

Media Release



International Commission on Shipping

Chairman:

Hon. Peter Morris

Commissioners:

Mr. James Bell

Prof. Moritaka Hayashi

Capt. Barry McKay

MEDIA RELEASE – ICONS REPORT ‘SHIPS, SLAVES AND COMPETITION’

International Commission on Shipping (ICONS) chair, former Australian Transport Minister and Ships of Shame, Peter Morris, released the commission's '**Ships, Slaves and Competition**' report and recommendations at the APEC International Symposium on Ship Safety at the Four Points Hotel, Darling Harbour, Sydney at 9.45 am on Tuesday, March 6, 2001.

The commission received 125 written submissions and commissioners travelled widely and liaised extensively with industry operators and governments in the year-long investigation into international ship safety.

ICONS heard evidence that tens of thousands of seafarers in 10 to 15 per cent of the world's ships work in slave conditions, with minimal safety, long hours for little or no pay, starvation diets, rape and beatings. It has been told of crew who have disappeared after complaints to officers and employer practices of blacklisting sailors who complain to unions.

ICONS found substandard shipping operates because of a veil of secrecy on ship ownership and support from cargo owners seeking lower freight rates at the expense of the majority of quality ship operators.

It has called for transparency and public accountability in shipping as with other transport sectors and industry generally.

The commission is recommending immediate pragmatic and concerted action by industry champions, quality ship owners, ship inspectors and their governments, cargo owners, and international maritime organisations - to end the misery.

Many of the ICONS recommendations can be implemented within 18 months and the remainder within five years. They are not expected to add to freight costs.

ICONS has called on Japan to take the lead through APEC and act immediately to stop slave ships operating in the Asia-Pacific region.

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PLEASE NOTE:

Hon. Peter Morris will be available for interviews from 10.30am in the executive board room, level 11, four points hotel, Sydney

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

contact

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