

SUNKEN DREDGER SALVAGED

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The dredger, *Jin Tai*, which sank to the seabed of the existing quay extension in the port of Ngqura in the early hours of 1 January 2012, floated to the surface on Sunday, 22 January, thanks to the combined efforts of specialists making up the Smit Amandla Marine salvage team. The salvage efforts consisted of a sequence of plugging openings, sealing compartments, calculating the different stability criteria and making the vessel watertight for a safe salvage. Firstly, fuel and hydraulic oil tanks had to be discharged ashore thereby minimising any threat of oil pollution. Engine rooms, workshops, other tanks and void spaces had to be pumped out, providing buoyant lift to the dredger's hull for floating. One of the three uprights (dredging support spuds) remained stuck in the seabed as the support cable was broken. Suitable repairs are currently being carried out in order to raise the spuds for stowing. The red & white Backactor arm and digging bucket, weighing about 250 tons, is being supported in the spoil barge's hopper. This extended arm bucket has a huge destabilizing force if not supported at full extension. Specialised cleaning and maintenance teams have commenced cleaning the interior and flushing the machinery and engines to preserve them. Some machinery is being made functional in order to correctly stow the Backactor into the transportation position, aft to forward along the centreline. The investigation into why the dredger sank will begin as soon as it is deemed to be safe to board.