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Sweet success at Westport

Westport dry bulk terminal has made a major leap into the world-class dry bulk handling facility when managed to discharge 25,500 tonnes of bulk raw sugar in record time of 2.5 days. The raw sugar discharged from the 174 LOA, Eco Vision on her maiden voyage at Westport on August 15, 2001.

Said the Chairman of Austbulk Shipping Sdn Bhd, (ASSB) Billy G H Tan: " This is an excellent performance at this relatively new port. The port has given a faster turnaround time for my vessel against initial indication of five days to clear this consignment. Westport's ability to handle bigger size bulkers with discharging rate up to 7,500 MT of raw sugar per day makes it the leading dry bulk terminal for bulk sugar handling in the region."

The Malaysian registered Eco Vision is one of the six vessels owned by Austbulk Shipping Sdn Bhd, discharged raw sugar from Bundaberg (Australia) for its customer, Central Sugar Refinery. The raw sugar was discharged at a rate of 400 metric tones per hour through a conveyor belt to central sugar's storage facility within Westport area.

Upon discharging the raw sugar, MV Eco Vision sailed to Australia to load a full cargo of Rutile and Concentrates from Geraldton to Taiwan and Japan.

ASSB was incorporated in October 1995 in Kuala Lumpur as an investment holding company focusing on marine transportation. ASSB joint ventured with the Development Bank of Singapore (DBS Bank) to acquire small handy size bulk carriers ranging from 21,500 dwt to 26,840 dwt.

According to Tan, ship management services for the group's vessels and operational support for both owned and chartered-in vessels provided by Tan Ecoship Sdn Bhd a wholly owned subsidiary of Austbulk.

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"Over the years ASSB has carved a niche in the parcel trade of minor dry bulk cargoes from Australia to destinations in the Far East. As a result the company went on to acquire 6 more vessels with specifications suitable for cross trade. Today Austbulk operates 11 to 12 vessels at any given time through chartering arrangement of varying duration i.e. from per trip to periods of 2 years. The reliability of its services has resulted in the company being awarded the long term contracts of Affreightment ranging from 60,000 tonnes to 150,000 tonnes per annum," said Tan.

According to the general manager of Westport Conventional Services, Chai Lih Yunn the port would be handling more than 2.3 million tones of dry bulk cargoes by end of this year with the entry of new customers and also expanding throughput levels from existing clients.

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