

**Departmental investigation into the  
grounding of the  
Antigua & Barbuda flag cargo vessel  
KARIN B  
while approaching  
Barry Beach Terminal, Victoria,  
on 19 October 1996**



**Report No 100**



**COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORT AND REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

# Contents

<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Sources of Information .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Narrative .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Comment and Analysis .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Conclusions .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Submissions .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Details of ship .....</b>	<b>26</b>

**Navigation Act 1912**  
**Navigation (Marine Casualty) Regulations**  
**departmental investigation into the**  
**grounding of the**  
**Antigua & Barbuda flag cargo vessel**  
**KARIN B**  
**while approaching**  
**Barry Beach Terminal, Victoria,**  
**on 19 October 1996**  
**Report No 100**

Published: May 1997

ISBN 0 642 19984 1

Investigations into marine casualties occurring within the Commonwealth's jurisdiction are conducted under the provisions of the Navigation (Marine Casualty) Regulations, made pursuant to sub section 425 (1) (ea) and 425 1 AAA of the Navigation Act 1912. The Regulations provide discretionary powers to the Inspector to investigate incidents as defined by the regulations. Where an investigation is undertaken the Inspector must submit a report to the Secretary of the Department. It is Departmental policy to publish such reports in full as an educational tool.

To increase the value of the safety material presented in this report, readers are encouraged to copy or reprint the material in part or in whole for further distribution, but should acknowledge the source. Additional copies of the report can be obtained from:

Inspector of Marine Accidents  
Marine Incident Investigation Unit  
Department of Transport and Regional Development  
P O Box 594  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Phone: 06 274 7324  
Fax: 06 274 6699  
Email: [MIIU@dot.gov.au](mailto:MIIU@dot.gov.au)

MIIU on the INTERNET

Information relating to this report and other marine investigation reports can be located from the Marine Incident Investigation Unit's Internet homepage at our URL:

<http://www.dot.gov.au/programs/miiu/miiuhome.htm>

# Summary

On the morning of Saturday 19 October 1996, the Antigua and Barbuda flag cargo vessel Karin B entered Corner Basin, Victoria, bound for Esso Australia Limited's private terminal at Barry Beach, where it was to discharge sections of a new drilling rig. Outside the bar, off Corner Inlet, the wind was very fresh from the north-west, but it eased to about 15 knots as the vessel passed through the inlet. Although the sky was threatening and a frontal change forecast, those on the bridge considered they had time to berth the vessel before the front arrived.

While making the turn from Toora Channel into the dredged Barry Beach Channel, Karin B was caught by a sudden increase in wind and was blown on to the mud bank to the starboard side of the dredged channel. The vessel listed 18° to port before stabilising and was towed off the bank during the next flooding tide by the supply vessel Lady Valesia.

No damage was sustained by the vessel and no pollution occurred.

There is no pilotage at Corner Basin, but in compliance with a Gippsland Ports Authority requirement, an offshore supply vessel master, with local knowledge of Corner Basin and Barry Beach Terminal, was engaged to provide advice to the Master of Karin B.

# Sources of Information

The Master and Mate, Karin B

Tidewater Master acting as Adviser

Tidewater Port Jackson Marine Pty Ltd

Esso Australia Ltd, Barry Beach Terminal Superintendent

Atwood Oceanics Platforms Pty Ltd, Project Manager

Gippsland Ports Authority

Marine Board of Victoria

Transcan, Marine Consultants and Surveyors, Inc, Humble, USA

Asiaworld Shipping Services Pty Ltd

Captain G Bradley, retired AOS master

Special Services Unit, Bureau of Meteorology

## **Acknowledgment**

Portions of charts Aus 181 and 182 reproduced by permission of the Hydrographic Office, RAN.

