



Northern Territory Branch News

'Wharves & Waves'

Issue 2

October 2009

Authorised by NT Branch Secretary Andy Burford

Branch Report by Glen Williams

Welcome to the second edition of the NT Branch News "Wharves and Waves". During the period since the inaugural edition of the branch news and now we have seen a lot of activity and the enthusiasm of the members who have participated in this activity has been great to see.

September saw the first of the delegate training which was attended by 11 members from various workplaces and the reports back from those that attended were very positive. The delegates came away from the training with a work plan to increase union membership and raise awareness of the union in their workplaces. There will be a five day training course for experienced delegates held in December and at this stage the MUA have reserved five places on the course so anyone wishing to attend should contact the branch as soon as possible to reserve your place. There have been many requests for more basic delegate training and we will look to lock in some more of that training early in the New Year.

We have had two branch meetings of the membership over this period and they have both been very well attended with 35 – 40 members attending both meetings. At this stage we will look to have bi monthly meetings of the members to report back on the activities of the branch and also to have a social BBQ following the meeting so we can continue to build the unity and network amongst everyone with the next meeting to be held in late November. At the most recent meeting we had new Assistant National Secretary Warren Smith in attendance who will be taking national responsibility for the NT after the retirement of Rick Newlyn later this year. I would urge all those who have attended the meetings to encourage your fellow workers to come along and get involved in the branch.

A Branch committee meeting will be held in the coming weeks and agenda items will include delegates to the MUA Youth Conference, planning activities for White Ribbon Day, MUA Golf Day, the Christmas party, HSRs in the workplace plus more. The Branch Committee meetings are open to all members and if any of the committee cannot make it to the meeting could they please nominate a delegate to act as a proxy.

With Christmas fast approaching we will be having the MUA Christmas party at the Darwin Bowls Club this year. The event will be catered and beer, wine and soft drinks will be provided. We would encourage all members to come along with their partners and enjoy a great night out. As there is considerable expense associated with putting on the Christmas party we would like members to register their intentions of attending the party by putting your name on the list which will be sent out to all workplaces or by contacting Andy Burford or myself.

As many people would already know Assistant National Secretary Rick Newlyn will be retiring at the end of this year after over twenty years as an official with WWF and MUA. Rick has had National Office responsibility for the MUA in the Northern Territory for many years and has served the membership up here admirably and with great vigour as anyone who has been in an EBA meeting will attest. Members will have the chance to farewell Rick at a small function sometime later this year and a notice will go out when the date is confirmed. Also retiring this year is MUA Deputy National Secretary Jim Tannock who has spent most of his life either as a member or official of the union and we all wish Jim the very best in his retirement.

If anyone is not receiving this newsletter or any of the text messages that are sent out by the Branch could you please contact me and update your details.

West Atlas Disaster by Rowan Hayward

Offshore there has been a massive environmental disaster involving the West Atlas jack-up drill rig chartered by PTTEP of Thailand. On Friday 22nd of August the rig sprung a leak and began spewing gas and oil into the atmosphere and ocean. All 69 workers on the rig evacuated by lifeboat and were picked up by the Lady Audrey. They were then transferred to the Java Constructor and airlifted back to Darwin.

Once again Australian seafarers showed their professionalism and ability to work under pressure and in a dangerous situation with no injuries reported. Lady Audrey then towed the lifeboats back into Darwin and was instructed by the company to come into port under the cover of darkness to avoid media attention.

At the time of this newsletter going into print the rig is still leaking gas and oil, another rig, the West Triton is being towed down to location from Bataam Indonesia, once on site they hope to be able to drill a relief hole to take the pressure off West Atlas so they can cap it.



