

Where is the award for the Captain of the *Pacific Adventurer*?

A peak shipping association has expressed dismay that the Captain of the *Pacific Adventurer* had been committed to trial in Queensland.

“Whilst not wishing to comment on the specific charges, our members have nevertheless questioned whether he and the shipping company involved will receive a fair trial given all the media hype when the incident occurred in March, last year’ Llew Russell, CEO of Shipping Australia Ltd said today.

In a severe storm the *Pacific Adventurer* lost 31 containers overboard and some of them punctured the bunker tanks which resulted in 270 tonnes of oil spilling off the Queensland coast.

“On the contrary, Captain Santos should be commended for bringing his crew and ship safely to port.

“The different reaction to a vessel spilling oil and the treatment of an oil road tanker spilling oil is quite extraordinary. It has been reported that in the same week tanker trucks were in accidents in other parts of Australia and spilt large amounts of oil on land but they barely got a mention in the general media”¹ he said.

Mr Russell pointed out that the *Pacific Adventurer* oil spill was a most regrettable accident and a major oil spill is a very serious issue.

“However, the increasing criminalisation of seafarers is an unfortunate trend that combined with the risks at sea of severe weather conditions, pirates, possibly fire and a long absence from home, can certainly deter young people from contemplating a sea-going career.

“We can only hope that all the facts of this case are carefully considered dispassionately by the Court and that both Captain Santos and the shipping company involved receive a fair trial out of the media spotlight” Mr Russell said.

Editor’s note

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¹ Stated in the Baird publication editorial “Ships and Shipping”, July, 2010.