# Narrative

## Background

As part of Esso Australia Ltd's new offshore petroleum activity in the Bass Strait, Atwood Oceanics Platforms Pty Ltd (AOP) was awarded the contract to drill the West Tuna extension, for which drilling rig modules and equipment were to be shipped from the United States. Normally, such modules and equipment are shipped into Melbourne and transported by road to the Esso terminal at Barry Beach, in Corner Basin, eastward of Wilson's Promontory. However, as a number of the modules were physically too large for road haulage, it was proposed the shipment should be direct to Barry Beach Terminal, the first such shipment into the privately owned terminal.

A representative of Intermarine Inc. of New Orleans, the company charged with arranging the shipment of the modules and equipment, travelled to Australia in early July 1996, to inspect the terminal and to hold discussions with Esso, AOP and the Gippsland Ports Authority. After an inspection of the terminal and a launch tour of the Corner Basin navigable channels, all conducted in fine weather with little or no wind, the representative declared that Intermarine could fulfil the delivery requirements.

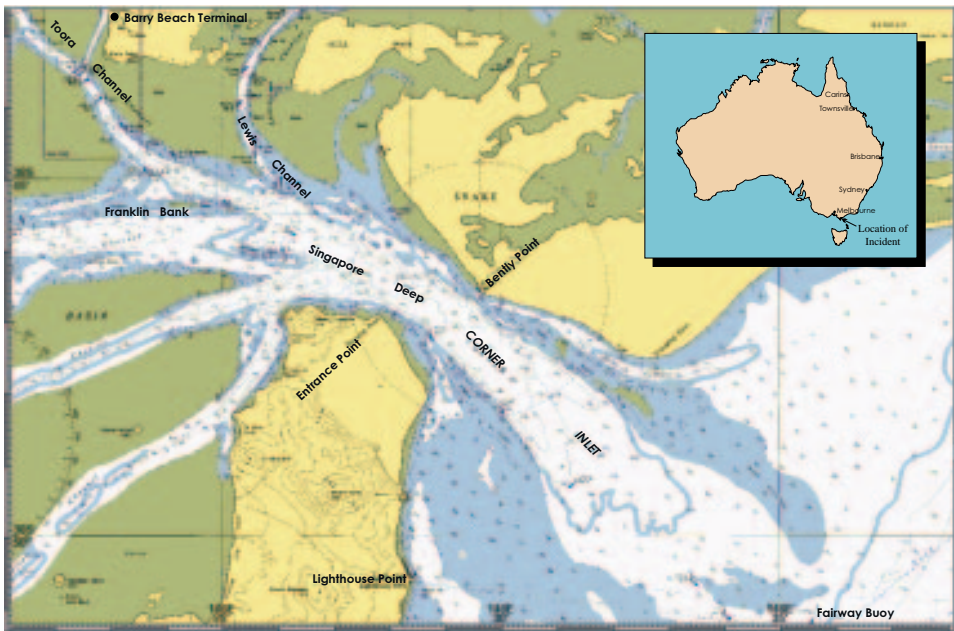
During ensuing discussions, Esso advised the representative the size of the turning basin off the terminal wharf restricted vessels to a maximum 95 m length overall, that there were no tugs or line-handling boats and that berthing would be restricted to daylight hours. It was also stressed to the representative that strong winds are a frequent feature of the weather conditions in Corner Basin. The representative undertook to be present to oversee the discharge operations.

There is no pilotage in Corner Basin, but the Gippsland Ports Authority, mindful of Regulation 502 of the Victorian Marine (Vessels) Regulations, requires a master who is unfamiliar with the small ports within the Basin, Port Welshpool and Barry Beach Terminal, to be assisted by a person with local knowledge. In the past, a master of one of the offshore supply vessels operating out of Barry Beach Terminal had been engaged to fulfil this advisory function to the masters of vessels calling at Port Welshpool and it was recommended to the Intermarine representative that he contact Tidewater Port Jackson Marine. Accordingly, Tidewater was approached and was agreeable to one of its masters assisting the Intermarine masters, by providing local knowledge, when they were manoeuvring their vessels to, and berthing them at, the Barry Beach Terminal.

