



# Southern Queensland Branch News

19<sup>th</sup> August 2010

## FEDERAL ELECTION

The Federal Election is nigh. Australians have a choice – risk going back to a Coalition Government that historically and traditionally supported the “big end of town” at the detriment of workers, or the ALP Government who still have work to do when it comes to workers’ rights; in particular the abolition of the regressive Australian Building and Construction Commission but in the recent past have made announcements beneficial to our Union

A Shipping Policy was announced on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> August to revitalise Australian Shipping. Hereunder are details of the package which can be viewed on the MUA website.

*The MUA joined with the Australian Shipowners Association (ASA) to welcome the Minister’s announcement which includes the introduction of a tonnage tax and a proposal for an international ships register.*

*MUA National Secretary Paddy Crumlin, the newly elected President of the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF), representing over 4.6 million workers worldwide, praised the reforms which the union has been advocating for the past 15 years and which he said are essential for a maritime dependent nation like Australia.*

*“The announcement by Minister Albanese today signals a new direction for Australian shipping and lays a foundation for improvements in Australia’s domestic and international freight transport infrastructure,” he said.*

*“It will bring significant economic, tax, environmental and employment benefits to the nation.”*

*Mr Crumlin said that after years of neglect by the Howard Government and a complete disinterest by the Liberals in shipping and maritime transport policy which saw Australian-flagged ships drop in number from almost 80 in the late 1990s to just 29 today, the policy announcement places Labor light years ahead in a vision for freight transport.*

*“We have been very vocal on the need for these reforms and it is very pleasing to see the Gillard Labor Government showing such foresight. The policy package has the potential to reverse the decline of Australian shipping and improve Australia’s international competitiveness,” he said*

*“By restoring balance to the domestic shipping sector and enabling Australian bulk commodities to be transported in Australian registered ships, there is an opportunity for Australia to leverage major benefits in productivity and efficiency. This is good news for the freight transport industry and for all those related businesses that depend on a supply of high quality maritime skills.”*

*Mr Crumlin welcomed the skills and training reforms that are part of the package and signalled the MUA’s ongoing commitment to labour reform to make the policy package work, stating:*

*“The proposed labour reforms will be challenging and will require patience and goodwill to be successful. However we believe they are attainable if there is investment in new modern ships, and training, adoption of a strong safety culture and if shipowners and operators are prepared to actively use the policy to secure long term contracts and bring stability to Australian shipping.”*

*While pointing out that there was very little detail in the announcement on how an international ships register might be implemented the union was looking forward to sitting down with the Government to work through the policy details.*

*“In our view it is critical that employment on international ships is regulated under Australian collective agreements, recognising international labour standards for foreign seafarers to ensure international competitiveness of ships attracted to the Australian international register. These vessels must be restricted from participating in the domestic trade,” he said.*

*“Nevertheless there is significant opportunity for regional seafarers from developing nations like Timor Leste, the Pacific Islands and PNG to be employed on international register ships as part of a regional development policy for the Pacific,” Mr Crumlin went on to say.*

The MUA sees the policy package dovetailing well with the National Ports Strategy and the National Freight Network Plan.

“Given Labor’s policy announcements on rail infrastructure improvements, its commitment to road transport reform and now shipping policy, Australia now has the framework for a truly nationally integrated freight transport plan that will deliver significant benefits to the nation,” MUA Deputy National Secretary Mick Doleman said.

“It will also attract foreign investment and signals to our trading competitors that we are fully prepared to compete along the entire supply chain as a trading nation.”

The only comment Abbott has made in relation to ships, vessels or boats is the turning back of vessels carrying asylum seekers.

For years, the Coalition policy has been to issue temporary protection visas. Now Captain Abbott wants to turn around vessels to whence they come. They have also championed guest labour working for cheap wages on the Australian coast via the decimation of single and continuous voyage permits, which are supposed to be issued in accordance with the Navigation Act.

“So it’s not okay to flee persecution, but it’s okay to work in Australia on third world wages.”

The MUA has been working feverously and have engaged a specialist in Occupational Health and Safety in order to establish appropriate National Stevedoring safety legislation. This work and waterfront safety will be at further risk should the Coalition be elected.

So members on Saturday, consider your future. Consider your families future. Further when casting your vote and if you have the opportunity to convince others via a conversation, do so.

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## QUEENSLAND HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES CONFERENCE

The number of workplace deaths, injuries and illnesses in Queensland is still far too high. We believe that having trained and informed HSRs operating in union-active workplaces is the best way to guarantee that workers come home safely from work.

Who should attend:

- Workplace Health and Safety representatives or delegates
- Union members interested in safe and healthier workplaces

Topics include:

- QCU agenda
- QHSQ agenda
- Industry specific workshops
- Workplace harassment
- Workers’ compensation

When:

- Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2010
- 9.00am – 4.00pm
- Level 2, 16 Peel Street, South Brisbane

Members interested in attending should register their interest directly with the Branch no later than Monday 6<sup>th</sup> October, so that the Branch can execute our approach to their representative Companies for time off to attend.

There is also a Port of Brisbane Safety initiative on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September, commencing at 12 noon, with an RSVP by Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> August. If interested to attend, phone 3258 4888 or email

[safetyone@portbris.com.au](mailto:safetyone@portbris.com.au).

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## THANKS TO MEMBERS

John Garrett expresses his thanks to Patrick’s Benevolent Fund members for assistance given and condolences extended in the recent passing of his father, Bill.

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