A.M.S.A. is sending planes to the site regularly and dumping large amounts of dispersant on the oil slick. What most people don't know is that dispersant used on oil spills at sea is actually worse than the effects of the oil itself. The way it works are the chemical bonds with the oil in effect making it heavier than the water and causing the oil and chemical to sink and the effect this can have is potentially devastating for coral reefs and underwater marine habitats as this is where the toxic substances invariably end up. Already tentative reports are starting to come back from fishermen who make their livelihoods by fishing these areas of sea creatures already dead from oil and chemicals being pulled up in their nets.

Also of concern is the proximity of several of Australia's important baseline scientific research stations at Ashmore and Scott reefs. These sensitive areas were chosen because of their isolation, to monitor the effects of climate change on coral reefs and tropical marine habitats. If we were to lose these fragile marine environments it would be a tragedy.

In the end Comrades these oil corporations need to be held accountable for the mistakes they make, they are probably thanking their lucky stars that where this all happened is out of sight out of mind to the general public therefore the media coverage is minimal. If an environmental disaster of this magnitude had of happened off the east coast it would be considered the worst maritime environmental disaster in Australia's history, as it is now it is being swept under the carpet, the companies may be fined large amounts of money to "clean up" this mess but you can't put a dollar value on the loss of not only these environments but also the livelihoods of Timorese and Australian fishermen, charter operators and everyone else that lives on or visits the Timor Sea and its surrounding coastlines.

MUA Picnic Day

The 2009 Picnic Day was a great success. The kids had an absolute ball with the water slides, face painting and tug of war activities. Contributions from Giacci, POAGS, Patrick, DPC, NT Shipping, the MUA Crew of the OMS Discovery and Cosimo Flora made the day possible.

Having had such a good attendance at Picnic Day we now look forward to having a good Christmas Party. This years Christmas Party will be focused on getting members and their partners together to celebrate an eventful year for the union in Darwin. We'll ensure to post the details as soon as they are finalised.



MUA Golf Day

The Organising Committee is looking for expressions of interest in holding an annual MUA Golf day at the Gardens Park Golf Links sometime in late November. It is intended that any money raised from the day would be split between a charity and the Branch to assist in paying for the delegates to attend the Youth Conference in Brisbane later this year.

A will be a notice put up in all smoko rooms for people to put their names on or you can register your interest in playing by calling Adam Grimshaw on 0418345580 or Zed on 0418848910.

Radioactive waste dump campaign welcomes MUA support

Since 2005 Aboriginal communities across the Northern Territory have been resisting federal government moves to impose a radioactive waste dump on their traditional lands.

Three potential Department of Defence sites were named by the Howard Government in 2005, without any consultation with affected communities or the NT Government. In 2007 a fourth site in the Muckaty Land Trust near Tennant Creek was proposed by the Northern Land Council, despite opposition from many Traditional Owners. The worst of the radioactive waste planned for any NT dump is spent fuel rods from the Lucas Heights reactor in Sydney, due back from overseas processing around the end of 2015. It is expected this would come through the Port of Darwin for road or rail transport to one of the proposed NT sites.

There is little benefit for Aboriginal communities in hosting a radioactive waste facility given the high environmental risk and limited job opportunities - only 30 jobs in short term construction and 6 security guards. The only dump site that would see financial compensation for the local Aboriginal community is Muckaty. Traditional Owners have been offered a package to fund roads, housing and education scholarships, things other Australians expect and receive as standard citizenship entitlements.

A series of truck and rail accidents over the last few years has increased concern about the risks of transporting radioactive materials thousands of kilometres to remote area. Recent incidents include a major cyanide spill, which closed the Stuart Highway for a week just outside of Muckaty Station.

The secretive site nomination process has been out of step with international support for genuine community consultation and consent in decisions about nuclear facilities. The UK Committee on Radioactive Waste Management report (June 2007) says, "There is growing recognition that it is ethically unacceptable to impose a radioactive waste facility on an unwilling community".

The Rudd government's continuation of Howard's dump plan also conflicts with ALP election commitments to repeal the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Act (the legislation forcing the dump on the NT) and to adopt an open, transparent and accountable approach to radioactive waste management. Traditional Owners from affected areas have travelled widely to raise awareness of their campaign and trade union support has been growing nationally.