Intermarine chartered three vessels, Karin B, Arktis Spring and Industrial Venture, to transport the modules and equipment from Houston, Texas to Barry Beach. The cargo was to be loaded in September 1996, for delivery in October. Due to other commitments, the representative was unable to fulfil his undertaking to oversee operations and a marine consultant with Transcan, a company of marine consultants and surveyors based in Texas, took over this responsibility acting as a Supercargo.

## **Karin B**

The one hold, one hatch Antigua and Barbuda flag Karin B has an overall length of 90.39 m, a beam of 14 m and a summer deadweight of 3525 tonnes at a load draught of 6.27 m. Built as the Marina Heeren at the Heinrich Brand Schiffswerft G.m.b.H. & Co yard at Oldenburg Germany in 1983, the vessel is ice strengthened and also strengthened for heavy cargoes. Powered by an 8-cylinder Krupp-MAK 1470 kW diesel engine, driving a single controllable pitch



**Portion of chart Aus 181 (reduced) showing Corner Inlet**

propeller, the vessel has a service speed of 13.5 knots. The vessel is also fitted with a bow thruster.

Normal manning of the vessel is a full compliment of 10, consisting of master, mate, second mate, chief engineer, bosun and five ratings. At the time of the incident, the master and chief engineer were both German nationals, the remainder Filipino.

## **The incident**

The Master rejoined Karin B at Houston, Texas on 6 September 1996, after two and a half months leave. He was informed that the cargo of drilling rig modules and equipment being loaded was for discharge at Barry Beach, a private terminal situated at the head of a narrow channel in Corner Basin, Victoria, Australia. He was also informed that there would be a pilot, but that there were no tugs or line handling boats at the terminal.



**Portion of chart Aus 182 showing the grounding position**

Although the Master was able to obtain the appropriate American charts with which to navigate to Corner Inlet, he was unable to obtain the Australian charts, Aus 181 and Aus 182, for Corner Basin and the Barry Beach terminal. However, he was advised by the Transcan consultant that the pilot would board one mile south-east of no.1 buoy, which was depicted on the American chart. He was, therefore, not perturbed about sailing without the Australian charts, hoping to obtain them in the Panama Canal, or at worst, with the pilot off Corner Inlet.

Karin B's cargo included three large modules to be loaded as deck cargo; one module, a series of vertical cylinders, was loaded on the port side, forward, the other two modules, large "box" structure mud tanks, were loaded side by side immediately forward of the superstructure. The size of these mud tanks was such that, apart from a narrow separation gap of about 500 mm, about one metre to starboard of the centre line, they completely obscured the view forward from the wheelhouse. However, the Master had been in

similar situations before, on heavy lift vessels, and so was not unduly concerned about this lack of visibility.

Karin B sailed from Houston on 9 September 1996 and proceeded via the Panama Canal and Papeete, Tahiti, where a call was made for bunkers. As the Master was unsuccessful in attempts to obtain the Australian charts in the canal, he telexed the ship's agents in Houston, requesting that supply of the charts be arranged in Papeete, but the charts were not available there either.

The initial estimated time of arrival at Corner Inlet had been on 16 October. However, as a result of an unscheduled deviation to Suva, to take on urgently needed lubricating oil for the main engine, Karin B did not arrive off Corner Inlet until 0100 on 19 October. The vessel's draught was calculated as being 4 m fwd and 4.9 m aft. Having been advised that the "Pilot" would be boarding one mile east-south-east of no.1 buoy at 0530, for a berthing time of 0730, the Master held off until 0500. This allowed him to get some sleep before he manoeuvred Karin B towards the boarding position.

As the "pilot launch" approached, the Mate left the bridge and went to stand by the pilot ladder, taking the watch rating with him.

