



## AUSMEPA MEDIA RELEASE

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PROTECTION ASSOCIATION (AUSMEPA)

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## **AUSMEPA announces the winner of its Environmental Award 2010/2011**

Captain Conrad Saldanha, Marine Manager Origin Energy LPG and Chairman of AUSMEPA said yesterday how pleased he was to announce that the Port of Townsville Limited had been selected to receive the Australian Marine Environment Protection Association's Environmental Award for 2010/2011.

The award, a Royal Selangor pewter plate, was presented to Mr. Barry Holden, Chief Executive Officer of the Port of Townsville by Captain Saldanha in Townsville on Tuesday 5 April 2011.

AUSMEPA received several nominations for its environmental award this year and the judging panel selected the Port of Townsville Limited for its outstanding achievement in the remediation of the former Sun Sun Prawn Aquaculture Farm, south of Townsville.

The aquaculture farm was located adjacent to creeks, tidal waterways, fish habitat area the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the World Heritage Area. It covered an area of approximately 30 hectares and had operated from 1986 to 1993. After the failure of the venture, the site was abandoned and handed back to the Port of Townsville Limited in a highly disturbed and degraded site.

Captain Saldanha said one of the more significant aspects of the nomination by the Port of Townsville Limited, taken into consideration by the judging panel, was that the port had gone beyond expectations of its role in undertaking the works.

The Port of Townsville Limited recognised the significant impact the site in its degraded condition was having on the surrounding marine environment and in conjunction with various stakeholder and close liaison with state and local regulations, commissioned environmental consultant GHD to undertake an assessment and develop and manage the remediation site.

In total, more than 260,000 cubic metres of soil moved to re-profile the existing aquaculture ponds and some 35,363 cubic metres of soil treated with more than 2000 tonnes of lime to neutralise harmful acid sulphates.

A shocking amount of waste, including 15 car bodies, 362 tonnes of concrete, 25 tyres, and 54 cubic metres of general rubbish, was also removed from the site.

Together this allowed the tide to return to the site for the first time in more than two decades and the revitalisation of the ecosystem to begin.

The AUSMEPA Board agreed to also award a highly commended certificate to three other nominations:

- The Sydney Ports Corporation for its high level of achievement in enhancing the protection of the marine environment and reducing marine pollution in its Port Botany expansion project including the commitment to secure the Penrhyn Estuary for locally significant migratory birds.
- Two nominations by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority:
  - The crew of the emergency towage vessel *Pacific Responder* in intercepting the disabled bulk carrier *Ocean Emperor* and preventing it from drifting onto Ribbon Reef No. 5 in the Great Barrier Reef on 27 July 2010. The outstanding performance of the *Pacific Responder* crew undoubtedly prevented massive pollution of this Particularly Sensitive Sea Area
  - An AMSA Marine Surveyor Mr. Andre Winkler for his significant contribution to reduce marine pollution in his actions as the Casualty Coordinator onboard the stricken bulk carrier *Shen Neng 1* which grounded on Douglas Shoal, 43 nm east of Great Keppel Island, in the Great Barrier Reef on 4 April 2010.

Captain Saldanha said calls for nominations for the AUSMEPA Environmental Award for 2011/2012 will be announced soon.

For more information about the award please contact Michael Julian 0417 657951. For information on the remediation work undertaken by the Port of Townsville Limited please contact Andrew Strutton 07 4781 1551

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