

In brief...

Korea's suffers its biggest oil spill

The Chinese VLCC *Hebei Spirit* was at anchor at Daesan in South Korea when a crane-carrying barge broke away from two tugs in high winds and crashed into the tanker, writes our US correspondent Hugh Ware.

Three of five tanks on the port side were breached, and about 15,000 tonnes of crude oil escaped, creating Korea's biggest oil spill. The ensuing events demonstrated that Korea was not prepared, as the owner of the tugs and barges, one of Korea's largest firms, refused to participate in meetings or accept any responsibility. It also took considerable negotiation for the oil to be discharged to a refinery.

Only the tanker master's actions before the ship made contact, when he tried to contact the tugs and move his anchored ship out of the barge's path, and after the barge's contact, met high standards.

Ngai Tahu appoints regional manager

Sea kayaking and the water taxi service are the lifeblood of Abel Tasman tourism, says the new regional general manager for Ngai Tahu Tourism, Al Rynn.

The growth of visitor interest in the park and the sea kayaking and water taxi activities were immensely valuable for the area, where many people are employed in tourism and all the locals benefited from the infrastructure, Rynn said.

In 1994 Rynn set up the Southern Exposure Sea Kayaking Company in Abel Tasman, and later diversified into water taxi and accommodation. He sold the business to Ngai Tahu Tourism last July.

"Since selling Southern Exposure, Al has become familiar with our aspirations

for the operations in the Abel Tasman," says Ngai Tahu Tourism's chief executive, John Thorburn.

Rynn took up the role on February 11.



Al Rynn, the new Abel Tasman regional general manager for Ngai Tahu Tourism.

VERSATILE NEW SYDNEY YARD

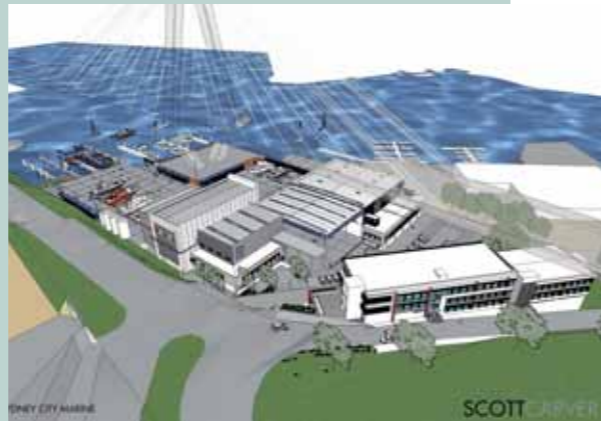
THE SYDNEY CITY Marine maintenance yard will be able to handle superyachts of up to 55m and a beam of 13m when it opens later this year at Rozelle Bay.

It will have a 600 tonne shiplift, a 100 tonne shiplift and a 47 tonne submersible trailer to ensure efficient movement of craft out of the water and onto the 6200m of open hardstand area or 3200sq m of undercover hardstand.

Painting can be done in a special 38m long by 15m wide booth or a 15m by 7m booth. With some of the latest painting technology, including sophisticated air extraction and filtration systems, the booths will provide an optimum environment for applying coatings, says a spokesman. That would save costs by minimising delays due to bad weather, reducing wastage of expensive paint coatings and reducing time out of the water, he said.

Trades and contractors will include mechanical engineers, stainless steel fabricators, shipwrights, riggers, spraypainters, electrical, marine diving and salvage, trimmers, detailers, engine servicing and repairs, all on the one site. The Sydney City Marine complex will also include a marine coatings and consumables supplier and chandlery, so essential supplies will be on hand.

While the complex can handle superyachts, the spokesman said that competitive pricing would ensure that owners of power and sail craft of 10m and above enjoy the same services at readily accessible rates.



Tax credit to boost business research

FROM APRIL 1, New Zealand businesses may be able to claim a 15 percent research and development (R&D) tax credit. Inland Revenue, which will administer the new incentive, says now is a good time for businesses to learn more about the credit and to determine their eligibility.