In compliance with the agreement to provide someone with local knowledge, to assist the Master, Tidewater had recalled one of their master's from leave. However, before agreeing to him proceeding on board, Tidewater had sought a "Deed of Indemnity and Release" from Intermarine, which was only received at 0200 on 19 October. The Tidewater Master for his part, to ensure that his role was clear, had requested that a fax be sent to the vessel stating that he would be boarding to "advise the master as required during entry" and a fax was duly sent to the agent in Melbourne, for onward transmission to the ship, on 14 October.

The Tidewater Master (as Adviser), the Intermarine Supercargo and the ship's Agent boarded a launch, chartered for the occasion from a local fisherman/boat owner, at Port Welshpool at about 0500. There was a strong wind blowing from the north-west and, on the way out to meet Karin B, the Agent expressed concern about the weather, but did not receive any response from the other two men. The three men boarded Karin B at 0540, in a position two miles south-east of no.1 buoy. Seeing the Mate and rating head for the forecabin as soon as they were aboard, the Supercargo led the way to the bridge.

As soon as the boarding party was aboard, the Master put the speed setting at Slow Ahead, to maintain steerage on the line of the leads (Lighthouse Point bearing 277°). He then increased the setting to Half Ahead as soon as the party arrived on the bridge. Not recognising the Supercargo, the Master asked him if he was the pilot and both the Supercargo and the Agent gestured towards the Adviser.

Although he introduced himself as the pilot, the Adviser went on to inform the Master that he was on board purely in an advisory capacity, to assist him during the entry. Introductions completed, the Adviser was surprised to find the vessel did not have the local charts and that there was practically no visibility forward from the wheelhouse, because of the deck cargo.

The Adviser quickly informed the Master of the courses for crossing the bar, between buoys 1 and 5. He also advised him that the north-westerly wind, blowing at about 20 to 25 knots, precluded turning the vessel off the berth, for a port side alongside berthing, as was intended and, that it was also very marginal for berthing starboard side alongside. However, the Adviser understood from the Master that he was prepared to do this.

Due to the lack of forward visibility from the wheelhouse, the Adviser took up station on the starboard bridgeway, calling out course



**View from control position**



**View from starboard bridge wing**

alterations and adjustments to the Master, who made the necessary adjustments to the autopilot. The Adviser quickly realised that, because the Master was unsupported by an Officer or crew member and because there was a lack of visibility from the conning position, he would have to assume, by default, the role of pilot. He raised with the Master the issue of steering in autopilot, the Master informing him that that was his normal practice.

The bar was safely negotiated and speed was increased to Full Ahead (80% pitch).

After clearing no.5 buoy, Karin B moved into sheltered waters and the Adviser spread out his charts and discussed the entry procedures with the Master, including the positioning in the Toora Channel for the turn into the Barry Beach Cut. He emphasised that the tide was ebbing at about 2 knots, which would be setting the vessel to starboard. They discussed the speed for the turn into the Cut; the Adviser's preference was to negotiate the turn at 7 knots, but he accepted the Master's view that 6 knots would be sufficient for Karin B. The Adviser also advised

the Master that it would be necessary to reduce from full speed as they were passing no.6 buoy.

As the vessel approached Bentley Point, on the northern side of Corner Inlet, the wind moderated to about 15 knots, remaining steady as the vessel progressed through Singapore Deep.

The Adviser received information from the Esso representative on the wharf that the mooring gang had not yet arrived and the Master was asked to delay his arrival off the berth. Speed was reduced to Slow Ahead, providing a speed of about 3.5 knots.

The narrow width of the Toora Channel precludes a conventional single screw vessel from turning around, thus once the channel has been entered, the vessel is committed to continuing to the Terminal. The decision on whether or not to proceed has to be made before the vessel passes the two beacons marking the entrance to the Lewis Channel (leading to Port Welshpool). When Karin B reached this point the wind was still blowing from the north-west at 15 knots and, although the sky was threatening and it was obvious that the forecast frontal change was fairly close, the Adviser felt that the vessel could be berthed before the change arrived.

