

WA Rank & File Voice



TOUCH ONE - TOUCH ALL

Newspaper of the Maritime Union of Australia - Western Australian Branch Number 22 September 2011

Some big
wins for our
members
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Your thoughts
on Mermaid
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affect you?
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WA Branch on the march



The MUA WA Branch and its members, from all over the state, have had a busy few months getting their message through to those who need to listen.





HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH

Troy Buswell, State Minister for Transport and everything else, giving Chris Cain free advice on the record in parliament on etiquette in the workplace in relation to the MUA WA Branch Secretary's email to National POAGS manager Michael Sousa.

It is rumoured that next month, Mr Buswell intends to chair Parliamentary discussions on fidelity in marriage.

WA Branch, caring for its members and their families



Greg 'Bear' Brownlee
07/04/1971 – 09/01/2011

In memory: The Bear, left, as we remember him and, far left, a few year's ago with Leah.

As you all know, Greg passed away in Cape Town, South Africa, earlier this year.

It has taken me some time to find the courage to thank you, the MUA members, for your caring generosity to me and my family.

For in doing so, I have to acknowledge the fact that **The Bear** is no longer with us.

This is one of the last things I have to do.

The loss we feel as a family and to you, his comrades and friends, is indescribable.

The hole he has made in our hearts, as well as the loss of what Bear could have been in our futures, is something we also grieve for.

Firstly, I have to especially thank Christy Cain and the WA Branch, for not only the support he gave me, but also the assistance he and Will Tracey gave Greg as an MUA member and union delegate.

I want to thank 'The Old Boys' that always looked after him when working on the ferries and at the container terminal in Sydney.

He has been a member since he was 16 years old.

Greg took his duties very seriously and with vigour. His main aim was to help wherever he could and be part of the union family.

Bear was a man's man at work, but always had a heart.

At home, you would never find a more caring human being.

His saying was "My job is to provide and protect" and this is what he did... with gusto.

Understanding his dedication as a union delegate, I must thank from the bottom of my heart the delegates who encouraged and collected the unbelievable gift that made at least some things so much easier for me and the family he loved so much.

Thank you again... yours in solidarity.

Leah Ryan-Brownlee



Value of a young life

Comrades,

As you are all aware, my son Kyle had open heart surgery at the Royal Children Hospital in May this year.

Kyle's Surgery involved a prosthetic valve upgrade. Whilst in surgery they severed some nerve tissue that regulates the bottom part of his chambers to pump.

At the moment, his bottom chamber is not working properly by itself, so intern they have put a pace-maker in so this will assist his heart to pump at regular intervals.

Since leaving hospital, Kyle has had ongoing follow up's back in Melbourne that have indicated to us that he will need ongoing supervision by the medical team at the Royal Children's Hospital.

Due to the generosity of members' contributing from Rollings, members from the wharfs and individuals, I was able to be home to support my son and family during this difficult time.

Kyle is back at school, however the battle still continues.

On behalf of my family, I would like to thank each and every person that has helped us with your generous donations.

This helped us immensely whilst in Melbourne.

Thank you,
Kind regards

Ashley Fabics (7669)



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Publication details

This paper is yours, so send your letters, articles and photos for publication.

Please include your phone number (which will not be printed) and union number.

Contact the editor Brad Elborough by email on muawapaper@hotmail.com.

Contributions can also be left with the branch office. The articles in this publication represent the views of the author and are not necessarily those of the WA branch of the MUA.

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Esperance wharfies strike and win!

MEMBERS, I am sure details of this report will be included on Danny Cain's page... but I must say that when Will Tracey took over the Esperance port, our membership was at an all time low. There was very little organisation in the Port, and its management was good at playing the workforce off against each other.

It's an amazing story, of how the workers turned that port around to achieve better wages and conditions for all.

I intend to get a DVD together as an educational tool of how this Port and these workers organised this turn around. Will has taken Danny to every meeting and couldn't be happier with the progress.

Nothing, in the way of struggle, comes cheap and our members in this Port fought for everything they got, including taking around 10 days of protected strike action.

Well done to all involved... in unity and strength,

Anti-union Chevron rip off all maritime workers

Brothers and sisters, it would come as no surprise, I'm sure, that this anti-union, anti-Australian company, has decided to bring in foreign labour through its contractors, to take Australian Maritime Workers jobs.

Why? I suppose they think that if they do it here and get away with it, then their next plan will be to take all construction workers' jobs too.

