Report of investigation into the collision between Hong Kong registered passenger high-speed craft *Lilau* and mainland non-registered fishing boat *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318* in position 22° 11.747’N 113° 49.175’E in the Lantau Channel on 8 May 2012.
Purpose of Investigation

This incident is investigated in accordance with the Code of the International Standards and Recommended Practices for a Safety Investigation into a Marine Casualty or Marine Incident (the Casualty Investigation Code) adopted by IMO Resolution MSC 255(84).

The purpose of this investigation conducted by the Marine Accident Investigation and Shipping Security Policy Branch (MAISSPB) of Marine Department, in pursuant to the Merchant Shipping Ordinance Cap. 281, the Shipping and Port Control Ordinance (Cap. 313), or the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) Ordinance (Cap. 548), as appropriate, is to determine the circumstances and the causes of the incident with the aim of improving the safety of life at sea and avoiding similar incident in future.

The conclusions drawn in this report aim to identify the different factors contributing to the incident. They are not intended to apportion blame or liability to wards any particular organization or individual except so far as necessary to achieve the said purpose.

The MAISSPB has no involvement in any prosecution or disciplinary action that may be taken by the Marine Department resulting from this incident.
# Table of Contents

1. Summary ....................................................................................................................... 1  
2. Description of the Vessels and management companies ........................................ 3  
3. Sources of Evidence ..................................................................................................... 6  
4. Outline of Events ......................................................................................................... 7  
5. Analysis of Evidences .................................................................................................. 12  
6. Conclusion ................................................................................................................... 18  
7. Recommendations ....................................................................................................... 20  
8. Submissions .................................................................................................................. 21
1. **Summary**

1.1 At 1250 hrs on 8 May 2012, the Hong Kong registered passenger high-speed craft *Lilau*, with a total of 142 passengers and 9 crew members on board, departed the HK-Macau Ferry Terminal bound for Macau. The bridge team consisted of the Master, who was steering the vessel, and supported by the Chief Officer and the Chief Engineer.

1.2 At 1323:06 hrs, the vessel passed the Fan Lau buoy and entered in the anti-clockwise traffic roundabout (previous named as the Precaution Area No.3 in the Trial Traffic Separation Scheme of Lantau Channel) at 1324:09 hrs. At the latter time, a mainland non-registered fishing boat *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318*, which was returning back to Zhuhai, China after fishing overnight, was at a position ahead of *Lilau* moving in a northwesterly direction. However, the bridge team of *Lilau* neither noticed this movement by radar nor by sight at this moment.

1.3 At about 1325 hrs, the Chief Officer sighted the fishing boat *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318* on own ship’s port bow about 2 to 3 points (i.e. 22 to 34°) and 2 to 3 cables (approx. 500 metres) away. He saw the Coxswain of the fishing boat looking downward and facing aft of his boat. He reported to the Master about the fishing boat crossing ahead and at about the same time the Chief Engineer also alerted the Master. Seeing no action taken by the Master, the Chief Officer reported his observation to the Master again. At this moment, the Master saw the fishing boat, which was at about 4 points and 300 metres away, and immediately altered course hard to starboard followed by slowing down the speed of the vessel. At about 1325:52 hrs, *Lilau* collided with the fishing boat.

1.4 At the time of the accident, the fishing boat and *Lilau* were approximately moving at a speed of 22 knots and 41 knots respectively. *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318* was hit by a strut of *Lilau* and cut into two and sank. The coxswain of the fishing boat fell into the water and missing. There were no injury to the passenger and crew of *Lilau*. There was no oil spilled into the sea in the accident.

1.5 The weather was fine, wind was blowing southerly at 2 to 3 force in Beaufort Scale, visibility was about 4 to 5 nautical miles, sea state was slight and tide state was ebbing.

