



Chairman:
Hon. Peter Morris
Commissioners:
Mr. James Bell
Prof. Moritaka Hayashi
Capt. Barry McKay

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ICONS Examines Role of Ship Surveyors

The International Commission On Shipping (ICONS) Chairman, The Hon. Mr Peter Morris announced today that Governments and industry alike are questioning the effectiveness of ship survey organisations known as Classification Societies.

Mr Peter Morris, a former Australian Federal Minister for Transport, says some see the shipping industry's Classification Societies as failing to enforce standards and regulations that are designed to ensure that world trade is moved safely, efficiently and cleanly.

Mr Morris said the industry's Classification Societies face a dilemma over their conflicting roles.

"In the minds of some people, Classification Societies often operate under a fundamental conflict of interest," Mr Morris said. "They are seen to be competing as businesses in the very industry they are supposed to be regulating.

"The consequences, in terms of safety and environmental protection, are quite often disastrous."

Mr Morris cited the recent sinking of the bulk carrier *Treasure* as an example of the environmental destruction that can be caused by oil spillage from a crippled ship.

The *Treasure* suffered hull damage in a voyage from Brazil to South Africa and subsequently sank in shallow water off Cape Town. Her cargo of 1300 tonnes of heavy oil in her bunker tanks threatens the local marine environment and the coastal wildlife sanctuary.

"ICONS' task is to recommend measures that would improve safe operations of international shipping," Mr Morris said.

"Classification Societies perform a basic role of creating and revising rules for the structure, strength, and essential engineering systems. They are also responsible for the very important function of assisting some flag state administrations to ensure that their vessels comply with mandatory structural and environmental standards.

International Commission on Shipping

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In these circumstances objectivity and impartiality is always hard to achieve.

The International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) has introduced some new and bold initiatives.

The European Union has recently agreed a new directive to ensure tougher policing of Classification Societies.

Mr Morris said ICONS would be addressing two key issues in regard to Classification Societies:

[1] Can IACS play a more effective role?

[2] Should the commercial incentive or profit motive be removed from Classification Societies? If so, how?

ICONS examination of these issues will be dependent on the quality of the submissions placed before it.

According to Mr Morris, one question that will undoubtedly be asked is, "should the profit motive be removed from the operation of Classification Societies".

Submissions can be lodged through the ICONS web site located at www.icons.org.au .

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