In April 2009 Muckaty Traditional Owners spoke in Wollongong alongside Arthur Rorris from the South Coast Labour Council and MUA NSW Branch Secretary Garry Keane.

Garry Keane noted, "It's really a frightening situation that people aren't going to have a say about what's stuck there, buried in their own lands. We are not prepared to be the people who transport this back up to bury it in an area where the communities have no say, the Traditional Owners have no say whatsoever about this going in the ground. We need to say this is just not acceptable."

In June the ACTU National Congress unanimously agreed to support Traditional Owners and communities opposing the waste dump. The motion, put forward by Unions NT Secretary Matthew Gardiner, also pledged support for trade unionists refusing to cooperate with the dump plan.

The MUA could give important support to the targeted communities by adopting a clear position of non-cooperation with this undemocratic process. The active support and solidarity of trade unions will be crucial in holding the government to its commitments and avoiding a major environment and human rights abuse in the form of an imposed radioactive waste dump.

As Muckaty Traditional Owner Dianne Stokes has said “We have been writing letters to the government body signed by the traditional owners. We have been asking for someone to come and sit with us so that we can talk to them face to face. We want to keep talking about it and continue to fight it until we are listened to. The big capital N-O ”.

Written by Natalie Wasley
Beyond Nuclear Initiative Coordinator.
Contact: natwasley@alec.org.au, 0429 900 774

www.beyondnuclearinitiative.wordpress.com

NT MUA Branch Committee Contacts

Tugs;	Stephen Richardson	0412 840 651
Perkins Shipping;	Darren Forsythe	0419 866 750 barra61@hotmail.com
	John Wicks	0407 231 249 john.wicks@perkins.com.au
POAGS;	Warren Mahony	0439 309 818
	Heiko Schenck	0419 801183 sonia.heiko@bigpond.com.au
Patrick;	Thomas Mayor	0419 866 750 tomtom.mayor@gmail.com
	Patrick Edwards	0415 416 090 paddy.edwards@bigpond.com
DPC	John Houghton	0437 031 402 john.houghton@nt.gov.au
	Erica Seipel	0411 170 062 erica.seipel@nt.gov.au
Seafarers;	Rowan Hayward	0407 089 490 rowan.hayward@bigpond.com

MUA WEBSITE

The new website has recently been launched and can be found at www.mua.org.au
Check out the events and news from our union and sign up for e-newsletter.

NT Branch has its own page so if you have something that you would like put on your page contact your committee.

White Ribbon Day

The White Ribbon Foundation is a United Nations endorsed campaign that endeavours to raise the awareness of violence against women and the need for men to step forward and very clearly enunciate their opposition to such behaviour, and also commit to not allowing it to proliferate through ignorance or silence. The MUA is the biggest union supporter thus far of the White Ribbon Foundation and all MUA male officials and staff have signed the pledge to become ambassadors.

Deputy National Secretary Mick Doleman is on the National Leaders Group not only representing the MUA but also the ACTU and a number of our alliance union partners particularly the TUF Alliance members.

On White Ribbon Day 2008, with the assistance of the MUA Women's Liaison Officer Mich-Elle Myers and the Branches, the Union was able to raise the profile of this worthwhile event across the country with the support also of the employers and with the MUA White Ribbon flag denoting "not violent, not silent" flying from ships, tugs and offshore vessels around the country. This flag was also flown from a number of employers' office premises.

This year the campaign focus is on "men swear" to a pledge of never condoning violence against women:

I swear:

- *never to commit violence against women,*
- *never to excuse violence against women, and*
- *never to remain silent about violence against women*

This is my oath.

We have replicated this pledge on the MUA website and want to maximise the MUA membership endorsement of this pledge. We will then upload in bulk numbers onto the Foundation's website.