1.6 The investigation into the accident revealed that the contributing factors to the accident were as follows:

   a) The Master of *Lilau* did not maintain proper lookout at all time when navigating the vessel into the high traffic density roundabout (previous named as the Precaution Area No.3 in the Trial Traffic Separation Scheme of Lantau Channel) as required by Rule 5 of COLREGS;
b) The Master of *Lilau* did not take early action to avoid collision by her manoeuvre alone, as required by Rule 17 of COLREGS, when it becomes apparent that *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318*, the give-way vessel, did not take any action to keep out of the way; and

c) The Coxswain of *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318* was not qualified to operate a vessel, and did not take action to avoid collision.
2. Description of the Vessels and management companies

2.1 *LILAU* (Fig. 1)

IMO No.: 8332332

Call Sign: VRVI5 (Official No. 709136)

Flag: Hong Kong

Port of Registry: Hong Kong

Classification Society: American Bureau of Shipping (ABS)

Trade of Vessel: River trade limits, Plying between Hong Kong and Macau

Ship Type: Category A, Hydrofoil Monohull, passenger high-speed craft

Gross Tonnage: 267

Net Tonnage: 98

Length (LOA): 23.930 metres

Breadth (molded): 8.530 metres

Depth (molded): 2.590 metres

Number of Passengers: 243

Main Engine: Gas Turbine, Detroit Diesel Allison, 501-K20A, 2 sets

Engine Power: 5590 kW in total (2795kW x 2)

Propulsion: Gas Turbine-Waterjet, 2 Sets

Service speed: about 42 Knots

Ship Builder: Boeing Aerospace Company

Year of Built: 1979

Material of Hull: Aluminium Alloy

Owner: Janny International Limited

Managers: Shun Tak-China Travel Ship Management Ltd

Damage: No significant damage was found on the vessel. There was fresh scratch marks on a strut of the vessel.
Fig. 1 – Lilau
2.2 Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318¹ (Fig. 2)

Registration: not registered
Ship Type: GRP open sampan with outboard engine
Particulars: not available
Max. Speed: Approx. 22 knots
Trade of Vessel: fishing activity within the Pearl River Estuary
Casualties: the coxswain lost in the accident
Damage: the vessel sank in the incident

¹ There was no official ship name of the vessel
3. **Sources of Evidence**

3.1 Information provided by Harbour Patrol Section, Vessel Traffic Centre and Passenger Ships Safety Section of Marine Department.

3.2 Statements provided by Master, Chief Officer, Chief Engineer and the crew of Lilau, as well as the ship management company of the vessel.

3.3 Information / statements provided by the wife of missing coxswain of *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318*, and the coxswain of *Yue Zhu Yu 13186*.

3.4 An investigation report provided by the China Guangdong Maritime Safety Administration.
4. **Outline of Events**

   **Account of Lilau**

4.1 At 1250 hours local time on 8 May 2012, the Hong Kong registered passenger high-speed craft *Lilau*, departed from Hong Kong-Macau Ferry terminal bound for Macau with 142 passengers and 9 crew on board. The bridge team consisted of the Master, Chief Officer and Chief Engineer. The Master was on the steering supported by the Chief Officer and Chief Engineer.

4.2 The vessel increased to maximum cruising speed of about 41 knots after passing the Green Island and enroute as planned until the Fan Lau buoy.

4.3 At about 1323 hours, *Lilau* cleared the Fan Lau buoy and on a course over ground (COG) 258°, speed over ground (SOG) about 41 knots. The Chief Officer reported to the Master the next COG to be 275°. He then wrote the time “1323”, “Check Point 4” in ship logbook indicating that vessel had passed check point number 4 at Fan Lau buoy on the planned route at 1323 hrs.

4.4 According to the Chief Officer, at the time when *Lilau* was abeam Fan Lau buoy, he did not spot any target in the radar screen causing concern. About 2 minutes later at about 1325 hrs when he stood up from his chair for a wider view by sight of the sea in front, he observed a fishing boat about 2 to 3 points\(^2\) and two to three cables\(^3\) away approaching own ship from port side at a high speed. And he saw the coxswain of the boat looking downward facing aft.

4.5 The Chief Officer shouted: “portside, fishing boat crossing”. The Chief Engineer also called out the name of the Master to alert him too. Without any action taken by the Master about five seconds after his first report, the Chief Officer shouted again: “portside, fishing boat crossing”. At that moment, distance between own ship and the fishing boat was about 300 metres and the Master began to notice the fishing boat at about 4 points (45°) on the port bow. He immediately altered course hard to starboard. A few seconds later, a slight impact sound was heard by the bridge team. The master slowed down the vessel and maneuvered back to the scene.

