

2010

OFFICE OF MARITIME COMMUNICATIONS
Annual Report



► *Contents*

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INTRODUCTION

Establishment of the Office of Maritime Communications

The Australian Maritime College (AMC) established the Office of Maritime Communications (OMC) on the 1st July 2002 pursuant to an initial expression of interest, many months of negotiations and finally, a tender submission for the Management of Maritime Examination and Certificate Services. The Australian Communications & Media Authority (ACMA formerly the Australian Communications Authority) previously provided these services on a state-by-state basis.

A Deed between the Australian Maritime College and Australian Communications & Media Authority was established to delegate authority and provide parameters for service levels and reporting by the Office of Maritime Communications pursuant to the Radiocommunications Act 1992 (Cwlth). The "Delegation of Powers (Issue of Certificates of Proficiency, Australian Maritime College)" transferred authority to the Office of Maritime Communications on the 11th July 2002.

The OMC assumed responsibility of the examination process for the Southern region of Australia, (South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania) from the 1st August 2002 and for the remainder of the states as of the 1st November 2002.

Under the Deed, AMC is required to:

- Provide examinations and issue certificates for the Marine Radio Operators Certificate of Proficiency (MROCP) and the Marine Radio Operators VHF Certificate of Proficiency (MROVCP);
- Provide examinations and issue certificates for the Marine Satellite Communications Certificate of Endorsement (MSCCE); and
- Re-issue lost or destroyed certificates for MROCP, MROVCP, MSCCE and Restricted Radiotelephone Operators Certificate of Proficiency (RROCP).

The Deed with ACMA also requires AMC to provide, within 15 working days of the end of each calendar quarter, a Performance Report with information about:

- Performance against Service Levels (paragraph 9.1 (a) and definition in subsection 1.1 of the Deed);
- Number of applications made, papers marked and certificates issued (paragraph 9.1 (b) of the Deed);
- Complaints – number, nature, source and action taken. Also other matters considered important enough to be brought to ACMA's attention (paragraph 9.1 (c) of the Deed).

AMC must also provide to ACMA by 31st October of each year an Annual Performance Report, which must include:

- A compilation of the Quarterly Performance Reports (paragraphs 9.1 and 9.2 (a) of the Deed);
- Statistical analysis of the nature of complaints and other data concerning complaints received in the year (paragraph 9.2 (b) of the Deed).

OMC is located within the Australian Maritime College at Newnham in Tasmania and comprises a manager, office administrator, one full-time equivalent clerical position and a casual position (equal to between 20% to 50% full-time equivalence depending on work-load).

VARIATION TO THE DEED

In April 2004 an ACMA representative conducted an audit of OMC as per the Deed, Paragraph 1.1. As a result, minor variations to the Deed were recommended. A Deed of Variation (Variation) came into effect December 2004, the Variation sought to clarify the following:

- Definition of a complaint and an inquiry;
- The parameters for the progress of an inquiry and a complaint;
- Definition of Marine Certificate of Proficiency for re-issues only;
- AMC's obligations regarding financial aspects and issuing of certificates to applicants who were under 16 years of age and had already been examined by ACMA; and
- Definition of an approved examination.

The Variation requires the quarterly and annual Performance Reports to include information regarding acknowledgement and consideration of inquiries and acknowledgement and resolutions of complaints. AMC is also required to provide a copy of the audited financial statements for that calendar year (paragraph 9.5 of the Variation).

RENEWAL OF CONTRACT

AMC has taken up the option to renew the contract to administer and provide services for the examination and issuing of certificates of proficiency and endorsement in relation to marine radio operations. The agreement now continues until 31st July 2012.

As of the 1st of January 2008 the Australian Maritime College became an institute of the University of Tasmania (UTAS).

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Handbook

The Marine Radio Operators Handbook (MRO Handbook) is the preferred study guide for MROCP and MSSCE qualifications and contains the required information for preparation for these examinations. The current MRO Handbook was printed December 2009. It also contains the required information for the MROVCP qualification. However the Marine VHF Radio Operators Handbook (MV handbook) is recommended for those people preparing for just the MROVCP qualification. The MV handbook continues to be popular and sales for the 2009 - 2010 year increased to 2471.

Examination Format

OMC continues to provide four versions of each of the MROVCP and the MROCP examinations, and two versions of the MSCCE examination. All exams are multiple-choice. The MROCP examination consists of 50 questions while the MROVCP and MSCCE examinations consist of 25 questions. A pass mark of 70% is required for each examination.

