



Southern Queensland Branch News

31st March 2010

WATERFRONT DEATH SPARKS RENEWED CALL FOR NATIONAL SAFETY CODE OF PRACTICE.

National Secretary Paddy Crumlin reports that maritime workers are mourning the death of a 49-year old Nick Fanos, employed by Patrick Stevedores, crushed to death while loading containers at Sydney's Port Botany at 7.30pm on Sunday night.

Comrade Crumlin reports that some co-workers either saw the accident or the aftermath. A Work Cover investigation and Coronial and other inquiries will follow. Comrade Crumlin said this was a death that could have been avoided with a better safety culture and application of safe working practices and guidelines nationally with full enforceability.

Comrade Crumlin has reminded industry participants that little more than a month ago Brad Gray tragically died in a workplace accident in Brisbane leaving behind a young family. He has told them that it is obvious we have a serious deficit in OH&S practices on our wharves and yet another tragedy shows that deregulated performance based arrangements are clearly not working. The need for stronger enforcement and compliance mechanisms remains urgent.

In the accident yesterday the man was loading containers onto the container ship *Vega Gotland*, a Flag of Convenience vessel.

THE NSCOP CAMPAIGN

National Secretary Paddy Crumlin advises that since the last National Office Report, he has written twice to Julia Gillard, Deputy PM and Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations (which includes OHS) seeking Government support for a process to bring about a fundamental transformation in the way stevedoring OHS is managed in Australia. The letter on 26 February 2010 followed the death of wharfie Brad Gray at POAGs Brisbane on 20 February 2010.

The third letter follows the death of Sydney Wharfie Nick Fanos, and calls for clear political support for a definitive timetable for reform of stevedoring safety. Comrade Crumlin says he has followed up that letter with a letter to Minister Albanese seeking his support for the proposals to reform stevedoring OHS he raised with DPM Gillard, because of the important role of AMSA in waterfront safety.

Comrade Crumlin advises that he has not yet had a formal response from Minister Gillard, but has communicated with her advisors and advisers in Minister Albanese's office. Comrade Crumlin reports that the second fatality on the waterfront this year again strongly emphasises that a new approach to waterfront safety is required and that there is a determination at all levels of the union to bring about the transformation that we have called for.

Union strategy

There are four aspects to the union strategy:

1. Essentially that we want **national legislation** covering all shipping and stevedoring safety (and not the current Commonwealth and State/NT mix) and we want a single regulator.
2. **Immediate practical reforms**, which include:
 - Acceptance of the MUA Safety Code (a package incorporating the following 4 elements):
 - Practical on the job safety guide
 - A guide to the operation to legislation, regulations and guidance material and the interface between Commonwealth and state regulation
 - MO32
 - Safe Work Australia Stevedoring Guidance

All of these need to be fully incorporated into each company's safety management systems in a systematic way and include an awareness raising and training plan for roll out across the industry

3. **An employer negotiation**, seeking acceptance of the National Stevedoring Code of Practice
4. **A communication plan**, to be commenced at the B&G and then Stevedoring Conferences in late May and early June 2010 respectively.

SPECIAL NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING - APRIL 2010

National Secretary Paddy Crumlin reminds Branches and Members that the union is holding a special two day National Council meeting in Sydney on 12 and 13 April 2010. The key themes for the Special Council meeting will be maritime industry safety, national shipping policy, the forthcoming ALP federal election, offshore industry matters, skills and training including the developments associated with the Maritime Employees Training Ltd (METL) business plan.

ANNUAL LEAVE

Deputy Branch Secretary Trevor Mundy will be on annual leave commencing on Good Friday for a period of 5 weeks, returning to work on Monday 10th May 2010.

Patrick Bulk & General delegate Brett Membrey will be a relieving official in the Branch on his return from leave, commencing on Monday 12th April. Brett's contact details will be relayed to members in next weeks Branch News

SVITZER ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATION

The EA meetings will commence next week in Sydney for 2 days, and further meetings have been scheduled for 20th – 24th April. There are also the added issues of the transfer of contracts from Svitzer to P.B. Towage in Townsville and to Smit Towage in Gladstone.

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