

BRAEMAR HOWELLS

A two-nautical mile exclusion zone remains in place around the MV Rena wreck in Mount Maunganui as work continues on wreck reduction and clean up of the surrounding seabed.

Over recent months Environmental cleanup specialists Braemar Howells has been focusing not only on the recovery of flotsam from beaches, but also the removal of container wreckage and debris from the area immediately surrounding the Rena. (Rena wreck reduction, meanwhile, is being carried out by the salvors.)

British-based Braemar has been assisted in this, and other container and debris retrieval endeavours over the past year by Unimar, a New Zealand marine support company.

Unimar vessel the "Tasman Challenger" has spent time over recent months positioned near the Rena to retrieve tonnes of scrap wreckage and distressed cargo retrieved by divers from the wreck site.

A total of 1368 containers were on board the Rena when she grounded on the Astrolabe Reef in October last year. Following recent subsea cleanup operations, the number of containers now accounted for stands at 1007, after four more were identified in October this year.

Braemar Howells operations manager Mike Richards says these four additional containers, hoisted from the seabed, were in a completely wrecked condition, which made identification difficult.

Mr Richards is full of praise for the kiwi divers who have been working in difficult conditions on the seabed, at depths of about 30 metres amongst often-strong currents and big swells.

His comments have been endorsed by the Rena owners and insurers.

Scrap steel, scrap wire and aluminium ingots form the bulk of what has been collected within the main debris field at sea.

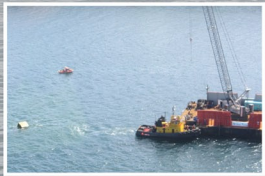
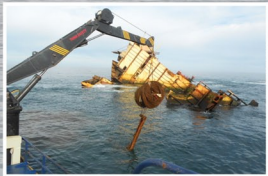
Meanwhile, Braemar / Unimar team members are continuing cleanup operations – of predominantly small polymer beads – from beaches, and surveys are being conducted. The amount of debris being collected has significantly reduced over time.

Boats and divers are being used to access areas inaccessible by land.

These, as well as tugs, barges, helicopters and fixed-wing planes have all been used as part of the Braemar cleanup operations. So too has sophisticated technology. Sonar equipment was used to search the seabed for sunken containers, and later vessels equipped with ROVs (Remotely Operated Underwater Vehicles) were utilised in an extensive operation to lift pinpointed containers and wreckage.

Braemar has called on specialist staff with skills in marine operations, logistics, distressed cargo, shoreline cleanup and other incident management expertise from its facilities around the world to assist in the Rena recovery.

The cleanup story continues to include many successful chapters, and it's still business as usual for this dedicated team, with Braemar continuing to work pursuant to the relevant arrangements made with the Rena owners.



Braemar Howells Ltd - the Environmental division of Braemar Seascope.