In order to minimise any possible fraudulent activity each examination paper is individually numbered and linked to the invigilator. An examination paper is used only once. Each examination paper is sealed and placed in its own clear plastic envelope. Both used and unused examination papers are returned to OMC and checked off against the invigilator. The clear plastic envelope allows invigilators, candidates and OMC staff to check off the contents and to recycle the unopened/undamaged examination papers and the clear envelopes.

All examination papers are moderated by lecturers at AMC who are involved with maritime communications and electronics training. Examinations are reviewed every six months, old exams are recalled and new exams are issued, this is done to preserve the integrity of the examination papers.

► *Introduction (continued)*

Online Examinations

OMC has developed an online database of revision and examination questions, a MROVCP examination and a MROCP examination using the UTAS student MYLO system. A revision mock MROVCP examination as well as a list of revision questions has also been developed. The system allows for the random selection of questions from the database and also randomises the answers for a particular question. The database contains 319 revision and examination questions. Questions are grouped and a set number of questions must come from a selected group i.e. distress and urgency may have 25 questions of which 10 must be selected for the examination. OMC have been testing the online examinations internally and have had good outcomes. Offers have been made to several external organisations with the Hunter TAFE accepting the challenge to trial the online examinations in early August. However this was pre-empted by an urgent request from an invigilator sailing in Ecuador. A chance meeting with another Australian sailor had the invigilator conducting an online MROCP examination in July in Ecuador (it was successful and the candidate was very pleased).

Invigilators

Currently the OMC invigilator database has 928, (793 in 2008-2009, 581 in 2007-2008, 1076 in 2006-2007, and 978 in 2005-2006) active invigilators in Australia and a small number in overseas locations. Invigilators are registered until 30th June 2011.

Newsletter

The OMC quarterly newsletter – “OMC news” – can be viewed at our website www.amcom.amc.edu.au. The newsletter keeps interested parties informed of relevant issues, policies, events and news of interest.

OMC Fees

In accordance with the Deed paragraph 5.1 (b) OMC must maintain financial viability, to ensure the ongoing provision of the Statutory Functions and Administrative Services on a cost recovery basis.

Sections 8.1 and 8.2 of the Deed states that the AMC must only charge for the Statutory Functions and Administrative Services on a “cost recovery basis” and that the “charges on a cost recovery basis must be approved in writing by the ACMA as being reasonably related to the expense incurred or to be incurred by the Provider (AMC) in relation to the matters to which the charge relates”. A new fee structure was introduced 1 August 2009; no adverse comments were recorded in relation to the new fees.

A financial submission is required every two years, 30th June 2010 being the end of a two year period. However a request to bring the submission in align with the UTAS financial year ending 31 December has meant the 2010 submission will commence from the 1 January 2010. The figures will be based on actual for July to December 2008 and January to December 2010. Figures will be forecast for the period 1 January 2010 to 31 July 2012. This will enable recovery of costs prior to the Deed expiring 31 July 2012.

Promotional and Marketing Activities

In 2009 OMC staff attended the Sydney Boat Show, promotional items were distributed handbooks were sold and many contacts were made with invigilators and the general public. OMC staff felt the event was very worthwhile and have been preparing to attend the 2010 Sydney Boat Show. A request from ACMA to also attend the 2010 Melbourne Boat Show in early July was approved. Orders for promotional brochures, pens, stickers and other materials were doubled to cover both events.

Online Payments

November 2008 saw the introduction of the facility to make payments on-line for examinations via the OMC website. The facility is being accessed by clients, organisations and invigilators.

General

ACMA and OMC staff have attended two meetings during the year to discuss items of interest to both parties. High on the agenda the subject for discussion being the review into marine radio operators qualifications, namely the VHF certification.

Applications for the VHF certificate qualification continues to steadily increase, showing an increase of 343 applications for the 2009-2010 period (1956) when compared to the 2008-2009 period (1613) and 2007-2008 period (1302).

Modern up-to-date marine radio equipment, which includes the Digital Selective Calling (DSC) service, requires the purchaser to obtain a Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI). The MMSI is obtained from the offices of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) who require the applicant to provide a minimum qualification of a valid MROVCP or the MROCP.

The issuance of the Satellite Endorsement continues to grow although not at the level first anticipated, as reported in the 2008-2009 annual report. It was thought that this level may increase during the 2009-2010 period since issuing of maritime trading qualifications was to come under the auspices of AMSA, whereby the holders of Master Class V will require a MROCP and the MCSSE.

OUR VIEW TO THE FUTURE

Marketing

OMC will continue to attend boat shows in 2010 and have budgeted for attending two in 2011.

Whilst at the 2010 Melbourne boat show a member of the public indicated that he was having trouble locating an invigilator who could accommodate his time frame to conduct an examination. Discussions with him lead to OMC staff conducting an examination at the Boat Show. A further two examinations were conducted at the Sydney Boat Show. OMC is considering advertising in the Boat Show program that we may conduct examinations if requested.