Chevron put ads on TV stating how much it does in the way of training young Australian kids. Well on a \$60billion project, its record is disgusting.

It has NOT trained any young kids, nor given them any career path in the Maritime industry. Its view is to bring in foreign labour, and pay them inferior wages.

Its view is to smash the Trade Union Movement, especially the MUA.

Its view is to take all the resources from Australia and give nothing back.

It's amazing how some small Aussie employers come back and tell us what these ideologies are saying.

Well CHEVRON, you have started this blue... we will finish it!

One thing about the Australian public and the average Aussie, is they absolutely hate a company bringing in foreign labour at the expense of Australians' jobs.

Members, get to your monthly meeting to listen to a full and more detailed report.

Shame on you Chevron!

AMC wharfies build solid unionism

It's always good to go into a workplace and see the MUA flag flying. I have started to see this more and more in our branch and stickers on hardhats, posters on the walls of the sheds. It all adds to an organised workplace.

Down at the AMC, the MUA members take great pride in their union and we have just secured ongoing work for at least the next two years.

That has been achieved with no lost time injuries and our members being prepared to get out there and do the job.

They are paid well, they are well organised and, most of all, we have delivered productivity.

It's a pity Chevron doesn't adapt the same principles in other areas, instead of trying to reduce unions' involvement in the project.

If we had our way, we would sack some of the bludgers that it has working for it in management and then maybe, just maybe, it would be shown the error of its ways.

I don't suppose I will see that in my lifetime... you can only hope, ha!



IN UNITY: Dredging and tug members at the Port Hedland meeting

Well done to all the members there. You are doing a mighty job!

Always remember, these outfits are nothing without your labour.

Mermaid's members take STRIKE ACTION!

Members at Mermaid Marine in Karratha have been taking Protected Strike Action in pursuit of their claims during the bargaining process.

Like all companies, the same regurgitated verbal diarrhoea spews out of management's mouths. Like: 1 - "we can't afford it"; 2 - "we'll go broke"; 3 - "the union will sell you out"; 4 - "you will all lose your jobs".

I have done plenty of EBAs and the same shit dribbles out of the employer's mouth, time in time out.

Mermaid Marine is a public listed company and made \$35million dollars last year, on the backs of you workers.

The CEO is on \$1.2million per year and has thousands of shares in this company. The shares are around \$3.

The members are entitled to a decent and fair wage increase, and we will continue to support our members in their struggle.

We will not be intimidated by the Chevrons/Mermaids of this world, and the other multinational companies who are all involved up to their neck in this dispute.

We will continue to fight until we win. Once again, it would be good to see all sections of our industry showing support for our members in this struggle.

Hopefully this company will start bargaining in good faith and come to the table with a real offer.

The last one (4 per cent) was an insult to our intelligence.

I want to thank Doug Heath and all our members who are fighting a struggle in an area where workers have been stood over for years, whilst people like the Mermaids' management, continue to prosper.

Members, you are fighting for your rights to share in some of this profit.

I salute you all. Dare to struggle, dare to Win.

The battle continues to secure our work

Members, I cannot stress enough to you all - please get to your Stop Work Meeting on the last Tuesday of the month.

Seafarers, divers, port workers, wharfies, these meetings are set up to let you know what is happening in your sectors of our industry.

Whilst the meetings are full, we need to be bashing the union doors down, to listen to the full and informative reports from your officials.

Be there at 9am on the last Tuesday of the month.

Buswell slags me off in the Parliament

Members, I am sure you all would have read the article in the West Australian Newspaper regarding me being slagged off in the Parliament by the Transport Minister, Mr Troy "Sniff Sniff" Buswell.

For those that didn't see this article, it was all about me sending an email to the most anti-union stevedore company manager in this country.

I actually called him a little maggot, who I wouldn't piss on if he was on fire! ... a maggot that has no standing in our industry.

All I can say to that boss is "grow up. You are a pathetic little man, the union is here to stay and will be long after you have gone".

The company in question has had, in Fremantle alone, nearly a third of its workforce injured on the job, with several near misses, any of which could have ended in fatalities.

In the past three years we have had three fatalities on the wharf, that's three too many.

As for Mr Sniff Sniff, all I can say is, "those in glass houses, shouldn't throw stones. You would be best sticking to what you're good at, pulling bras and sniffing ladies seats".

