

**5th IHO-HSSC Meeting
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Information Paper for consideration by HSSC

Withdrawal of Raster Navigational Chart service

Submitted by: Australia

Executive Summary: Australia has conducted an analysis of ongoing demand for Raster Navigational Charts following completion of initial ENC coverage. As a result, Australia has announced intentions to withdraw the Australian Raster Navigation Chart (AusRNC) service from July 2014. The analysis may be of interest to other Member States.

Related Documents: Nil

Related Projects: Nil

1 Introduction / Background

ENC coverage

1.1 Australia has completed initial ENC coverage and has a portfolio equivalent to the coverage provided by paper charts. Coverage consists of 862 ENC across five navigation purpose bands. The equivalent paper nautical chart portfolio consists of 464 paper charts and their RNC equivalents.

1.2 Australian ENC are available for international mariners via the IC-ENC network, while the local AusENC service caters for smaller commercial and recreational vessels operating entirely within Australian and Papua New Guinea (PNG) waters.

Withdrawal of Raster Navigation Charts

1.3 At present, Australia provides a Raster Navigation Chart service known as AusRNC. The RNC are supplied in the HCRF format with three levels of update service (monthly, periodic, or no update) selectable by the user. As full ENC coverage is now available, the service will be withdrawn on 30 June 2014. One year's notice has been given to cater for those mariners who have paid for a 12 month update service, as well as to permit time for users to transition to alternative services. To date, feedback has been either positive, or, with one exception¹, non-existent.

¹ One item of adverse feedback was received. This advised that the presentation of names of reef and islands in RNC was neater than in ENC.

1.4 Following a consultation phase with chart distribution agents and key organisational customers, notification was undertaken via Notice to Mariners, letters to affected organisations and a mail-out which accompanied every monthly RNC update disk in July 2013. Advice was also promulgated via social media and the AHS website. A phased reduction in purchase price for the update service has been implemented. Further mail-outs are planned with future update disks.

1.5 The reasons for withdrawing the service include:

- Raster Navigation Charts were established as an interim solution in 1997 (as “Seafarer RNC”) while awaiting ENC endorsement by the IMO and completion of initial coverage – that ENC coverage now exists.
- While take up of the RNC service was good in the early years, use of the full service, which includes the update service, has already been overtaken by demand for the local AusENC service after just one year of operation.
- The IMO required paper charts to be used if RNC was in use, which effectively limited the ability of ships to ‘go paperless’ when using RNC.
- The AusRNC service did not cater for international shipping, which largely relied upon the global service provided by the UKHO.
- Navy users will be able to view Additional Military Layers on their Warship ECDIS, so will not need the additional information embedded in the parallel series of Government RNC also produced by the AHS.
- The AHS makes a significant financial loss when comparing the cost of generating the base and monthly update disks against the revenue received from selling or supplying RNC – this loss can no longer be justified as a public, Government or Fleet requirement as alternatives now exist.
- The staff directly associated with providing this service to the public can be redeployed.

2. Analysis / Discussion

2.1 Significantly, Australian ENC coverage now at least replicates the full extent of paper chart coverage – it is not limited to priority ports and shipping routes. Initial considerations had focussed on withdrawal in mid 2018, however objective analysis suggested an earlier withdrawal was possible. However, the difficulty in reaching this decision should not be underestimated. A clear distinction was necessary between what was genuinely required in relation to Australian shipping and boating requirements, and what was still considered by many within the AHS as desirable. A strong focus on objective evidence and analysis was required.

2.2 For Australia, having objectively assessed user requirements and found no genuine ongoing requirement, the decision to withdraw the service this was largely a resources decision – demand had been overtaken by ENC, while the savings to be made in withdrawing the service exceed the projected loss of revenue. Additionally, withdrawal of the RNC service will simplify production and permit management activities.

2.3 In addition to ENC, Australia will be continuing to provide a service for geo-referenced tiff images of paper charts. No decision regarding the life of the AusGeoTIFF service has been made; the service will continue until at least 2018.

3. Conclusions

3.1 This paper has been submitted for information only – Member States may draw their own conclusions regarding the applicability to their own particular circumstances. While some Member States may have significantly differing circumstances and usage rates, the decision to withdraw the local Australian RNC service recognises that a more widely applicable (ENC) alternative is available throughout the entirety of the Australian Charting Area, that withdrawal assists the AHS and that discussions with key users prior to withdrawal indicated significant no concerns, later confirmed by almost universal acceptance by users.

4. Action required of HSSC

4.1 The HSSC is invited to consider and discuss this paper.