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## Shipping to go Green in Sea Change

With environmental sustainability the topic du jour these days, the Government is focusing on how improving our coastal activities can help us be green. The Ministry of Transport's recently-released raft of discussion papers shows a concerted effort to push maritime issues to the fore and make sure the legislative framework governing the area is ship-shape.

The revival of our coastal shipping industry is the focus of the aptly-named *Sea Change* policy put out by the Ministry last year. Currently we ship only 15 per cent of our domestic freight: by way of comparison, Japan has a similar coastline but transports almost four times that amount. By doubling the amount of freight moved by sea by 2040, the Ministry hopes to reduce both road congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

But the policy is also aimed at ensuring economic sustainability: as the competition for cargo increases globally and shipping companies use bigger ships and fewer ports, New Zealand needs a strong, efficient operation to attract business. To do this, *Sea Change* looks at ways to improve access to funding for coastal shipping initiatives and

proposes the establishment of a Maritime Liaison Unit, which will effectively act as the shipping industry's PR agent, promoting its profile at both industry and government levels. The Ministry is also hoping to boost the industry's dwindling workforce with better training and education.

Of course, coastal freight is not always kinder to the environment: more ships on the water means greater risk of oil and cargo spills. The Ministry has acknowledged that our port and harbour safety management regime needs to be improved to deal with these environmental risks.

At the moment port and harbour safety, which covers things like navigational aids and hydrographic surveys, is managed through a voluntary code. This allows flexibility, but relies heavily on the level of commitment from the relevant players – port facility operators, councils, government bodies – to work properly. The Ministry's draft policy discusses whether to keep the status quo or to give the code more teeth by recognising it formally or even turning the code into a statute. Indications are that the Ministry prefers an intermediate approach,



making the code an approved code of practice and imposing duties and obligations on operators and those in the business of marine services.

And the focus on addressing environmental risks in our waters doesn't end there: the Ministry is also considering adopting four international marine conventions which provide global mechanisms to address and respond to pollution from hazardous or noxious spills and establish liability and compensation schemes for damage from maritime incidents such as bunker oil spills.

The Ministry has carried out a cost/benefit analysis of adopting these conventions and will review submissions, but given we already meet many of the standards and obligations contained in the conventions, it's likely we will become a

party to at least some of these conventions.

The Ministry for the Environment is also busy in this area. It is working on new legislation to develop an RMA-style, effects-based legislative framework – complete with a new breed of Exclusive Economic Zone resource consents – to fill gaps in the existing law.

From here, it's a case of wait and sea (misspelling intended): the Ministry of Transport now is to review the submissions received and, in the case of the two policies, work on adding detail to the drafts. The Ministry for the Environment, however, is now working on policy. We will keep you updated.

*Amber Trebitsch, Solicitor, Minter Ellison Rudd Watts  
amber.trebitsch@minterellison.co.nz*



## Replanting Mangroves in Asia

In 2007 an estimated 184,000 mangrove seedlings, covering about 18 hectares, were planted in the Stung Hav district, Sihanoukville, Cambodia.

The initiative, implemented to protect and rehabilitate the existing fishery resources, was funded by Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA).

In addition to the replanting, the Cambodian Department of Fisheries worked with the fishery community to erect 50 fish cages made of concrete, designed to also serve as artificial reefs, in the reforested area. The initiative was developed to encourage community members to guard the fishing grounds against illegal fishers, while

allowing low impact fishing efforts. Following the installation of these reefs, community members attest that there has been significant increase in the fish catch in the surrounding areas, consequently increasing the income among fishers.

Supporting these initiatives is a series of information, education and communication campaigns aimed at creating awareness among the community members on the importance of caring for their coastal and marine resources. Copies of a community regulation book and pamphlets on prohibited and permitted activities were distributed to community members.