All members are encouraged to visit the website: www.whiteribbonfoundation.com.au and to "swear" on the web: www.mua.org.au and go to the link, or www.myoath.com.au.

Darwin Branch members are encouraged to identify activities around the 25th of November which the membership can be a part of and that can raise awareness for this very important and unfortunately necessary campaign to protect the rights and dignity of women worldwide.



INDUSTRIAL ROUNDS

Darwin Port Corporation

The JCC has met again recently and a range of issues have been discussed. One issue that is currently on the agenda is the Drug and Alcohol policy. The new D&A Policy will be developed with full consultation between the JCC and DPC management. To assist in the development of the policy and testing regime the MUA has asked that the JCC members are appropriately trained in drug and alcohol awareness so that they have the knowledge and understanding of the issue. The DPC has sourced the training and it will be discussed at the upcoming JCC meeting.

Health and Safety Representative Training has occurred for the elected HSR in the Maintenance Workgroup and at this stage this is the only Workgroup who has an elected and trained HSR who is now empowered under the NT Workplace Health and Safety Act. The Designated Workgroups at DPC consist of Engineering, Mooring Basin Operations, Pilot Boat, Cargo, Administration and Security. To have a HSR in each Workgroup there must be an election conducted then the training will be provided and that person will become a part of the HSR Committee. If you are interested in getting a HSR elected for your Workgroup contact the union and they will assist you to achieve this important new development in safety for all DPC workers.

Patrick Stevedores

The Day Worker issue has been submitted to Fair Work Australia. In the meantime members moved a resolution to work to rule until a satisfactory outcome has been achieved. It is important that we resolved this issue in our favour as we see this as the thin end of the wedge for the rest of the industry and we will not just stand by and see a reduction in wages and conditions on the Darwin waterfront.

There has been an issue on Rig Tenders where the manning has been left short at a total of 4. Andy Burford and Glen Williams met with Patrick management to address the issue. Patrick gave an undertaking to man these vessels fully and safely and if there are any further issues the union should be contacted immediately through your job delegates. Management will consult with the Union and the committee as early as possible if there is to be special dispensation for manning arrangements on a case by case basis.

P&O

Following on from the outcomes of the EBA, 7 new Guarantee Wage Earners (GWE's) have been made permanent from the existing casual pool of labour. This will provide more job security and stability at P&O for our members as the port show signs of continued growth in stevedoring activity. It is important that as the port expands and the more operators use the wharf area that we protect what is rightfully our stevedoring work.

The Consultative Committee has met with the company recently and resolved a few outstanding issues that have been dragging on since the implementation of the EBA. The next meeting will be held in the coming weeks and any member who has any issues that need to be dealt with or have any questions regarding the EBA etc. please contact any of your committee members.

Perkins Shipping by Mischell Hodgson

Most people would now be aware that Toll Holdings Pty Ltd has taken over 100% of Perkins Shipping. Employees have been told that the brand will not change and will still be known as Perkins. The executive director Mr Paul Toussaint-Jackson has resigned from his position as of from early September 2009.

Currently Perkins has been appointed two of Tolls managers, Mr Steve Brown and Mr Shaun Fraser who are relocating from our southern states and should be starting their new appointments by middle of October.

Toll's resources will be a big boost to Perkins Shipping and the future of the company looks bright. No major changes are forecast at this early stage, though there has been a murmur of a move over to Tolls land at East Arm however, nothing has been officially announced and it is not clear on a time frame when this will occur.

Being under Toll's umbrella should produce some change and certainly some exciting times for all Perkins Shipping, so the only thing that can be said at this stage is "watch this space".

Baker Hughes

EBA negotiations have been ongoing with Baker Hughes and the company continues to not bargain in good faith by refusing to shift on the issues that have been identified by the members as important and must have in their agreement. Twice now Baker Hughes has put the agreement out to vote only for it to be rejected unanimously both times. Following this most recent ballot the members and the union will consider what steps to take under the new Fair Work Australia legislation to assist us in reaching a suitable outcome to the negotiations for all involved.