A word of advice Mr Buswell, pick the phone up next time and get the other side of the story. I was supposed to have a one on one meeting with Troy, but I won't hold my breath waiting, or lose any sleep.

Regards in struggle.

Mermaid wharfies fight on

Members, as I headed up to the start of another major bout of Protected Industrial Action at the Mermaid Supply Base (10 days) I can report that the members are rock solid in their endeavours to obtain a fair outcome in this dispute.

This is not a normal EBA process whereby workers go for increases in wages and conditions.

This company has been literally robbing these workers of thousands of dollars each day.

What draws me to that conclusion is:

1. The workers are paying well above any worker in Australia for accommodation;
2. The workers are paying well above any worker in Australia for electricity;
3. The workers are paying at least 25 per cent more for food and groceries;
4. Married couples are having to share accommodation in Karratha just to get by;
5. Mermaid Marine made \$35,000,000 for its share holders and the company is worth around \$700,000,000. The CEO, Mr Jeff Webber, earns \$1.3million/year plus bonuses, plus thousands that is put into his superannuation.
6. Mr Jeff Webber also has thousands of shares in this company too... all made for him on the back of our members.

These members are locals in this booming town. They deserve to be treated fairly and this union will fight to the end to make sure that this group of workers are successful in this struggle.

Members, you will obviously see that we have had some major wins in this blue. Don't get too complacent, stay active and stay strong. It's not over yet.

To my officials, delegates and all the members, I am very proud of you all in this struggle.

Remember you are fighting for all workers in the Pilbara.

United In Struggle.



Year of the wharfie: further progress

Patrick Bulk and General

To say this agreement has taken too long is an understatement; the latest focus has been on the company's costings.

We spent a significant part of our last national meetings debunking their costings as Patrick was clearly seeking to misrepresent the quantum of our claims in order to run the negotiations for a political end.

Patrick has been used by Freehills and others just as they did in '98. You would think they'd have learned from their role in that ugly piece of industrial relations history.

Partial work bans have been in place since the beginning of April and are unifying the workforce more and more as every day passes. Alongside the political motivation, Patrick's strategy is clearly to delay the wage increase, but our members have maintained their resolve to get a decent outcome at this agreement - an agreement that rewards wharfies equally, regardless of the port they work in around the country; an agreement that ends the division and recognises a multi-skilled workforce; an agreement that has proper casual loading to put an end to the cancer that is casualisation; an agreement that is worth fighting for!

MUA Here to Stay!

Patrick Terminal

After the company put in an insulting offer to settle this agreement, members across the country unanimously endorsed protected action to further their claims.

We took a couple of 24hr stoppages and notified for further action when Patrick put an offer on the table to break the deadlock.

The national negotiating team again gathered in Sydney with the understanding that we would lock away the offer and resolve the outstanding matters.

Unfortunately, the company had a different view and talks stuttered. By the end of the two days of negotiating, the company had a clear understanding of what they need to agree to in order to reach agreement.

At the time of writing, we are waiting on the company's response to both Part A and Part B matters. Once the company has put their final position it will go to the members for approval or further action may occur if members feel the offer is unsatisfactory.

DP World

In the last edition, I reported that DP World seemed like they were genuinely trying to reach agreement. Since then, we have met on several occasions and they have taken a position to say 'no' to all matters until we "drop our claims to a reasonable number".

It amazes me how companies continue to try and run the agenda and tell us how



many claims we can have. Many claims are non cost and are a product of a lack of consultation and cooperation during the term of the last agreement.

Our members are not prepared to go another three years like that. We will continue to represent our members in their claims, as we are elected to do.

The company has put up a number of changes, including redundancies, as a result of losing a contract to Patrick.

They claim these are not EA matters, but we will work our way through these matters over the coming months.

We will have a full report back to members after the scheduled Part A meetings (September 6-8) and will be seeking endorsement on the way forward.

ABS

ABS operates in the ports of Albany, Kwinana and Geraldton and now Esperance. We had our first meeting in June articulating our claims and hearing the company complain how they are unreasonable.

If I recorded the opening salvo from every employer at EA time, they would be remarkably familiar. No employer comes in saying things are going great and we are prepared to share the spoils.

The second meeting in August was a bit more productive, with agreement in principle reached on a number of claims. We still need to shift the companies thinking on some of the major claims and plan to meet again mid September.

Mercantile

Mercantile had been operating in the port under a non union agreement, paying much less than unionised operators. Clearly this is something we will not cop and we went about organising the joint.