The Adviser gave directions to the Master so that Karin B was on the port hand side of Toora Channel, to make for an easier starboard turn into the Barry Beach Terminal dredged channel. As the vessel passed Toora Channel no.4 beacon, the Master changed the steering mode from automatic to manual and stationed himself at the control position, about one metre to starboard of the centre line and in line with the gap between the two deck cargo mud boxes. Speed was increased, so as to bring the vessel to the previously agreed speed of six knots for the turn. The tide was in the second hour of the ebb, approaching its maximum rate of flow.

When no.8 buoy was just forward of the port beam, and as it just became visible to the Master, the Adviser gave orders to commence the turn to starboard and the Master applied 10° starboard rudder. Initially the Adviser thought the turn was being made too fast and asked for the helm to be eased—he thought the vessel was still in autopilot and was not sure of how much helm had been applied. Then, as the vessel swung through the turn, the Adviser asked for more helm again, to increase the rate of turn.

As Karin B was passing between no.2 and 9 buoys, the Master received the instruction “steady”, immediately after which there was a sudden shift in the wind to the west and a tremendous increase in the strength to an estimated 35 knots. The Adviser gave orders for full speed and a series of helm orders, initially to keep the stern clear of no.9 buoy and then to try to keep the vessel in the channel. However, at 0750, even with the bow thruster on full power, Karin B was set on the starboard hand bank, about one cable inwards from no.9 buoy, six cables from the berth, and immediately listed about 10° to port.

Concerned about the vessel’s stability, the Master told the Adviser that they urgently needed assistance to get off the bank. The Adviser told the Master that there were no tugs, but agreed to seek the assistance of the offshore supply vessel Lady Valesia, lying alongside the wharf. VHF contact was made with Lady Valesia, which needed 10 to 15 minutes to make ready. There ensued some discussion between the masters of the two vessels over terms of contract, which were finally agreed upon as a towing contract.

In the meantime, the Master and the Adviser continued their efforts to refloat Karin B, their concerns mounting as the port list increased as the tide receded. The ballast tanks were all full and the soundings were monitored for any drop in water levels, but there were no changes, indicating the hull had not been breached.

Lady Valesia arrived on the scene at 0850 and a towing line was quickly passed to the stern of Karin B. The strain was taken and, with Karin B's propeller set at full astern pitch, Lady Valesia tried to pull Karin B off the bank. However, at 0907, the towing wire pendant parted. The list stabilised at 18°, so it was decided to defer further attempts to refloat the vessel until the tide was flooding, in the afternoon.

Lady Valesia remained standing by and re-passed the towing wire to Karin B at 1400. The wind had decreased shortly after midday, but by 1400 was increasing again. Lady Valesia took the strain at 1410 and Karin B applied astern pitch on the propeller at 1425. As the height of the tide increased, the port list started to decrease and at 1510, with the vessel listing 13°, Karin B started to move and was pulled off the bank at 1515.

The wind by this time had increased to 35 knots, making berthing out of the question, therefore, Karin B was towed to the Singapore Deep, where it was anchored at 1710.

Subsequent inspection by divers revealed that Karin B had suffered no structural damage.

# Comment and Analysis

Karin B was caught and driven aground by a sudden increase in wind strength as it manoeuvred into the narrow approach channel to Barry Beach Terminal. The large windage area of the vessel's deck cargo and the lack of room to manoeuvre precluded effective action by either the Adviser or the Master.

Once Karin B had entered Toora Channel, some 4.3 miles from the berth, it was committed to continuing to the Terminal, thus the decision to proceed had to be made before that point. The three persons on the bridge with the experience to form a professional judgement were all of the opinion that, in the weather conditions being experienced at the time, berthing could be achieved.

However, there are a number of factors in the planning and communications aspects that need to be considered.

## Planning

The initial meetings between Esso, AOP, the Gippsland Ports Authority and Intermarine Inc were held to discuss the feasibility of the proposed operation. The only constraint at that time was one of size, the size of the swinging basin and depth of water over the bar restricting the size of vessels to a maximum 95 m in length and a draught of 5.5 m. During the discussions it was also agreed that berthing operations should be restricted to daylight hours.