ACTU Experienced Delegate Training

Following on from the recent basic delegate training provided by the Branch the MUA along with other unions in the NT are organising the course outlined below for more experienced delegates and workplace leaders. The course will be held from the 7th – 10th of December at the Unions NT Building in Wood Street Darwin.

If you think you fit that description and would like to attend any or all of the courses please contact Glen Williams on 0401271740 to register your interest. More basic delegate's course will be offered early in 2010.

Monday 7 th	Tuesday 8 th	Wednesday 9 th	Thursday 10 th	Friday 11 th
		Skills for Building Union Power: This module will focus on skills and tools for building union power in the workplace and beyond. (Bridging module)	P2: Campaigning Skills Participants will develop skills and knowledge around campaigning: from planning & strategising to building alliances and escalating actions. Participants will be asked to work through the program using a campaign that they are currently involved in.	

Maritime Super fund update

Fund review for the past financial year and a broad outlook for the future

Maritime Super's management team will be hosting seminars during October to provide a review of the Fund's performance over the last financial year and a broad investment market outlook.

Additionally, the affiliated financial planners will recap the recent budget changes and the new asset and income test limits.

This is a great opportunity for you to get an update on your Fund and to share your views and opinions with us.

Some of the topics we'll be covering are:

- ✔ Maritime Super's performance over the past financial year
- ✔ a recap of investment market events and movements
- ✔ recent superannuation news and legislative updates

Date

Thursday, 15 October 2009

Time

9.00am - 10.30am

Location

MUA Darwin
Forthill Wharf
Darwin

The seminar will conclude with a Q&A session - we look forward to seeing you there

Branch Committee Meeting

The next Branch Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday the 20th of October on Forthill Wharf at 4.00pm. All members are welcome to attend the Branch Committee meetings but are reminded that only the elected committee members can vote on resolutions etc at the meeting.

To all seafaring members can anyone interested in being on the committee please contact the branch to register your interest in being on the committee? At this stage we would like to have four seafarers on the committee to cover for the time away. Some initiatives we would like the seafaring members of the committee to consider are having regular meetings with the delegates from the rig tenders to build a network and share experiences so as to assist each other, share information on all issues affecting the industry and building an affective communications network between all the vessels working out of Darwin.

Mandorah Camping Ground

Most members would be unaware but the MUA own a beachfront acre block of land over at Mandorah.

There is a functioning shower and toilet along with a garage and covered common area. The land is available for members and their families to camp on and small donation is all that is required to access the block with all money raised going towards the refurbishment and improvement of the current facilities.

Anyone wishing to camp on the block should contact the Branch to arrange access.

Young Maritime Workers Conference '09

THE National YOUNG MARITIME WORKERS (YMW) Conference will be held in Brisbane this year on November 30 – 3 December the theme will be “**Know the Past, Own the Future**” and the newly formed National Young Maritime Workers Committee will have the carriage of the content. The committee will also facilitate the conference. If anyone has any ideas they would like to pass onto the committee they should contact their state representative. The Northern Territory Youth Representative is Patrick (Paddy) Edwards.

Delegates for the NT Branch to attend will be discussed at the upcoming Branch Committee meeting so any of you young members under 35 who are interested in attending should contact the Branch or you Branch Committee representative to register your interest in attending.

Contributions to this newsletter can be made by contacting:

Thomas Mayor 0419 815 842, Rowan Hayward 0407 089 490 or Glen Williams 0401 271 740

Andy Burford
Branch Secretary

Ph 0409 714 150

Glen Williams
NT Alliance Organiser

Email: glen.williams@mua.org.au Ph: 0401 271 740

Forthill Wharf
DARWIN NT 0801

PH: (08) 8981 6830

FAX: (08) 8981 1492

MUA – HERE TO STAY