

UOW wins grant for port study

Project to look at safety

By MARIO CHRISTODOULOU

THE University of Wollongong has received its largest single grant, worth about \$950,000, to fund research aimed at making Australian ports safer and more economical.

The five-year research project aims to, in part, improve navigation and tracking systems used to guide ships into ports safely and quickly.

Port Kembla Port Corporation chief executive Dom Figliomeni said he hoped the research would avoid a repeat of an embarrassing incident in April 2002 when an 88,000-tonne bulk carrier, the SA Fortious, struck Port Kembla coal terminal's main coal-loading berth.

The crash cost about \$20 million.

"Bringing ships in and out is always a risk and we need

to make sure that we have the most up-to-date information while vessels transit in and out of the port," Mr Figliomeni said.

"We are trying to ensure all the players involved in moving a ship in the port know what is happening and they can see where ships are at any given time."

Professor Tim Coltman, who is leading the research at the university, said the project was the fifth largest funding grant of its kind in the country.

He said the funding could help Port Kembla compete with international ports.

"The research that we have done so far, in conjunction with Port Kembla Port Corporation, is that there are some enormous opportunities to do some quite innovative work that will lead the world in this space," Prof Coltman said.