

## **Reviews, Recommendations and Reality**

### **Abstract**

*Since its inception in 1973, Australia's National Plan to Combat Pollution of the Sea by Oil and Other Noxious and Hazardous Substances (National Plan) has stood the test of time and served Australia admirably. This has not been without review.*

*Since the early Nineties the National Plan and its management by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority has undergone a range of reviews. This includes two reviews of high-level nature, other associated management reviews of a departmental, operational or audit nature. In addition to the associated management reviews are the outcomes of exercises and incidents responses. In all, over two hundred recommendations have been generated from reviews over the last ten years.*

*This paper explores the need for ongoing reviews, associated recommendations and whether in reality these are achieving real improvement. It specifically challenges the value of and need for reviews in a changing environment. This includes recognising that whilst reviews are an ongoing process of improvement, they are often driven by indirectly related factors such as microeconomic reform, privatisation of port operations and financial considerations, which cannot always easily be quantified in reality. It also explores the challenge for managers and managing agencies to find a balance between what can be achieved with the available resources whilst maintaining a high level of response capability, which, in reality, is the overall goal. In addition to reviews and recommendations, is the ongoing need and pressure to be on par with world best practice.*