



Australian Government

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Media Release

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AMSA'S RESPONSE TO WA CORONER'S REPORT ON KANIVA SINKING

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) has carefully considered the WA Coroner's findings and recommendations following the inquest into the *Kaniva* sinking in June 2012.

The Coroner found the *Kaniva* was "unseaworthy, grossly overloaded, with no EPIRB, inadequate personal safety devices and with a crew which had very limited sea experience."

In assessing the search and rescue response, the Coroner found:

- there was little any rescue coordination centre could have done before the *Kaniva* experienced serious difficulties;
- that shortly before it capsized the *Kaniva* was progressing with engines going and was not in immediate danger of sinking;
- until the distress phase was reached it was not appropriate for there to be a mayday relay to shipping, or to expect that naval vessels be dispatched.

With regards to the recommendations relating to communication with Indonesian search and rescue agency BASARNAS, AMSA has already initiated the following measures:

- AMSA and BASARNAS have undertaken a search and rescue officer capability development program involving six BASARNAS officers over two years. AMSA currently has two officers in Jakarta working closely with BASARNAS while a BASARNAS officer is located with the Rescue Coordination Centre. The officers liaise with their respective agencies in the relevant languages during incidents, and can provide greater depth of information about the resources and procedures of search and rescue activities.
- AMSA assists BASARNAS during incidents to issue broadcasts to shipping and communicating with merchant vessels in the area. BASARNAS officers are currently undergoing training in this system with AMSA staff.
- There has been improved communications between the agencies following this incident with increased understanding of each agency's capacity and operational procedures.

In regards to the Coroner's recommendation to involve relatively senior management in decisions affecting incident coordination, AMSA senior managers are empowered to intervene in operational decisions throughout the course of an incident. AMSA has already enhanced its incident notification procedures to senior management since the incident, particularly regarding asylum seeker vessels.

AMSA's Rescue Coordination Centre is staffed by highly skilled professional search and rescue officers whose priority is to save lives. They operate effectively in often difficult circumstances and AMSA is proud of their efforts in providing search and rescue services to the Australian community.

AMSA provided its full assistance to the inquest, made all of its relevant documents available and presented an expert witness to assist the inquest.

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