I spent a couple of days in Geraldton with Matt Elliot in the final stages of these negotiations. We now have an agreement in principle that will bring Mercantile

in line with the other players in the port and Matt is just finalising the drafting for endorsement.

The members have waited a long time for a union agreement to give them decent wages, conditions and protection. Their unity over the past months is to be commended.

Matt Elliot has shown his value to the MUA as an organiser yet again.

Well done to all involved.

CBH

The members at CBH have been solid in this EA campaign, led by a good delegate structure with Rhyse, Bernie, Val, Brett, Graeme and Dave all playing a role.

We reached agreement on the bulk of the claims, but the members were not satisfied with the archaic D&A policy that was urine based and had the ability to sack someone for their first mistake.

I met with CBH hierarchy to try and resolve the matter, but there was a view that our members didn't care about it.

That was tested at an EA vote with CBH management presenting their position and copping some serious flack before being asked to leave. A motion was put to reject the EA, which received 100 per cent support.

A second motion was put if the D&A clause was fixed the EA would be endorsed, again receiving 100 per cent support.

A further motion to go to protected action was 100 per cent endorsed. The matter was quickly resolved and an amended EA endorsed with 100 per cent support.

The key outcomes beside the D&A policy were: 2.5 year term backdated and backpaid to November 2010; 5 per cent increase on wages and allowances at 10 month intervals; 25 per cent casual loading above permanent composite hourly rate; overtime paid at 1.25 x composite rate (25 per cent increase); insourced AQIS duties and night-shift supervisor

duties with \$100 per shift allowance when upgraded, transition to retirement arrangements, LSL improved - 13 weeks after 10, 10, 7, 6, 5 years. Plus, the ability to take double leave at half pay, personal leave increased to 120hrs from 84hrs in line with 12 hour shifts with adjustment made to sick leave bank to reflect same, dispute resolution with status quo, sliding scale redundancy to maximum 78 weeks, agreed training matrix with automatic upgrades, delegates charter, paid union training, MUA stopwork meetings and heat agreement plus other matters resolved.

Congrats to the CBH members for sticking together to get a much deserved outcome for your agreement.

POAGS

While I haven't had much direct involvement in the national negotiations, as these are being handled by Will Tracey, I have had to deal with the ongoing issues, particularly in Fremantle.

The workload has increased dramatically and POAGS are struggling to deal with the manning requirements since they have lost many of their key skills and experience to other employers who value their workers.

POAGS have been operating an ad hoc training and recruitment regime while bringing in members from around the country to fill the gaps, much of the time putting people in positions they are not adequately trained for or familiar with.

Many EA breaches are occurring and management fail to address the problems. Safety remains a major concern despite management rhetoric.

It's not good enough and management have failed to address the concerns either at site level or through EA negotiations. Patience is wearing very thin, as is the one sided goodwill demonstrated by our members.

OMSA Tug and Barge

After months of copping reasons why OMSA would not hold a consultative meeting, we finally got the delos from almost all vessels to the table at OMS office on July 8.

A heap of longstanding issues were discussed, with commitments from OMS and OMSA to address the problems and improve living conditions across the Fleet.

OMSA have just secured a two-year extension to their contract, which means they have the longevity and capacity to settle these matters and promote a safe, comfortable and productive work environment.

OMS have agreed to a follow up meeting in October to keep on top of the issues. The delegates came out of the meeting with a positive outlook and it is now over to OMS to deliver on their commitments.



Fight from the front

This report sees your Branch in the middle of some key campaigns for various groups of members around the state.

These are campaigns of significance to key parts of our membership that will have consequences beyond those immediately involved in the actual disputes.

Stevedoring

Much has been said about the various stevedoring disputes in other parts of the paper. There has been a concerted campaign inside Patrick's Bulk and General to break the industrial grip Mick O'Leary has on any EBA outcomes there. A former official of this union, he has seamlessly gone to the other side, forcing you to wonder what he was really about all along.

We need to seriously question those who still speak fondly of his role inside this organisation. He had the audacity to question not getting life membership of this union and then was caught out attempting to put together a strategy around locking Patrick's wharves out in this round of negotiations.

It is clear he was no more than self serving, throughout his time at the MUA and any ex-official who can discuss candidly locking Patrick's workers out again is no friend of the MUA.