Online Examinations and Training

OMC is considering the future development of the online examination and revision database; offering more revision questions and mock examinations.

The UTAS student system MYLO does not allow for the general public to access the revisions questions. OMC would like to investigate the possibility of purchasing a package to develop a revision question database and a mock test to be available on the OMC website for general public use.

General

ACMA have appointed auditors to audit the OMC in relation to our fulfilment of the requirements of the Deed. This is to occur August 2010, the current deed due to expire 31st July 2012.

As OMC is committed to continuous improvement we will continually review our services to ensure they are relevant to the changing maritime communications system environment. OMC will continue to request a review concerning the renaming of marine radio certificates, bringing them into line with international qualifications and bringing them under the Global Maritime Distress and safety System (GMDSS) operating system.

The review into maritime radio communications qualifications and the carriage of particular types of marine radio onboard Australian vessels continues. OMC would urge ACMA and state rescue authorities to undertake investigations into the carriage of, or lack of, suitable radios on vessels in the event of a marine rescue operation. Recent media reports into rescue operations would suggest the increasing reliability of Emergency Position Indicating Beacons (EPIRBs) over suitable marine radio systems, and the increase in the reliance on mobile telephone systems during emergency situations.

John D Mair

Manager, Office of Maritime Communications

Date: 25th October 2010

OFFICE OF MARITIME COMMUNICATIONS
Australian Maritime College
Locked Bag 1394
Launceston Tasmania 7250

FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES
Telephone: (03) 6324 9686
Facsimile: (03) 6324 9885
Toll Free: 1300 365 262
Email: amcom@amc.edu.au

