water south of the ship in the morning light. Mr Stewart and Mr Blake relayed this information to Queensland Water Police resulting in the rescue of two adults and a child.

The Australian VTS Award was launched in December 2019 to recognise an outstanding contribution by a VTS to the safety of life at sea, safety and efficiency of navigation and protection of the marine environment.

Nominations for the 2020-21 Australian VTS Award will open on 1 October 2020.

**Media Contact:**

**Deputy Prime Minister –** Dean Shachar 0418 202 860

Media release

Tuesday 28 July 2020

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