It does appear though that senior management inside Patrick's, at both the Terminals and the Bulk and General, have woken up to his well known shortcomings and are seeking to land acceptable outcomes for both parties. It is just a pity the amount of time that has been wasted letting him fuck things up so much.

We are waiting for Part A meetings to reconvene so we can move forward without the ego of this bloke preventing further delays to a much anticipated outcome.

Our Patrick's members have, to their credit, not allowed the dirtiest O'Leary tricks detract them from a decent outcome. Is it any wonder that the broader Geelong membership have disowned this shitman.

In WA alone, we have been to nine days of action and four months of work bans, as we simply try to move him from his irrational ideological stance.

The Mermaid Marine Supply Base members have been locked in a titanic tussle with that company over their EBA.

The key issue has been compensation for the unreasonable and highly inflated cost of living expenses in those towns unfortunate enough to be on the doorstep of the largest resources boom this country has ever seen.

These guys have done a mammoth job and spent 14 days on the grass fighting to make sure those who live in these Pilbara towns come out the other side of this boom having earned their share of the wealth.

This is as opposed to having it butchered through escalating cost of living pressures that have seen rents in these towns skyrocket to around \$2000 per week for a normal house.

Members are forced into share accommodation with their family and other families, just because rental and other living expenses are too high. We can't allow this boom to cause dysfunction and dislocation in those communities that are most affected by it. These members have done us all proud as they fight the good fight.

It looks as though we have broken through though and it is a credit to the delegates and members in Dampier and Karratha and especially our North West organiser Doug Heath.

He works tirelessly to ensure the success of campaigns that have so much influence on our members and the broader community up there. It must be remembered that in these North West industrial towns there is little gap between work and home life and members and delegates in the North West need to work hard to support Dougy in his current role for our great Union.



PICKET LINE: Protecting your working rights

We are also in the middle of the POAGS EBAs and negotiations at a national level have proved as hard as any negotiations to date.

With agreements in WA having expired in Bunbury, Fremantle, Dampier and Port Hedland, some 28 meetings at the National level have failed to secure the desired outcome. Things are looking increasingly hostile in these negotiations as well.

Port Authorities

The middle of this paper shows the gains from a great campaign down at Esperance to secure decent wages and conditions for our active membership there.

This was another campaign against an employer who had been through four CEOs in as many years. The management team down there would struggle to make your best B-Grade side and 14 days of strike action secured the best outcome at a WA Port Authority in many years.

The details are outlined in other reports, but there needs to be recognition again of the resolve of the membership and delegates who formed a negotiating committee that was driven mad at times by the dyslexic approach of the Esperance Port negotiators.

Special mention must go to Danny Cain, who took over the leadership of the industrial campaign whilst I took annual leave. It is not easy to walk into an industrial campaign that has already had many days of strike action and lead from the front as well as he did.

He showed he has got what it takes to lead workers in the hardest disputes whilst keeping a good eye on landing an outcome. Our membership should be proud to have picked up such a young, keen and committed trade unionist as Danny.

Men of his calibre are not easy to find and the future looks like it is in great hands.

We are also in the middle of negotiations at the Port of Broome. The committee has worked well to engage our membership and get them behind the new EBA campaign.

The agreement has not expired yet, but early signs are encouraging with a great deal of goodwill being shown by senior Port management so far in these negotiations.

The next paper will hopefully allow us to report an outcome that is positive.

The Fremantle Port is in the middle of negotiations around an agreement for our membership who work in the small craft and control tower areas of Fremantle Ports. We are currently going to ballot.

The Freo Ports refuse to put an offer that adequately reflects the worth of these members to the operation of the state's largest Port.

Unfortunately, it appears as though not having these guys at work for a couple of days may be the only way to get Port management to see just how valuable they are.

We are also kicking off campaigns for the Stevedores at KBT and the Inner and Outer Harbour workers. These are at the stage of developing the Log of Claims with a

view to kicking off meetings with the Port Authority in November.

The Inner and Outer Harbour members are seeking to build on the good ground made in the last EBA and the Stevedores have some ground to make up in comparison to all the other EBA outcomes through the rest of the Freo Port.

The current negotiations underway, with our control tower and small craft membership, lead me to believe that industrial action is the only way to get them to get serious about the process. Port management appears to have learnt little from the previous campaigns the MUA has run at the Port.

It also wouldn't hurt to get a functional HR team down there, but you can only dream.

