

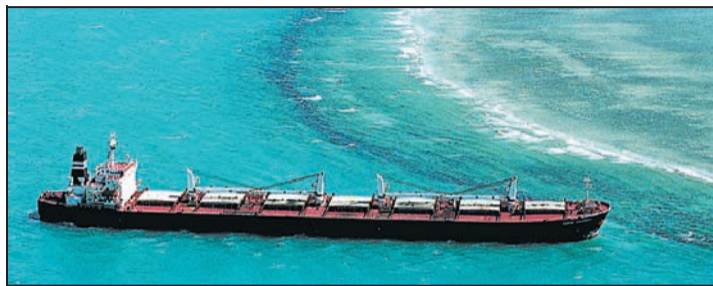
'Reef unharmed' by grounding of coal carrier

EARLY indications show there has been little or no damage to the Great Barrier Reef by the *Doric Chariot*, 600km north of Cairns.

Federal Environment Minister Dr David Kemp said yesterday there had been no environmental damage from the grounding of the 73,000-tonne coal carrier on Piper's Reef.

But he said the collision had a potential for a major disaster to one of the seven wonders of the world.

"There is a potential, depending on the cargo, of ships hitting the reef to cause very



significant damage to the reef and we've just got to do everything possible to minimise the possibility there is to environmentally damage the area due to a collision."

Dr Kemp said as a result of previous collisions, penalties had been greatly increased.

"Those penalties are now over \$1 million, which should be a significant deterrent and I

am putting to ship owners and crews that we want the highest level of care from any ship that is traversing the reef.

"Clearly we are going to be looking at the possibilities of improving the technology for monitoring ship movements through the reef."

Dr Kemp said pilotage services were continually under review.

"One of the troubling aspects of this collision was that there was a pilot on board the ship, and yet it still occurred," he said.

— DANNY MORTISON