Copies of this report will be available at:
www.amcom.amc.edu.au

► Activity Report

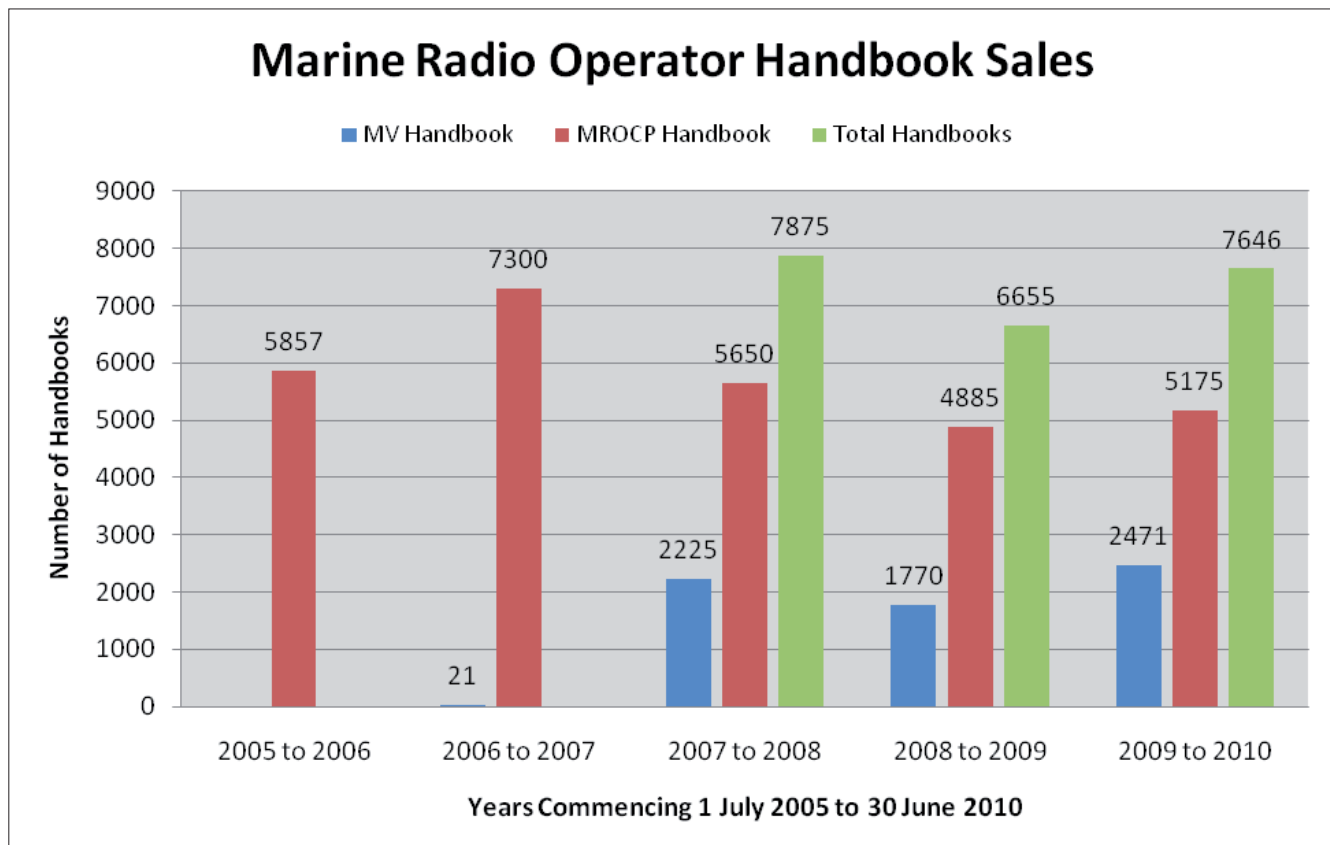
ACTIVITY REPORT

Handbooks

In accordance with the functions associated with the issue of Marine Certificates of Proficiency in paragraph 1.2 (e) and (f) of the Deed, OMC distributed a total of 7646 marine radio handbooks during the year. Sales for the year of the MRO Handbook were 5175 (4885 in 2008-2009, 5650 in 2007-2008,

7300 in 2006-2007, and 5857 in 2005-2006). Sales for the year of the MV handbook were 2471 (1770 in 2008-2009, 2225 in 2007-2008 and 21 in 2006-2007). A comparison of handbook sales over a five year period 1st July 2005 to 30th June 2010 is shown in Figure 1: Handbook Sales Comparison.

Figure 1: Handbook Sales Comparison



Examinations

Pursuant to paragraph 1.2 (a), (b), (c) and (d) and paragraph 9.2 (a) of the Deed, OMC received 7054 applications for marine radio operator certifications during the year ended 30th June 2010. Of the 7054 applications made, 6878 were new applications and 176 were reissues. Of the 6878 new applications made, 6876 were for examination papers that have been marked and 2 certificates were issued to current GMDSS GOC holders.

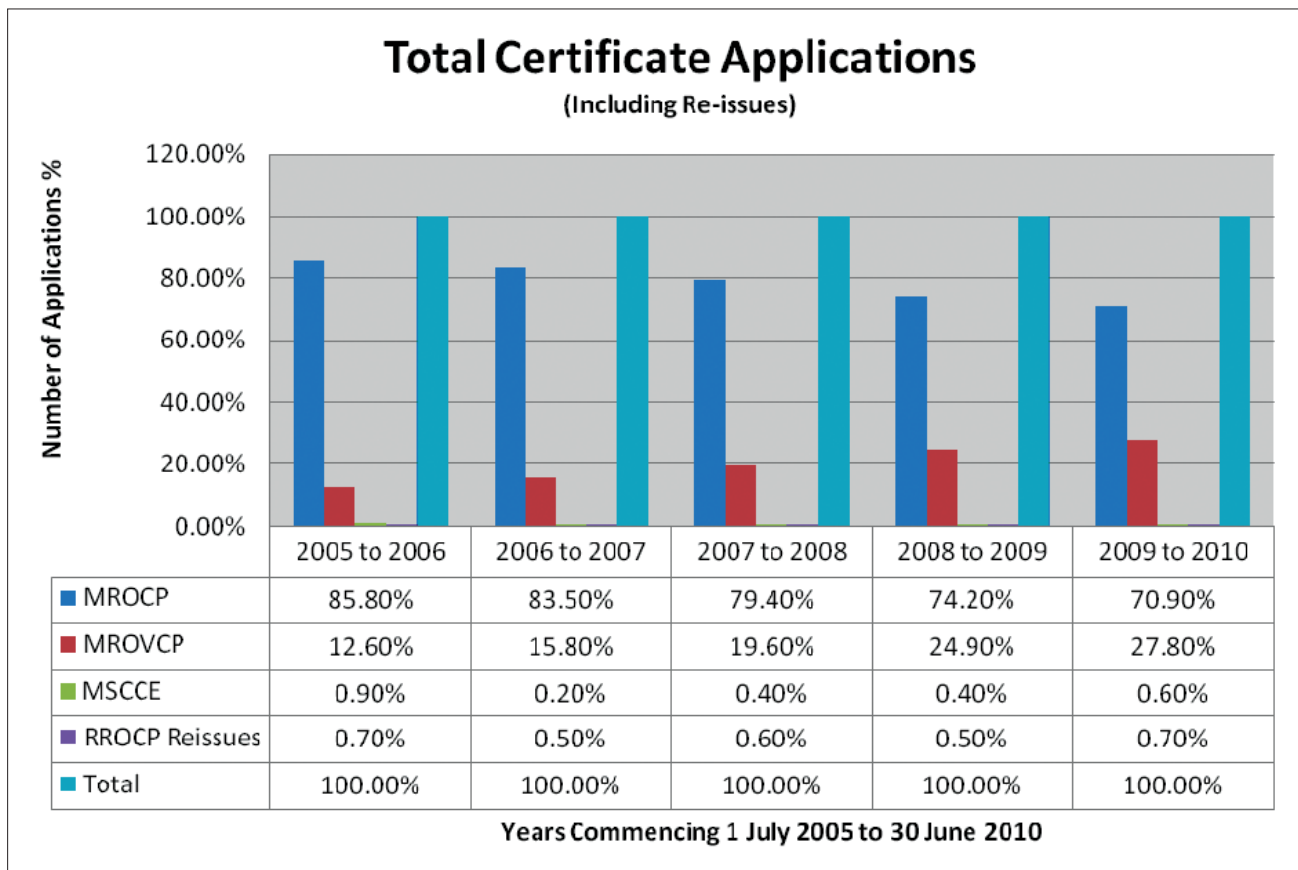
Of the total applications marked (6876), 6425 were to applicants who were successful and 451 were to unsuccessful applicants, to whom notifications were dispatched. A comprehensive classification of these applications is shown at Table 1: Marine Radio Operators Certificate Activity.