Offshore

The biggest issue in the offshore is the attempts by AMMA (Australian Mines and Metals Association) to use construction jobs to introduce foreign labour to attempt to break our influence inside the industry.

There is currently a massive campaign underway, as we see the biggest threat to our offshore industry so far.

It is understandable that AMMA would continue its dim-witted ideological campaign in this industry, but what will be interesting is whether our largest offshore companies want their massive projects to be AMMA's industrial playground.

You would have to think that with AMMA's win-loss record so far, some of them may be a little hesitant at letting AMMA get control of their projects with another sure fire strategy ably put together by some of Australia's finest minds.

These are the guys who unbelievably introduced common law contracts on to the world's biggest construction job in the MUA area of coverage. AMMA now has most contractors considering what value they get for their money.

Mind you, with their mates down the road at CCI giving away two months free membership if you buy 12 months worth, touting for employer support during the world's largest resource boom appears to be a hard ask.

It's not hard to imagine where AMMA would be at if it didn't have the resource majors enforcing a No Ticket No Start policy for all the contractors in the industry.

General

And all this comes as we see the Federal Government's industrial police force go after various members of the Branch Executive.

The Fair Work Ombudsman currently has two separate charges pending against State Secretary Chris Cain and another two against myself, as Assistant Secretary, over a number of disputes involving the Branch officials doing no more than representing the interests of our membership.

Whilst legal complexities prevent us from saying too much about the separate charges - of concern are comments by Fair Work lawyers that there is more to come, given the industrial activity of the Branch.

We will continue to keep the membership posted of developments in this area.

It is important that members continue to support their Branch, delegates and officials in any way they can.

Attendance at monthly Stop Work meetings is a must for both the seafarers on the last Tuesday and the stevedores and port workers on the last Wednesday of each month.

These meetings allow members to hear where their Branch is going and what issues and campaigns will most influence their workplace, industry and working life for the short and long term.

Your Union, your industry, your future.



Wins on the board

At the time of writing this report, the MUA has come out of an Enterprise Bargaining Dispute with Mermaid Marine Australia with agreement for a wage increase (inclusive of paid meal breaks) that equates to a 27 per cent wage increase over three years.

Members have taken 20 days Protected Action (with the possibility of more to come) to break the back of a recalcitrant company. This is a company that clearly didn't want to share its massive profits gained from the blood, sweat and tears of the Dampier Supply Base wharfies.

Despite working in extreme heat and being subject to the highest living costs in the country, Pilbara wharfies have been among the lowest paid. Entry level rates of pay of just \$28 per hour just don't cut it in a resources boom. Prior to hitting the grass, members had been offered a four-year wage agreement with no wage increase. This is worse than anything the bosses tried on during the poisonous era of Howard's Work Choice legislation.

Last year, MMA made \$37million profits from their Dampier vessel and Supply Base operations. Its CEO earns about \$1.3million per year. In contrast, the current base rate earnings for wharfies at the Supply Base is about \$56,000.

Average rents are over \$1600 per week (\$80,000 per annum) in the Pilbara.

A unified and increasingly militant workforce showed unbending determination to break the poverty trap and took the fight to MMA to ensure they become part of the success story of the resources boom – not the cannon fodder of greedy, profit-driven corporations.

The irony of this dispute is that MMA is the principal maritime service provider for US multinational, Chevron. With annual profits of \$15billion, Chevron should be acting as a good corporate citizen and insist MMA pay its wharfies what they are worth.

Chevron is going to make billions of dollars from exploiting Australia's natural resources. It is only fair that workers engaged on Chevron related work get some benefit from the \$35billion Gorgon project and the upcoming Wheatstone project in Onslow.

This dispute has galvanised the Karratha community. Locals live in an environment where multinationals plunder our oil, gas and minerals and put very little back into the town. The same goes for Port Hedland.

Demountable classrooms are dumped in school yards as a substitute for proper classrooms, health services are basic (at best), public transport is non-existent and recreation for teenagers is something akin to what you would



SAFETY? Some dodgy Dutch scaffolding aboard the Rotterdam

find in a third world country. All this and workers cop low wages and high living costs.

I have nothing but admiration for the way our Mermaid Marine delegates, activists and rank and filers have stuck together in their fight for a good agreement. The support from the casuals, seafarers and POAG and Patrick wharfies has been rock solid. Twelve months ago, there were less than 30 per cent of MMA employees in the MUA. Workers have got themselves organised and have demonstrated an unbending unity in a common struggle. I'm proud to be organising such a committed union membership.