4.6 Pieces of blue colored GRP debris were seen floating on the water, with one big piece protruding above water surface showing the number “1318”. There was no sign of the whereabouts of the coxswain.

4.7 After checking and confirming the condition of the vessel, passengers and crew of

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\(^2\) One point equal to 11.25 degrees

\(^3\) A cable length equal one-tenth of a nautical mile (i.e. 185.2 metres)
Lilau, the accident was reported to the Vessel Traffic Centre of Hong Kong Marine Department (VTC), Vessel Traffic Control Centre of Macao (Macao VTS), and China Guangdong Maritime Safety Administration (GDMSA). There was no injury to the passenger and crew of Lilau. There was no oil spilt into the sea in the accident.

4.8 Some minutes later, a fishing boat similar to the sunken vessel named “Yue Zhu Yu 13186” arrived at the scene of the accident, searched for a few minutes and left. Launches from the Hong Kong Marine Police and the Harbour Patrol Section of Marine Department arrived at the scene and started the search and rescue (SAR) operation for the missing person.

4.9 At about 1418 hours, Lilau was permitted to leave the scene and was instructed to return back to Hong Kong with all the passengers on board. She arrived at the Hong Kong-Macau Ferry terminal at about 1501 hrs and disembarked all the passengers.

**Account of Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318**

4.10 Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318 departed Zhuhai, China for fishing in the waters off Wailingding Island in the Pearl River Estuary together with an open sampan Yue Zhu Yu 13186 in the afternoon on 7 May 2012. Each vessel was operated by a coxswain without passenger. In the afternoon on 8 May 2012, both vessels started to return back to Zhuhai. The ships’ course was approximately northwesterly and they were moving at a speed of about 22 knots with Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318 about 200 metres ahead of Yue Zhu Yu 13186.

4.11 About one minute before the collision, according to the coxswain of Yue Zhu Yu 13186, he saw a passenger high-speed craft approaching from aft of own vessel and was overtaken. However, he could not see the collision between the passenger high-speed craft and Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318 since his view was obstructed by a fishing vessel in between.

4.12 After the accident, the coxswain of Yue Zhu Yu 13186 saw the Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318 had been broken into pieces with her stern sank into the water. The passenger high-speed craft stopped at the scene. He left the scene after he could not find the coxswain of Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318 in the water.

**Search and rescue operation**

4.13 After the collision, Lilau slowed down, turned back and stopped at the scene for inspection. Only debris belonging to the broken sampan was seen floating in the water.

4.14 The Hong Kong Marine Rescue Coordinating Centre coordinated the Searching and Rescuing operation with vessels deployed by the Harbour Patrol Section of HKMD, the Hong Kong Marine Police and the China Guangzhou MSA, as well as helicopter deployed by the Hong Kong Government Flying Services. The SAR operation was terminated after one week of searching without findings. The relatives of the missing coxswain and the
patrol vessels of China Guangzhou MSA continued the search for some more days and finally they decided to terminate.

**Weather condition**

4.15 At the time of collision, the weather was fine, wind was blowing southerly at 2 to 3 force in Beaufort Scale, visibility was about 4 to 5 nautical miles, sea state was slight and tide state was ebbing. The weather was not considered to be any adverse effect to the accident.
Fig. 3 The Lantau Channel Traffic Separation Scheme (trial) and the tracks of Lilau & Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318
Fig. 4 - The track lines of Lilau and Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318 with the relevant bearings and distance before collision.
5. Analysis

Certification of the vessels and crew

Lilau

5.1 *Lilau* was registered in Hong Kong and all her statutory and Classification certificates were valid at the time of the accident.

5.2 The vessel was manned by the Master, Chief Officer, Chief Engineer, three sailors and three cabin attendants.

5.3 The Master of the vessel had 47 years of experience working on board sea-going vessels and passenger high-speed crafts. He possessed a Certificate of Competence (Deck Officer) (Master Mariner) Class I issued by the Hong Kong Marine Department valid until 27 November 2016. Also, he was issued with a Type Rating Certificate valid until 7 August 2012 certifying that he was qualified to serve as a master on board such type of passenger high-speed craft as *Lilau*. The Master began working as a Chief Officer on board passenger high-speed crafts in 1991 and was promoted to Master in August 1996.

