



**ATTORNEY-GENERAL
THE HON PHILIP RUDDOCK MP**

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**LAUNCH OF MARITIME AND TRANSPORT ARBITRATION
COMMISSION**

Australia is poised to become an international leader in maritime law with the establishment of a specialist arbitration commission, Attorney-General Philip Ruddock said today.

Mr Ruddock said much of the arbitration in maritime law had traditionally taken place in London or New York.

However, the Australian Maritime and Transport Arbitration Commission (AMTAC) would harness the skills of maritime lawyers, arbitrators, judges and scholars who are well placed to perform this work.

"Given the expertise in Australia, there is no reason why more arbitrations should not take place in Australia," Mr Ruddock said at the launch of the commission in Sydney today. "In fact parties will now have a cheaper and more efficient avenue for the resolution of such disputes."

AMTAC will come under the auspices of the Australian Centre for International Commercial Arbitration at a time when approximately 12 per cent of world trade by volume either comes into Australia or out of Australia by sea.

The Attorney-General said maritime law and transport law were highly specialised fields where decisions are required to be made in short timeframes. Arbitration makes sense as it allows for rapid and low cost dispute resolution as well as for decisions to be taken locally. Arbitration also provides the parties with flexibility to select the decision maker and venue of their choice.

"I am committed to encouraging parties to disputes of all kinds to engage in alternative methods of dispute resolution," Mr Ruddock said.

"The Commission paves the way for Australia to play a leading role in maritime and transport arbitration and mediation, both domestically and internationally."

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