The support from our seafaring membership for the Mermaid wharfies has been second to none. This support came in the form of Rolling Funds, emails of support and the refusal to tolerate scab labour.

Thanks should also go to the Pilbara truckies and the Transport Workers Union who refused to cross the picket lines. There wasn't one contractor who wanted to become Pilbara pariahs by crossing our pickets. This support will be reciprocated when the truckies need our backing.

The MUA is still locked in negotiations with the company in respect to the conditions of employment of the wharf membership, which includes permanent jobs, fair rosters, proper dispute settlement procedures involving arbitration and a delegate's rights clause.

MMA's Human Resource management team has proven inept in their negotiations of these matters and things will need to turn around to prevent further Protected Action at the Supply Base. If MMA ran its business like it runs its HR management, it would be a loss making business.

The MUA has numerous concerns about Mermaid's vessel operations and its treatment of our seafaring membership. MMA currently employ 19 self sponsored TIRs. Rather than sponsoring

workers to go through college and pay their college fees or TIR wages, MMA have picked up workers who paid their own way through college and spent 13 weeks without an income.

It then placed them on vessels and paid them just \$680 per week (before tax). A large number of our TIR members have families to provide for – this is an almost impossible mission when they are put on a shit wage after being without any income for three months. Some of our TIR members have had to do work in lieu of IRs – and have still been paid at the TIR rate.

The MUA has also pushed to ensure Mermaid Marine employ more permanents. At present, 85 per cent of the MMA seafaring workforce are casual. In most other offshore companies, between 70 and 80 per cent of the workforce are permanent.

A large number of our IR's and cooks working for MMA have been engaged on a casual basis for years – some have been with the company for over 10 years and have never been offered permanency.

This is not a healthy work environment.

We are in dispute with MMA over some significant backpay claims and are in the process of taking MMA to the Federal Magistrates Court for backpayment of shorthand payments and PAB allowances that haven't been paid on Woodside's Pluto Project. This later claim is worth over \$1million and is grinding its way through the legal system.

Members working on a number of Mermaid Vessels on the Gorgon project are still waiting for their full backpayment for the Gorgon Allowance.

Every other Offshore company has paid members their full Gorgon Allowance for work on the Gorgon project. MMA owe our members employed on the Ranger about \$120,000 and inshore members on the Titan are yet to receive one cent – despite working on the Gorgon project for well over 12

months.

Safety on the Mermaid vessels has also been substandard. When the Toll Sandfly arrived in Dampier, members had identified over 120 safety breaches and/or vessel defects. It took over five weeks for Mermaid to get this vessel into a seaworthy state.

On the Mermaid Sentinel, Mermaid Marine took a bed bug infested vessel onto the Gorgon project – so much for Chevron's boast about not having non indigenous species (NIS) taken onto their project. When I raised my concerns about this with MMA, they claimed that bed bugs were not NIS and there were no breaches of Chevron's quarantine and environmental standards.

What a load of bullshit!

When MMA decided to fumigate one of its other vessels, the Mermaid Endeavour, to get rid of vermin, eight of our members were hospitalised, one lucky not to have been killed.

I was contacted by members prior to the fumigation with concerns about the directive given by MMA for crew to remain on the vessel whilst it was being sprayed.

Despite my clear advice for members to get off the vessel, the Vessel Superintendent directed the Master of the Vessel to remain on the vessel. Five minutes after spraying commenced, one deckhand had collapsed in his cabin and had to be rushed to hospital. He was advised by the doctor that he was lucky to be alive.

Despite his near death experience, the deckhand was sent back to the vessel to sleep, with no concern about his welfare or continued exposure to toxic chemicals.

Despite the near fatality, MMA repeated the chemical spraying two days later – again with crew on board. The Master, Mate and Chief Engineer, after more exposure to toxic chemicals, developed intense migraines, organ failure and the need to excrete and were rushed to hospital.

When the Master of the Vessel advised MMA management that he had been given a doctor's certificate declaring he was unfit for work, he was directed to go to a company doctor and threatened with repercussions if he didn't return to the vessel.

Three other deck crew who were then sent onto the Endeavour from another Mermaid Vessel also had to receive medical attention after exposure. This matter is being investigated by a number of Government regulatory authorities.

I am disgusted with Mermaid Marine's callous disregard for the welfare of our members.