5.4 The Chief Officer of the vessel had 42 years of experience working onboard sea-going vessels and passenger high-speed crafts. He possessed a Certificate of Competence (Deck Officer) (River Trade) Class 2 issued by the HKMD valid until 16 August 2015. Also he was issued with a Type Rating Certificate valid until 31 January 2014 certifying that he was qualified to serve as a chief officer on board such type of passenger high-speed craft as *Lilau*. He began working as a Chief Officer on board passenger high-speed crafts since 2007.

5.5 The Chief Engineer began his sea-going career since 1979 working on board sea-going vessels and passenger high-speed craft, with a break of four years between 1987 and 1991. He joined the shipping company of *Lilau*, starting as Assistant Engineer and was promoted as Chief Engineer in August 1995.

*Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318*

5.6 *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318* was not registered and possessed no certificate for the vessel.

5.7 The coxswain of *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318* was not certificated to operate a vessel as confirmed by the Chinese Administration.
Collision of vessels

5.8 *Lilau* was equipped with Automatic Identification System (AIS) but without Voyage Data Recorder (VDR). The VTC radar could record her track, no heading information of Lilau was available in the recording.

5.9 *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318* was a small fast moving vessel whose echoes could not be detected continuously and accurately by VTC radar. Her ship track was re-constructed by tracing backward the echoes from the time of collision with *Lilau*.

5.10 The approximate ship tracks of both vessels and their relative positions before the accident are shown in Figure 3 & 4.

5.11 At about 1323\textsubscript{06}hr, *Lilau* was at position 22° 11.458’N 113° 51.344’E proceeding at SOG 41 knots on COG 258° following the planned route passing Fan Lau Buoy. Chief Officer reported to Master and then he entered the information in the ship’s log book. At that moment, the Chief Officer, who was seated, and did not spot any target causing concern after checking those targets in the area. Referring to the VTC radar image (Figure 5), there were three echoes near the Gui shan Bei Light Vessel, respectively a stagnant echo at 1.67 nm\textsuperscript{4} bearing 260° right ahead of Lilau; a vessel moving southeasterly; and another stagnant echo. There were no convergent courses of the vessels with Lilau.

5.12 At about 1324\textsubscript{09} hrs at position 22° 11.430’N 113° 50.706’E, SOG 41 knots, *Lilau* had altered to a COG 275° and entered in the anti-clockwise traffic roundabout in Lantau

\textsuperscript{4} nm stands for nautical mile, one nautical mile equivalent to 1.852 kilometres
Channel off Fan Lau Kok at southwestern tip of the Lantau Island (Figure 6). Referring to VTC radar image, a small target was recorded moving northwesterly direction and ahead of Lilau, distance between them about 0.97 nm, bearing 258°. But the bridge team of Lilau neither noticed that small moving target by radar nor by sight.

Fig. 6 – One small target was moving northwesterly at 132409 hrs.

5.13 At 1325 hrs, position 22° 11.545’N 113° 49.973’E, at SOG of 41.5 knots, Lilau had altered to COG 279.7°. Referring to VTC radar image, the small target was recorded at 0.41 nm, bearing of 258° from Lilau (Fig.7). At that time, the Chief Officer sighted a fishing boat on own ship’s port bow about 2 to 3 points (i.e. 22 to 34°) and 2 to 3 cables (about 500 metres) away. He shouted “portside, fishing boat crossing”. At about the same time, the Chief Engineer also called out the Master’s name alerting him about a fishing boat crossing ahead. Seeing no action taken by the Master, Chief Officer shouted again: “portside, fishing boat crossing”. At this moment, the Master saw the fishing boat, which was about 4 points and 300 metres away, and immediately altered course hard to starboard followed by slowing down the speed of the vessel. At about 132602 hrs, the radar image of VTC indicated a small target echo merged in the past track of Lilau at the approximate position 22° 11.704’N 113° 49.233’E. It was therefore deduced that the collision happened shortly before 132602 hrs. The echo merged with in the past track of Lilau was the broken parts of the fishing boat. Referring to the tracking of both vessels in Fig.3 & 4, the time of ship collision was deduced to be at about 132552 hrs. The estimated SOG and COG of Lilau at the time of collision were respectively 41 knots and 280° basing on the recording of VTC radar (Fig.3, 4 & 8).
Fig. 7 – VTC image at about 132500 hrs showed situation of both vessels involved in the accident.

