Fatal accident due to capsize of the local hopper barge “CROWN ASIA 22” at waters off east of East Ninepin Island on 1 June 2018

1. The incident

1.1 At about 2031 hours on 1 June 2018, the local hopper barge “Crown Asia 22” (the barge) with two crew and about 1,218 tons of cargo capsized at waters off east of East Ninepin Island when she was towed by the locally licensed tugboat “Hoi Luen 103” to the East Ninepin Mud Disposal Ground. The two crew were found dead.

2. Probable Causes

2.1 Most of the port side void spaces manhole covers of the barge were not properly covered before the commencement of the towing, which probably allowing swells to enter the port side void spaces of the barge in the heavy sea conditions resulting in listing to port side.

2.2 The barge was yawing heavily when under towing. During this period, the barge might be subjected to transverse towing force. The heeling moment increased the heeling angle of the barge to port side.

2.3 The cargo of the barge was not trimmed before departure, when the barge listed to port side, the water shifted and the cargo collapsed to port side. This made more water entering the cargo hold and thus increased the draft and the listing. As this was not noticed and rectified in early stage, the barge eventually capsized.