At the 30th June 2010, OMC had issued 6603 certificates (176 re-issues, 2 to GMDSS GOC holders and 6425 to successful

applicants) and dispatched 451 failure notifications, all compliant applications received for marking were marked and certificates or notifications were issued.

OMC offers certification of two proficiencies (Marine Radio Certificate of Proficiency - MROCP and Marine Radio VHF Certificate of Proficiency – MROVCP) and an endorsement for Marine Satellite Communications Certificate (MSCCE). Of the 7054 applications received, MROCP applications accounted for 70.9% (5001), MROVCP for 27.8% (1963) and MSCCE accounted for 0.6% (41). The remaining 0.7% (49) comprised reissues of RROCP certificates. A comparison of total applications including re-issues for a five year period 1st July 2005 to 30th June 2010 is shown in Figure 2: Total Certificate Applications.

Figure 2: Total Certificate Applications



▶ Activity Report (continued)

Examinations (continued)

A comparison of new MROCP, MROVCP and MSCCE applications (excluding re-issues) over the period 1st July 2005 to 30th June 2010 is shown in Figure 3: Certificate Application. The 2009-2010 year saw an increase of 3% (9% decrease 2008-2009) in the number of MROCP applications (4881 excluding re-issues) and an increase of 21% (24% increase 2008-2009,) in the MROVCP applications (1956 excluding re-issues). Whilst the number of MSCCE applications increased by 71% (41 excluding re-issues).

The total average failure rate for the 2009-2010 periods is 7%. This is equivalent to the 7% reported failure rate for 2008-2009 (9% in 2007-2008, 11% in 2006-2007, and 9% in 2005-2006). A comparison of MROCP, MROVCP, MSCCE and the total average pass and failure rates for new applications for a five year period 1st July 2005 to 30th June 2010 is shown in Figure 4: New Applications – Pass and Fail %.