Fig. 8 - 132602 hrs, the radar image of VTC showed a small target echo (broken parts of the fishing boat) merged with the past track of Lilau.
5.14 At the time of the collision, the bridge team members of *Lilau* heard a slight impact sound. Lilau returned back to the scene after the impact and discovered pieces of blue colored GRP debris floating on the water, with one big piece from the bow of the fishing boat protruding above the water surface showing the boat number “1318”. The coxswain of *Yue Zhu Yu 13186* arrived at the scene after the accident found that *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318* was cut opened and damaged with her stern sank into the water. *Lilau* was later docked for a hull inspection and found new paint scratch marks appeared on the forward strut of *Lilau* (Figure 9).

![Fresh Paint scratch on the strut](image)

**Fig. 9** – New scratch marks were found on the forward strut of the *Lilau*

### Collision Avoidance actions taken by *Lilau*

5.15 Referring to paragraph 5.12, the bridge team members of *Lilau* should be able to detect at a much earlier time of the moving target of a small fishing boat by radar and/or by sight prior to 1325:00 hrs if proper lookout had been carried out by them from the time at least at 1324:09 hrs when the small target was recorded by VTC radar moving northwesterly direction and ahead of *Lilau* with a distance and bearing of about 0.97 nm and 258° between them under good visibility of about 4 to 5 nm.

5.16 Referring to paragraph 5.13, the Chief Officer sighted the fishing boat and reported his observation to the Master at about 1325 hrs but there was no immediate action taken by the Master. Even after the Chief Engineer called out the Master’s name alerting him of the
danger, the Master did not response and take immediate action. The Chief Officer repeated his report, at this moment, the Master saw the fishing boat and immediately altered course hard to starboard. Based on the re-constructed tracks of the two vessels prior to the accident as shown in Figures 3 & 4, and having considered there only slight difference between the heading of each fast moving vessels and their respective COGs, they were meeting in a crossing situation with *Lilau* and *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318* respectively as stand-on and give-way vessel. As required by Rule 17 of COLREGS, *Lilau* should have taken action to avoid collision by her manoeuvre alone as soon as it becomes apparent to her that *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318* was not taking appropriate action in compliance with COLREGS. Valuable time in the matter of seconds had been lost for taking early collision avoidance action. At last, *Lilau* had taken the collision avoidance action but it was too late to avoid the collision which happened a few seconds later.

5.17 The traffic density in the roundabout (previous named as the Precaution Area No.3 in the Trial Traffic Separation Scheme of Lantau Channel) is usually high and risk of collision persists. The China GDMSA\(^5\) established an anti-clockwise traffic flow in the roundabout and requiring all vessels navigate with extreme caution in the area. *Lilau* was about to entering into the roundabout at 1323\(_{06}\) hrs at a SOG 41.0 knots. She was inside the roundabout at 1324\(_{09}\) hrs moving at a SOG 41 knots. When the Chief Officer sighted the fishing boat at about 1325 hrs, *Lilau*’s SOG was about 41.5 knots. *Lilau* was moving at SOG 40.5 knots when she collided with the fishing boat at about 1325\(_{52}\) hrs. The speed of *Lilau* was almost unchanged from 1323\(_{06}\) hrs to 1325\(_{52}\) hrs. It was therefore considered that the bridge team of *Lilau* did not exercise extreme caution such as taking sharp lookout and/or slowing down the speed where necessary when the vessel was about to entering and subsequently sailing inside the roundabout.

**Collision Avoidance actions taken by *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318***

5.18 The coxswain of *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318* was the only person on board and he lost after the accident. Based on the statements provided by the crew of *Lilau*, the coxswain of *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318* was looking downward and facing aft of his vessel prior to the accident. It was probable that there were neither look out nor collision avoidance action taken by the coxswain of *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318*.