After the incident, and before the next berthing operation, further restrictions were imposed, limiting berthing to periods of flooding tide and to maximum 12 knot winds.

The Gippsland Ports Authority required the vessels' masters to be assisted by a person with a certificate of local knowledge. However, Intermarine Inc. were left to make their own, commercial, arrangements with an Offshore Supply Vessel Company.

Even though this was the first such venture, and although strong winds were known to be a characteristic feature of Corner Basin, at no time was there a meeting of all parties to consider the safety case, to determine all the safety parameters and the precautions to be taken for berthing the vessels at the Barry Beach Terminal. Nor was the function of the offshore supply vessel master clearly defined so as to be fully understood by all parties involved.

Esso submitted that they should not be considered a party to the operation and that they had no influence on strategic and operational planning. However, Barry Beach is a private terminal, owned by Esso and they were the hirers of the equipment, which was for their use. While making no judgement as to the degree of involvement, the Inspector considers it reasonable to consider Esso as a party to the operation and to have an interest in the safety aspects of the strategic and operational planning.

## **Communications/information**

The Intermarine Inc. representative present at the early discussions had a marine background and it was he who had confirmed that Intermarine could fulfil the contract requirements. However, although he was provided with a tour of the Terminal and the approach channels, which would have shown how open and unprotected Corner Basin is, and was warned about the often windy conditions of the area, he appears to have passed little information to the vessels' masters, or to the Consultant who took over his organising role.

This resulted in the Master not being aware that Corner Basin is not a pilotage area, or of the role of the Tidewater master.

All of the correspondence from the Agent to both Intermarine and to the Master referred to the “pilot”. The information sent by Tidewater to the Master, through the Agent, stated, “A Tidewater master with current local knowledge will join ... to advise master as required during entry”. However, this was changed by the Agent to state “Pilot will join ...”. This changing of the text of the message meant that important information was not relayed to the Master, information that should have indicated to the Master that he was not to be assisted by a pilot and was expected to retain the conduct of the vessel himself.

Although the physical size of the modules forming the deck cargo of Karin B were known at the time Intermarine approached Tidewater, this information was not provided. Thus the Tidewater Master was unprepared for the task that confronted him when he boarded Karin B on 19 October.

## **Navigation charts**

Proper passage planning includes the planning of the pilotage sections of a voyage. For a master and his officers to be able to plan accordingly it is essential they have the relevant navigation charts available to them.

Normally, it is the master’s/owner’s responsibility to ensure that a vessel is provided with the necessary navigation charts for the current voyage. However, in this instance, where the port concerned was not a regular commercial port, it is considered that it would have been appropriate for the Intermarine representative to obtain the necessary charts for the three vessels while he was in Australia, before he returned to Houston.

## **Role of the Tidewater Master**

As the role of the Tidewater Master had not been clearly defined, as safety parameters had not been laid down and because of the loose use of the term “pilot”, there were considerable misunderstandings as to what was required of individuals.

The Adviser boarded with the expectation that the Master would conduct the Karin B inwards and decide whether conditions were acceptable, while he offered advice as to speed, positioning in the channels and the alter course positions.

The Master, on the other hand, was expecting normal pilotage, with a pilot taking over the conduct of the vessel, issuing course, helm and engine orders and making decisions on whether or not conditions were suitable for berthing.

In the event, because the Master did not have the charts necessary to navigate inshore of the fairway buoy and because the deck cargo precluded the master conning the ship from the customary position on the centre line, the Adviser found himself, by default and against his will, in the role of pilot. Even so, he still expected the Master to actually berth the ship alongside and to make any decisions regarding the weather, remarking to the Master that he considered conditions to be marginal.

However, when the wind eased, the judgement really rested with the Adviser, with his local knowledge of weather patterns.