The tax credit is part of a package of business tax reforms to encourage increased investment in R&D and lead to innovation and the development of improved products and processes, said the director of Inland Revenue's business tax reform programme, Ron Grindle. This is expected to boost New Zealand's productivity and international competitiveness.

"Businesses will claim the credit in their normal income tax return," Grindle said. "A supporting R&D tax credit detailed statement will also be required

and they will need to keep good records to support their claim."

The R&D must meet three key eligibility tests: The business must operate in New Zealand, R&D activities must be related to business activities, and the business must control the R&D, bear the financial risk, and own the results.

"While R&D is new territory for us, we're working to ensure effective administration of the regime. In a first for us, the tax credit will be administered on line," Grindle said.

The first claims will be filed at the end of 2009. To support their claims, businesses will need to keep good records of their R&D spending from April 1, 2008. If they have an early balance date, they will need to be keeping those records now.

See www.ird.govt.nz

WIDE RANGE OF EXHIBITS

AUSMARINE 2008 WILL be presented from November 2008, in Sydney for the first time. The event will cover all kinds of commercial and government watercraft and marine equipment, including that designed for aquaculture.

Fiji chops stayover time for boats

LEISURELY YACHTING AND a berth for the cyclone season are under threat in Fiji following the interim government's decision to change without notice or discussion the length of time yachts are allowed to stay.

Yachts are now only allowed to stay three months instead of the previous six, unless they apply for an extension.

A \$30 million superyacht development at Vuda marina is understood to be on hold because yachties are expected to set sail for Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa, New Zealand and Australia, which offer them a longer period of stay. These other destinations deny Fiji lucrative income from maintenance, slipping and the injection of money that yacht owners and their guests pour into the economy.

In a report released on January 23, the interim finance minister, Mahendra Chaudhry, said Fiji was losing millions of dollars in duty because of people abusing the system. Yachts

were suspected of being a means of transport for smuggling contraband and endangered flora and fauna, as well as prostitution, Chaudhry said.

The Fiji Visitors Bureau says the yachting industry needs to be protected because it taps into a segment of tourism that Fiji finds great difficulty in reaching. It says the legislation is detrimental to the economy.

The chairman of the bureau, Patrick Wong, said the spin-offs from the yachting industry were huge, because visitors inject money directly into the economy by buying goods, services and repairs to their boats.

While yachties brought in their boats, their guests were usually flown in to cruise around Fijian waters and enjoy the sights the islands have to offer. The government needed to review the decision because a period of three months was not enough for yachties, he said.

PESTS AND PETS NOT GOOD FOR GULF

FISHERS, BOATIES AND visitors can make all the difference in keeping pests out of the Hauraki Gulf, says the Department of Conservation.

They should check below decks, clear gear and leave pets at home before landing on or mooring near the gulf islands. Mice and rats particularly love dark spaces in and around boats, while Argentine ants will rapidly make any close space home, says DoC spokesperson Richard Griffiths.

It was easy for ants and weed seeds to get into gear, shoes and clothing, and hitchhike to a new island location. "Argentine ants are particularly nasty because they're so easily spread and they form large colonies readily," he said.

Putting traps and bait out on board boats at least two days before a trip was a great way to improve the chance of catching unwanted pests.

Pets on boats were fine if they stayed on board, but many dogs were keen swimmers. "And there are often toileting needs," says Griffiths.

There's also a fire ban for the gulf islands. While it's okay to use gas barbecues, it's best to use them on board rather than on shore.

Phone the DOCHOT line or 0800 362 468 to report anything suspicious, whether it's smoke, swimming pets or rats.



OLD SALT PLIES FOR COVER SHOT

THE WELL KNOWN Maritime New Zealand marine manager Jim Lott was recently a candidate for the cover of *Professional Skipper*. But given his gathering years, and having a "senior moment" while chatting on the cellphone when manoeuvring to anchor was not a good look, we decided that wishing Jim a very happy birthday was the order of the day.



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