



International Commission on Shipping

Friday, 1 September 2000

International Commission arrives in Canada and United States

The International Commission on Shipping (ICONS) moves to Canada and the United States next week where its investigations will focus on the damage that substandard shipping causes human and marine life.

ICONS Chairman and former Australian Federal Minister for Transport, The Hon. Peter Morris, said the Commission's worldwide inquiry would help deliver universal standards to improve safety and environmental accountability in the merchant shipping industry.

In developing these standards, ICONS would be addressing areas of genuine concern relating to the industry's impact on human and marine life.

"We must prevent any injustices or inhumane treatment of seafarers worldwide and ensure that our marine environment is preserved," Mr Morris said.

The Commission has completed the Asian section of its program. Summary details of information gathered and most submissions received to date are exhibited on the Commission's web site at www.icons.org.au

Common issues of concern that have been expressed include:

- The need for transparency in shipping transactions so that those who benefit from the avoidance of international safety regulations are seen to be doing so. Increasingly this includes ship charters and cargo owners.
- Greater demand for nations registering ships to be held accountable for the safety of their ships and ensure that they meet safety requirements.
- The destructive effects of blacklisting seafarers who sought payment of moneys owed to them and their families.
- The need to ensure that crewmembers had the required skills and competencies to work a ship safely without endangering themselves and the lives of others or the marine environment.

- The need for Classification Societies to perform their contractual ship survey tasks to required international standards and in a consistent manner.
- Port State Control authorities having sufficient trained personnel and equipment to carry out the stringent inspections of visiting foreign ships that was necessary to eradicate sub-standard ships from the seas.

The Commission has received strong support from government maritime agencies.

The Canadian Minister for Transport, the Hon David Collonette MP, has declared Canada's support for ICONS and a submission is expected from the US Coast Guard.

The Commission begins its North American program with a public hearing in Vancouver on Tuesday 5th September, followed by Montreal on the 7th September, New York, Monday 11th September, **Washington**, Thursday 14th September and **Miami**, Monday 18th September.

Further information relating to the Canadian and USA hearings can be found at www.icons.org.au.

Enquiries

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