## **Weather**

The weather forecast for Eastern Bass Strait, issued by the Bureau of Meteorology, Melbourne at 1650 on Friday 18 October, was for the wind tending northwesterly and freshening 15/20 knots overnight

ahead of a west to southwest change in the morning at 20/30 knots. A cold front south of the Bight was expected to cross Bass Strait early Saturday, a gale warning issued by the Bureau at 1345 on 18 October advised of a cold front located 40S128E/48S130E at 180000Z, moving eastward at 40 knots.

Karin B is equipped with a facsimile machine and the Master had received the weather chart for Australia on the Friday. A “High” was depicted over South Australia, with “Lows” well to the south. He anticipated fine, stable conditions.

The Adviser was aware of the forecast frontal change and was expecting the front to pass later in the morning. Although the sky to the west was dark, he was of the opinion there was sufficient time for Karin B to berth before the front arrived.

The Special Services Unit of the Bureau of Meteorology was contracted to investigate the weather conditions in Corner Basin on the morning of 19 October. Their report indicated that the front passed through Corner Basin at around the time of the incident. The shift of the wind from the northwest, as the vessel proceeded up Toora Channel, to the west as the vessel made the turn into Barry Beach Channel, indicates the passing of the front at that time.

The Bureau of Meteorology provides a 24-hour advisory service. Before leaving Port Welshpool to board Karin B, the Adviser could have telephoned the Bureau for the latest information on the front. The Duty Meteorologist would have been able to advise him on the current location of the front and predict the time of the front passing Corner Basin. However, even without such advice, the information contained in the gale warning issued at 1345 on the Friday, and in possession of the Master, was sufficient to show that the front could be expected to pass Barry Beach Terminal at around 0800 on the Saturday.

## **Port organisation**

Although Barry Beach Terminal is the property of Esso, the mooring gang for securing Karin B alongside the wharf was arranged by AOP, who used members of their own work force and lodged them in a local motel, so as to be on hand when needed.

The information regarding the non-arrival of the mooring gang, which resulted in the vessel being slowed down, delaying arrival by about 30 minutes, was passed to the Adviser by an Esso representative. However, according to AOP, the mooring gang arrived at 0700, in time for the scheduled berthing time of 0730.

This would indicate a lack of communication and co-ordination between the two principal companies, which resulted in the vessel being provided with wrong information.

## **The Adviser**

The Tidewater Master had experience as master on offshore supply vessels spanning 12 years and 7 years experience operating out of Barry Beach Terminal. Although he was used to operating in all weather conditions, he was concerned that the wind at the time he boarded Karin B might have been too strong for berthing that particular vessel. However, his concern was alleviated by the Master's apparent comfort with the conditions and a drop in the wind strength.

Although nothing was said to him on the subject, he was used to working under the philosophy and pressures of the offshore petroleum industry. The vessel was already three days late on its initial ETA and the approaching change in the weather could result in further delays, thus he felt under some pressure to "get the show on the road". As a

result of this, a certain amount of caution would have been lost, which is particularly relevant as comprehensive safety parameters had not been laid down for the vessels' masters, and himself, to work to.

## **The Master**

The Master was placed at a distinct disadvantage by the shipper not providing him with all the available information to hand concerning Corner Basin and Barry Beach Terminal.

Had the Master been aware that there was no actual pilot for Barry Beach Terminal, it is most probable that he would have been more cautious about entering Corner Inlet and negotiating the buoyed channels in the wind conditions existing at the time the Adviser boarded. Also, it is unlikely that he would have been prepared to sail beyond the Panama Canal without the necessary charts on board.

As aboard many small vessels, the Master's usual procedure was to con the vessel at the control position, operating all the controls himself. He normally steered the ship in the autopilot mode, changing over to manual as the manoeuvring situation required. On some vessels, controls for steering and engine movements are duplicated on the bridgewings to enable one man operation, however, Karin B was not so equipped. Under the circumstances existing at that time, with forward visibility severely restricted by the deck cargo, it would have been prudent for the Master to have been assisted on the bridge by the Mate, rather than having that officer standing by on the forecastle.