Figure 3: Certificate Application

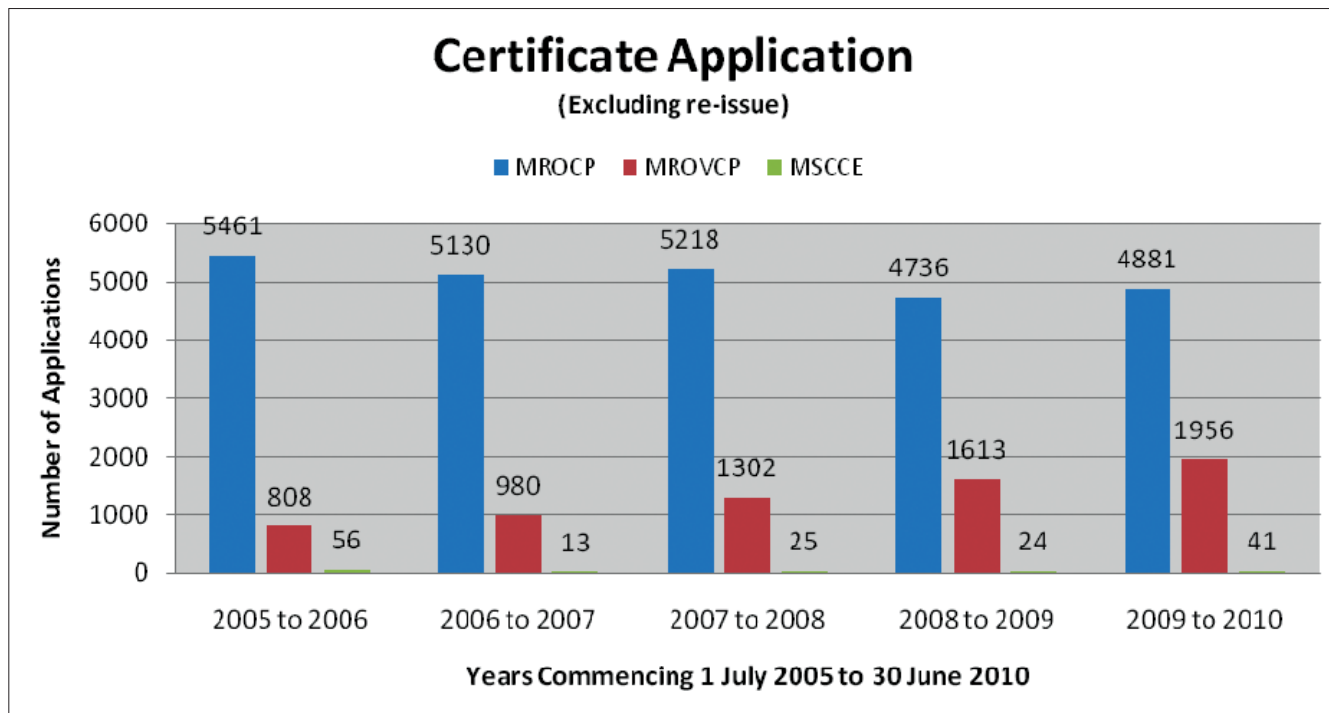


Figure 4: New Applications – Pass and Fail %

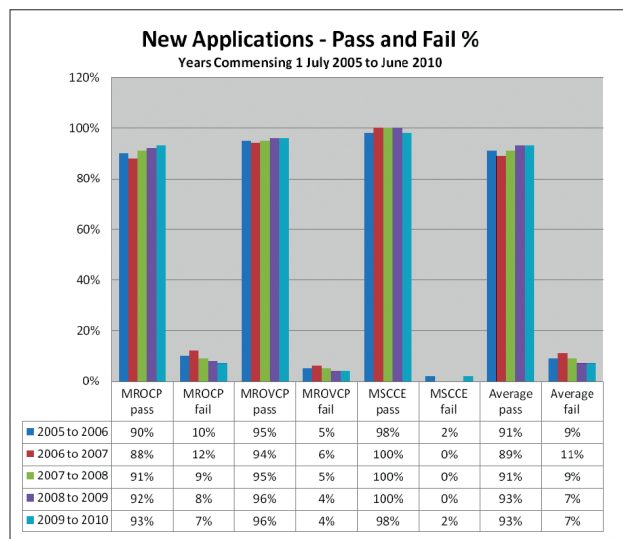


TABLE 1: MARINE RADIO OPERATORS CERTIFICATE ACTIVITY

NUMBER OF EXAMINATIONS, APPLICATIONS AND CERTIFICATE ACTIVITY REPORT 2009 - 2010	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER	TOTAL FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2010
Total Applications	1829	1946	1423	1856	7054
Pass	1688	1798	1295	1646	6427
Fail	110	102	80	159	451
Reissue	31	46	48	51	176
% Fail	6%	5%	6%	9%	7%
% Pass	94%	95%	94%	91%	93%
MROCP	1288	1368	975	1370	5001
Pass	1172	1245	886	1213	4516
Fail	93	92	61	119	365
396	23	31	28	38	120
% Fail	7%	7%	6%	9%	7%
% Pass	93%	93%	94%	91%	93%
MROVCP	532	555	407	469	1963
Pass	514	542	387	428	1871
Fail	17	10	18	40	85
Reissue	1	3	2	1	7
% Fail	3%	2%	4%	9%	4%
% Pass	97%	98%	96%	91%	96%
MSCCE	2	11	23	5	41
Pass	2	11	22	5	40
Fail	0	0	1	0	1
Reissue	0	0	0	0	0
% Fail	0%	0%	4%	0%	2%
% Pass	100%	100%	96%	100%	98%
Examinations Marked	1796	1900	1375	1805	6876
New Certificates Issued	1688	1798	1295	1646	6427
Notifications Sent	110	102	80	159	451
RROCP Reissue	31	46	48	51	176
Under 16s (OMC) Applications	3	8	11	5	27

▶ *Activity Report* (continued)

Service Level Analysis

AMC is required to report on service levels under paragraph 9.2 (a) of the Deed and paragraph 12(c) & (d) of the Deed of Variation. The following, Table 2: Service Level Analysis and

subsequent notes provide an analysis of service levels in regard to the processing of examinations for Marine Radio Certificates of Proficiency and general inquiries.

