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AUSMEPA's Marine Pests and Threats Educational Program Completely Revised and Updated

Mr. Michael Julian, Executive Director of the Australian Marine Environment Protection Association (AUSMEPA) announced today that the Marine Pests and Threats unit of work on the AUSMEPA website had been completely rewritten and brought up to date with current practices and knowledge in Australia and in line with international requirements established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ship's Ballast Water and Sediments 2004.

Julian said that Marine Pests and Threats had been the first educational program put up on the AUSMEPA website back in 2003 and had been used by many thousands of school children in their quest for knowledge about the threat to Australian waters by the ship borne invaders.

The new website <http://www.ausmepa.org.au/pests/default.asp?pageid=2&nav=2> provides a vast amount of information on the issue of marine pests being brought to Australia in ships' ballast water and as hull fouling and what is being done by ships and the shipping industry to minimise future introductions.

The website describes the worst offenders such as the Northern Pacific Seastar, European Fan Worm, European Shore Crab, Black Striped Mussel and Japanese Kelp. It also explains why ships need ballast water, how they manage and treat their ballast water, the amounts of ballast water carried around the world by shipping, and explains the role of the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) in overseeing the prevention of marine pests coming into Australia in ships' ballast water.

All AUSMEPA's education resources are free to schools, including posters that compliment each unit of work <http://www.ausmepa.org.au/other.asp?pageId=32>

Mr. Julian acknowledged the assistance of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries for providing information to help the upgrade.

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