

Submission to the Independent Review of the Shipping Registration Act 1981

November 2024

The Australian Commercial Vessel Operators Association (ACVOA) members own and operate domestic commercial vessels and regulated Australian vessels, operating on international voyages as well as around the Australian coast.

ACVOA supports the changes to the Shipping Registration Act to bring the Act into line with modern shipping and business practises, enable the administering of the Act to be simplified and to remain cognisant of the strategic fleet report recommendations.

In addition, ACVOA provides the following response to specific questions and a general comment on the object of the Act.

Proposed changes to system of registration;

1. A single vessel register -

A single registry must ensure it provides the Flag state with the flexibility to manage foreign vessels and the different types of domestic vessels separately, around all matters in an appropriate and proportionate manner.

9. A registration term to help keep the register current, with a simple but low-cost renewal process that provides owners with a prompt to confirm or update their information.

There is potential to automate registration renewal for ships are issued statutory Australian certificates. These are renewed every five years, creating a simple method for regular confirmation of relevant information.

14. Are there additional insights or comments you would like to offer as part of this review process?

As a general comment around Object “4. *To be competitive with other ship registries and encourage growth of the Australian commercial fleet.*”; The changes described here will bring administration of the Act into the modern era. This on its own will not create a more competitive registry or invigorate owners to register their vessels Australia. While Australia has formed a plan for a strategic fleet, there is still no maritime strategy that may guide the evolution of the registry or encourage growth of a commercial fleet. The economic and security importance of an Australian fleet must underpin a broader strategy, including the reason unrelated to the registration process, that local operators do not always flag in Australia, to enable the development of a sustainable fleet.
