



AUSTRALASIAN INSTITUTE  
OF MARINE SURVEYORS

# Shipshape

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# First review of the AGSA Scheme finalised

I AM pleased to announce that, after almost 12 months of work, the review of the AGSA Scheme (the Scheme) is now complete. Apart from amendments to the Deed of Arrangement with the AIMS needing to be finalised and signed off by the legal teams of both the AIMS and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (DAFF), there is no further work to be done in regard to the review process.

Working with the Department has been challenging but enjoyable. The amazing work done on this review was due to both parties keeping the intent of the Scheme clear during the process so that we could focus solely on identifying the improvements needed and developing joint solutions to ensure the effective operation of the Scheme.

Issues raised through feedback mechanisms from all key stakeholders were included in the review and both parties agreed on several key points.

It was agreed that there should be a clear separation of an accredited marine surveyor's role and responsibilities with those of a bulk vessel inspection authorised officer by limiting overlapping responsibilities where possible and that key performance indicators for Accredited Grain Surveyors should be developed. This was achieved through careful scrutinisation of the Standard for Empty Bulk Vessel Surveys and introducing monitoring and auditing arrangements for accredited grain surveyors to ensure greater compliance to the Standard.

Other changes to the Standard include deleting the term "Grain Clean" and clearly articulating the processes for identifying and



managing conflicts of interest as per advice from the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC).

In summary, the NACC applies to any person who does something, or tries to do something, that could adversely affect a public official's honesty or impartiality in their official capacity. As an accredited marine surveyor under the AGSA Scheme, your decision to certify a bulk vessel as fit to load may affect the official duties of an Authorised Officer (AO). This is because an AO who is conducting a phytosanitary inspection of a Bulk Vessel Inspection Authorised Officer (BVI AO) is required to consider your Fitness to Load certificate when issuing a bulk vessel approval.

It was unanimously agreed by the working party that AIMS and the Department that surveyors have existing relationships with BVI AOs, shippers and shipping agents, and that these relationships constitute interests. To effectively manage your interests, a new Guidance Note was developed and has been introduced to facilitate transparency, independence and objectivity when performing your surveys. The steps involved

include identification and disclosure of your interests, and adoption of appropriate management strategies to manage any real or apparent conflicts of interest.

In the context of the NACC and the AGSA Scheme together, you must consider and disclose any conflicts of interest to demonstrate your integrity when surveying bulk vessels as part of the conditions of your accreditation under the Scheme.

Finally, in line with other accreditation programs mandated by Government, it was agreed to introduce an AGSA Code of Conduct. The Code forms part of the application and renewal procedures and is a condition of accreditation.

The purpose of the introduction of the Code of Conduct is to enhance the transparency, accountability and professionalism of the Scheme, and to further assure the dry bulk export communities are undertaking surveys in accordance with the Standards.

While many improvements have been made to the Scheme, it is hoped that the auditing and monitoring of marine surveyor performance will reduce the need for more oversight of surveyors and, although a further review will be scheduled to take place in two years, we expect that only minor amendments would be required.

I urge all AGSA Accredited Marine Surveyors to download and read the new Standard for Empty Bulk Vessels and ensure that they have appropriate survey procedures in place to maintain their compliance with their obligations under the Scheme.

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