TABLE 2: SERVICE LEVEL ANALYSIS

SERVICE LEVEL ANALYSIS 08 - 09	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER	TOTAL
Certificates not issued within 15 working days of receipt of exams.	Note A 1	0	0	0	Note B 1
Written contact from clients not responded to within 20 working days.	0	0	0	0	0
Telephone calls from clients not responded to within 2 working days.	0	0	0	0	0
Inquiry from a person in relation to that person not acknowledged in 10 working days.	0	0	0	0	0
Inquiry not properly considered and answered within 40 working days.	0	0	0	0	0

Note A: One certificate was issued well after the 15th working day, due to a clerical error.

Note B: During the 2009-2010 period OMC staff have worked to improve and monitored data entry anomalies (duplicate entries due to various spelling interpretations, files not being closed, etc). The number of applications not responded to in 15 working days equates as 0.01% of total applications made. This is a decrease of 0.07% when compared to the 2008-2009 year of 0.08% (0.16% in 2007-2008, 0.08% in 2006-2007, and 0.2% in 2005-2006).

Complaints

Pursuant to paragraph 1.2(p) and paragraph 9.2 of the Deed, the OMC staff have endeavoured to keep as accurate a record as possible in relation to complaints. Complaints can be lodged either in writing, email, and telephone or addressed through the University of Tasmania's complaint procedure. The 2009-2010 operational years saw a total of four communications of complaint which is equivalent to the number of communications of complaint for the 2008-2009 year. A comparison of the number of complaints is illustrated in Figure 5: Complaint Comparison. The total of four (4 in 2008-2009, 1 in 2007-2008, 8 in 2006-2007, and 9 in 2005-2006) communications of complaint contained one or more expressions of dissatisfaction (refer to Appendix 1: OMC Complaint Analysis). The four communications of complaint originated from clients, from which 4 expressions of dissatisfaction were recorded. Of the four expressions 25% queried the examination results, 25% were dissatisfied with the invigilator, 25% queried the examination paper and 25% were dissatisfied with OMC's procedures.

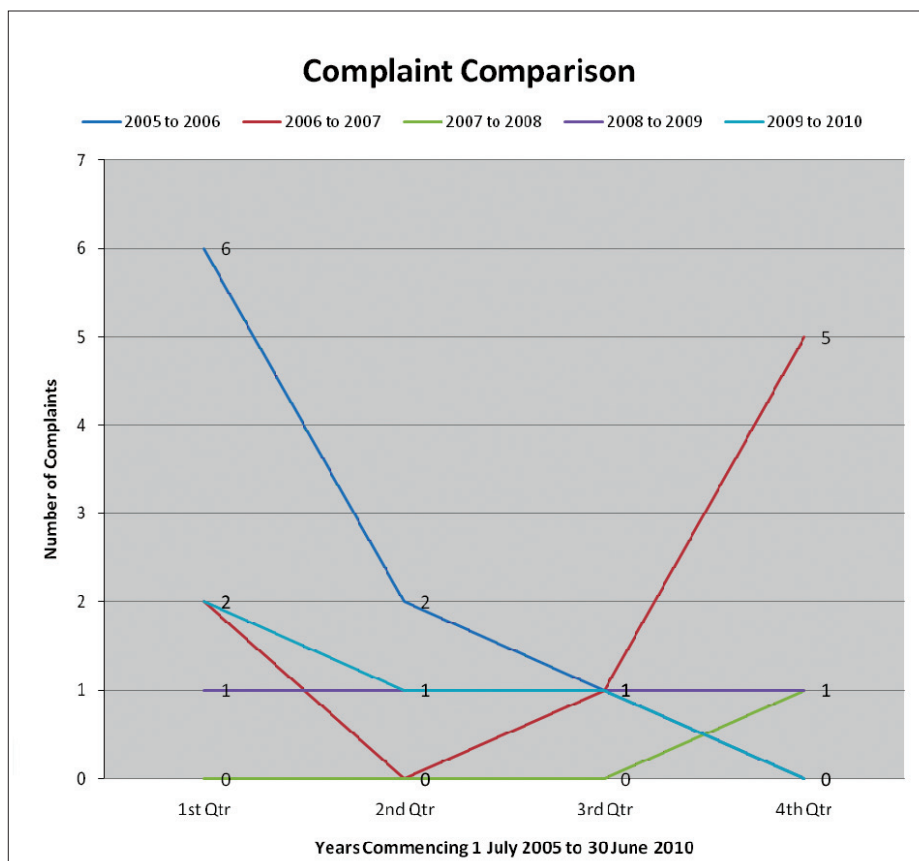
Of the four communications of complaint, 50% were dissatisfied with the response but understood the rationale, whilst 50% were satisfied with the resolution. In the absence of further contact from the complainants regarding the complaints OMC considers that the matters have been resolved. Consequently all

complaints received have been considered to be resolved within the 40 working days required in paragraph 12.1 (b) of the Deed.

