



# NMSC Media Release

31 May 2006

## POSSIBLE PHASE-OUT OF HF COAST RADIO VOICE MONITORING

The National Marine Safety Committee (NMSC) has released a discussion paper on the feasibility and acceptability of phasing out the requirement for the National Coast Radio Network to voice-monitor distress and safety channels in the high frequency (HF) band by the year 2010.

The paper will help the NMSC to assess the value and use of the current high frequency (HF) distress and monitoring arrangements that are carried out by state and territory governments. The paper also explores whether there are better alternatives for the future and which options could provide these alternatives.

NMSC CEO Maurene Horder said that a variety of scenarios could arise if the phase-out goes ahead.

"The discussion paper indicates how a phase-out might impact on marine safety authorities and boat operators around Australia", Ms Horder said.

"For instance, there may be a financial cost to industry with a substantial saving of cost and resources for jurisdictions, or vice versa", she said.

The paper identifies four key options:

- provision of an HF(voice) safety and distress monitoring system by services other than the current National Coast Radio Network through a new, stand-alone service
- provision of an HF(voice) service by incorporating its function into the current Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) infrastructure that provides the existing HF Digital Selective Calling (DSC) Service so that it also covers HF(voice) monitoring.
- having some geographic areas continue to be covered by the HF(voice) service within the current infrastructure, or
- re-equipping boats with alternative long distance communications equipment.

Public comment is now sought on the possible phase-out. Copies of the discussion paper can be downloaded from the NMSC website [http://www.nmsc.gov.au/yoursay\\_2.htm](http://www.nmsc.gov.au/yoursay_2.htm) or obtained by phoning [02] 9247 2124. The period for public comment closes on 30 September 2006.

It should be noted that no final decisions will be made until the full consultative process has been completed.

*Ends*

*For further information, contact NMSC CEO Maurene Horder or communications officer Rosemary Pryor on (02) 9247 2124.*