## **Manning level**

The manning level on board Karin B, master, chief engineer, two mates, a bosun, four ratings and a cook, was not sufficient to allow the bridge to be manned adequately to meet the circumstances as existed on board at that time.

# Conclusions

These conclusions identify the different factors contributing to the incident and should not be read as apportioning blame or liability to any particular organisation or individual.

Karin B was caught by a sudden strong wind associated with the passing of a cold front during the manoeuvre into the confined approach channel to Barry Beach Terminal.

The following factors are considered to have contributed to the incident:

- Inadequate strategic and operational planning, in particular in the consideration, by all parties involved, of the safety case and the determination of safety parameters and precautions to be taken for the berthing operations.
- The function of the offshore supply vessel master was not clearly defined so as to be fully understood by all parties involved.
- The loose use of the term “pilot”, which misled the ship’s Master as to the situation at Corner Basin.
- Readily available, up to date information on the approaching front was not obtained from the Bureau of Meteorology.
- A perceived need, on the part of the Adviser, to get the job done, which would have affected the level of caution adopted.
- A lack of communication and co-ordination between the two principal companies, which resulted in the vessel being misinformed.

# Submissions

Under sub-regulation 16(3) of the Navigation (Marine Casualty) Regulations, if a report, or part of a report, relates to a person's affairs to a material extent, the Inspector must, if it is reasonable to do so, give that person a copy of the report or the relevant part of the report. Sub-regulation 16(4) provides that such a person may provide written comments or information relating to the report.

The final draft of the report, or a part of the report, was sent to the following:

The Master, Karin B

The Tidewater Master providing assistance

Tidewater Port Jackson Marine Pty Ltd

Esso Australia Ltd, Barry Beach Terminal Superintendent

Atwood Oceanics Platforms Pty Ltd, Project Manager

Marine Board of Victoria

Transcan, Humble USA

Asiaworld Shipping Services Pty Ltd

Submissions were received from the Tidewater Master, the Marine Board of Victoria, Esso, Atwood Oceanics Platforms Pty Ltd and Asiaworld Shipping Services Pty Ltd. Where considered appropriate, in order to clarify certain issues, the text of the report was amended accordingly.

Esso Australia Ltd submitted :

“We are surprised that your first conclusion is that “all parties” contributed to inadequate strategic and operational planning. Esso is one of “the parties” referred to in the report, and, with respect, Esso had no influence on strategic and operational planning at all. Esso was merely the hirer of equipment which was transported to Australia for Esso’s use. We would therefore be obliged if your conclusion could be amended to indicate that Esso was not one of those parties concerned.

“The second paragraph of the section titled “The Adviser”, commencing with the words “Although nothing was said to him...” is misleading and wrong, and at best hearsay and irrelevant. We ask that the entire paragraph be deleted. For your information, the petroleum industry is one of Australia’s safest, and Esso is very proud of its safety record and attitude to safety generally. Any suggestion along the lines of that contained in the paragraph referred to is strongly denied.”

# Details of ship

Previous name	Marina Heeren
IMO No.	8215596
Flag	Antigua and Barbuda
Classification Society	Germanischer Lloyd
Ship type	Heavy lift cargo vessel
Owner	Embo Shipping Co Ltd
Manager	W Bockstiegel, Emden
Charterer	Intermarine Inc, on behalf of Industrial Maritime Carriers (USA) Inc.
Year of build	1983
Builder	Heinrich Rand Schiffsweft G.m.b.H & Co, Oldenburg
Gross tonnage	2649
Net tonnage	1415
Summer deadweight	3525 tonnes
Length overall	90.4 m
Breadth extreme	14.03 m
Draught (summer)	3.739 m
Engine	8 cylinder MaK diesel
Engine power	1471 kW
Crew	10 (2 German, 8 Filipino)