It was brought to OMC's attention during the fourth quarter of the year that OMC has not been compliant with paragraph 12.1 (d) of the Variation in relation to communications of complaint. Paragraph 12.1 (d i) requires all complainants to be provided with a written decision, of the four communications received, two were given written decisions and two were provided with decisions via the telephone. Also paragraph 12.1 (d ii) requires complainants to be advised that if unsatisfied with the decision they may apply for an independent review by a delegate of the OMC. It has been OMC's practice that during the course of the communication of complaint, that if the complainant is dissatisfied with OMC's remedial actions or decision, they are then advised that UTAS provides a complaint procedure and a feedback screen accessible via their website www.utas.edu.au. This information is usually provided in the course of a telephone conversation. Paragraphs 12.1 (d iii & iv) requires the complainant to be advised of the outcome of the independent review within 30 working days of receipt of application and to advise the complainant that application may be made to the ACMA for final determination.

OMC will, in future address this oversight.

Figure 5: Complaint Comparison



▶ *Activity Report* (continued)

Incidents

Paragraph 1.2(q) of the Deed requires AMC to report to ACMA any other incidental matters within the scope of the Deed.

During the year OMC has referred three incidences to the ACMA security advisor for investigation. One incident involved a group discussion after the examination, resulting in the examination answers sheets being altered. Whilst in another incident, the examination was conducted allowing the use of the handbook and assistance from a third party. The third incident involved an invigilator charging for invigilating services, which is a breach of the guidelines.

OMC deregistered a total of four invigilators in the 2009-2010 period for various breaches of the Invigilator Guidelines.

Compliments

Through the 2009-2010 year OMC has also received 5 compliments as well as many helpful suggestions that have been implemented or are being considered for changes in the future. The suggestions together with the complaints inform us of the areas that may need remedial action. An analysis of the compliments received is shown in Table 4: Compliment Analysis.

TABLE 3: RATIO ANALYSIS – EXPRESSION OF DISSATISFACTION

SERVICE ENCOUNTERS	OTHER	HANDBOOKS	APPLICATIONS	TOTAL
1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010		7646	7054	14700
Expressions of Dissatisfaction	3	0	1	4
Handbook – General				0
Application – Examination Questions				0
Application – Examination Result				0
Pricing			1	1
Other	3			3
Ratio		0.000 0.000 Expressions per 1,000 Service Encounters	0.000142 0.142 Expressions per 1,000 Service Encounters	0.000272 0.272 Expressions per 1,000 Service Encounters

TABLE 4: COMPLIMENT ANALYSIS

COMPLIMENT ANALYSIS 08 - 09	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER	TOTAL
General Office Assistance	1	1	1		3
Marine Radio Operators Handbook				1	1
Marine VHF Radio Operators Handbook					
OMC Newsletter					
Examination Process	1				1

APPENDIX 1: OMC COMPLAINT ANALYSIS

Service Level –
expression of dissatisfaction or grievance with the Administrative Services or Statutory Functions 2009- 2010

Total

Communication of Complaint	Telephone	Written / Electronic				
Complaints received	4	0				4
	Immediate – by phone	Within 10 Working Days	Outside 10 Working Days		In Progress	
Acknowledgement time	2	2	0		0	4
	Volunteer Organisation (Invigilator or Official)	Educational Institution Invigilator	Private Invigilator	Client	Other	
Source of complaint		0	0	4	0	4
	Remedial	Written Reply	Other		In Progress	
Action Taken	1		3			4
	Immediate – by Telephone	Within 40 Working Days	Outside 40 Working Days			
Decision Advised	1	3	0		0	4
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied but Understands	Dissatisfied	No Response		
Complainants Level of Satisfaction	2	2	0	0		4
Expression of Dissatisfaction	Examination Questions	Examination Cost	Examination Results	Handbook General	Handbook Cost	Other
Nature of Dissatisfaction	0	0	1	0	0	3

Office of Maritime Communications
Australian Maritime College
Locked Bag 1394, Launceston, Tasmania 7250

Phone (within Australia) 1300 365 262
Phone (International) +61 3 6324 9686
Facsimile +61 3 6324 9885
Email amcom@amc.edu.au

www.amcom.amc.edu.au

www.amc.edu.au



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