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\(^5\) GDMSA: Guangdong Maritime Safety Administration.
6. Conclusion

6.1 At 1250 hrs on 8 May 2012, the Hong Kong registered passenger high-speed craft Lilau, with a total of 142 passengers and 9 crew members on board, departed the HK-Macau Ferry Terminal bound for Macau. The bridge team consisted of the Master, who was steering the vessel, and supported by the Chief Officer and the Chief Engineer.

6.2 At 132306 hrs, the vessel passed the Fan Lau buoy and entered in the anti-clockwise traffic roundabout (previous named as the Precaution Area No.3 in the Trial Traffic Separation Scheme of Lantau Channel) at 132409 hrs. At the latter time, a mainland non-registered fishing boat Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318, which was returning back to Zhuhai, China after fishing over the night, was at a position ahead of Lilau moving in a northwesterly direction. But the bridge team of Lilau neither noticed this movement by radar nor by sight at this moment.

6.3 At about 1325 hrs, the Chief Officer sighted the fishing boat Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318 on own ship’s port bow about 2 to 3 points (i.e. 22 to 34°) and 2 to 3 cables (about 500 metres) away. He saw the Coxswain of the fishing boat looking downward and facing aft of his vessel. He reported to the Master about the fishing boat crossing ahead and at about the same time the Chief Engineer also alerted the Master. Seeing no action taken by the Master, the Chief Officer reported his observation to the Master again. At this moment, the Master saw the fishing boat, which was at about 4 points and 300 metres away, and immediately altered course hard to starboard followed by slowing down the speed of the vessel. At about 132552 hrs, Lilau collided with the fishing boat.

6.4 At the time of the accident, the fishing boat and Lilau were approximately moving at a speed of 22 knots and 41 knots respectively. Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318 was hit by a strut of Lilau and cut into two and sank. The coxswain of the fishing boat fell into the water and missing. There were no injury to the passenger and crew of Lilau. There was no oil spilled into the sea in the accident.

6.5 The weather was fine, wind was blowing southerly at 2 to 3 force in Beaufort Scale, visibility was about 4 to 5 nautical miles, sea state was slight and tide state was ebbing.

6.6 The investigation into the accident revealed that the contributing factors to the accident were as follows:

a) The Master of Lilau did not maintain a proper lookout at all time when navigating the vessel into the high traffic density roundabout (previous named as the Precaution Area No.3 in the Trial Traffic Separation Scheme of Lantau Channel) as required by Rule 5 of COLREGS;

b) The Master of Lilau did not take early action to avoid collision by her
manoeuvre alone, as required by Rule 17 of COLREGS, when it becomes apparent that *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318*, the give-way vessel, did not take any action to keep out of the way; and  
c) The Coxswain of *Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318* was not qualified to operate a vessel, and did not take action to avoid collision.
7. **Recommendations**

7.1 The management company of *Lilau* should issue a safety circular informing all masters and navigation officers of the findings of this accident investigation. They should be reminded to maintain a proper look-out at all times and take appropriate collision avoidance action in compliance with the rules of COLREGS.

7.2 The Shipping Division of Marine Department, as flag Administration of the vessel, in considering the findings of this accident investigation, should consider taking any regulatory actions deemed necessary, including but not limiting to paragraph 7.1 above.

7.3 The Register of Fishing vessel of Guangdong Province (廣東省漁業船舶檢驗局) and the Fishery Administration of Guangdong (廣東省漁政總隊) should be provided with a copy of the investigation report for their information and necessary actions.
8. Submissions

8.1 In the event that the conduct of any person or organization is criticized in an accident investigation report, it is the policy of the Marine Department that a copy of the draft report should be given to that person or organization so that they can have an opportunity to express their comments on the report or offer evidence not previously available to the investigating officer.

8.2 Copy of the draft report has been sent to the following parties for comments:

a) the management company, the Master and the Chief Officer of Lilau;

b) wife of the missing coxswain of Yue Zhu Hai Yun 1318

c) the Shipping Division of the Marine Department, as flag Administration of the vessel Lilau;

d) the Guangdong Maritime Safety Administration, China, as the coastal State of the accident.

8.3 A submission was received. The final report has been prepared after considered the comments.