Another company with substandard safety is Van Oord. The MUA has been in constant dispute with this company regarding them

engaging members in high risk work without them having the appropriate High Risk Ticket.

Further to this, the Dutch have been jumping in cranes, dogging and rigging loads and working in confined spaces in breach of the Occupational, Safety and Health Act, 1984 and their 457 Visa obligations.

They are also taking Australian jobs. In one of their more blatant breaches of safety, a Dutchy got into the crane on the Rotterdam (without having a ticket) and lowered one of his compatriots into a confined space (again without a ticket) whilst he hid inside a bulk bag.

So much for Rio Tinto's commitment to safety (Van Oord are working on a Rio Tinto project). At the same time, the Dutch had an unlimited amount of piss on board the vessel – Van Oord were bringing pallet loads of piss onto the Rotterdam right under Rio Tinto's nose. Rio supposedly has a tough policy about drugs and alcohol on the project, but it seems as though it is ok for a multinational Dutch dredging company to bring 120 cartons of beer onto the vessel each week.

With safety at rock bottom on many of the resource projects in the Pilbara, it is no wonder there have been so many workers killed this year. We have had four deaths in the first half of this year and countless serious injuries (one worker lost his legs on the FMG Project and a Total AMS worker lost a leg at Onslow).

There have been numerous workers suicide in construction camps and members killed travelling to work on dodgy Pilbara roads. MUA member Marilyn De Lina, who worked on the Mermaid Marine Supply Base, was tragically killed in one such traffic fatality.

I want to thank all of our wharf members at the Supply Base and the AMC in Henderson and all of our seafaring members on a number of vessels who put their fighting funds to supporting Marilyn's family.

This support shows why it is a privilege to be part of the MUA.

The MUA has raised numerous safety breaches perpetrated on BHP's RGP project in Port Hedland by Workboats Northern Australia and can't understand how this company gets chance after chance. A worker doesn't get another chance when an employer perpetrates industrial manslaughter.

Resource companies should start taking note of the legitimate safety concerns being raised by unions in the Pilbara, rather than focussing on profit at any cost.

Dare to struggle, dare to win.



New national laws for maritime safety

ON July 5, a public forum was held in Fremantle by AMSA where it rolled out the proposed changes to Maritime safety laws that will apply from 2013.

These laws will apply across all states under a National System.

If implemented as intended from 2013 the Australian Maritime Safety Authority will become the national regulator for commercial vessel safety in Australian waters. According to the blurb on AMSA website the regulator claims:

The benefits of the proposed National System will be:

- A simplification of maritime safety laws;
- The clear and consistent application of nationally agreed standards across the country;
- Making it easier for seafarers and their vessels to work and move through the nation without barriers;
- A uniform approach to safety requirements. (Source: www.amsa.gov.au)

The changes are overdue and should bring a degree of uniformity to safety, particularly in relation to the lack of response some members have observed when dealing with State Regulators such as Worksafe WA. AMSA's website proposes the changes in this manner:

From January 2013, the way commercial vessel safety in Australia is regulated and operated will change in three ways:

- A proposed Maritime Safety (National Law) Act will apply to operations of the domestic commercial vessel fleet;
- A National System for Commercial Vessel Safety (National System) will operate in all states and territories;
- The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) will become the National Regulator of the National System. (Source: www.amsa.gov.au)

It will be interesting to see how AMSA gears up for the changes given that when NOPSA was created all sorts of claims were made that all the red tape associated with safety on offshore facilities would be "simplified" and we all know what happened there.

The most apparent and visible benefit at this stage is that it will hopefully remove the ability for any government department, State or Federal, to claim it's not their jurisdiction.

More bed bugs

The lack of care and regard that Mermaid Marine Australia has demonstrated for the welfare of its employees has never become more apparent than the recent handling of a bedbug infestation on the Mermaid Sentinel.

In spite of their obvious knowledge of the severe infestation, the operational priority took precedence over the crews' health and comfort.

MMA CEO Mr Jeff Webber didn't appear concerned that these blood sucking creatures have access to our members' blood and made their life miserable. He and his vessel operations people repeat-



THE REAL BUG: Jeff Weber, CEO of Mermaid Marine?

edly failed to act when it was known that they were on the vessel.

If he thought he could get away with it, he might have given them a job in the IR or payroll section. The incompetents that he has surrounded himself with didn't give a damn either and in fact nearly killed crew members when they didn't allow them off while the vessel was being fumigated.

As people become more mobile around the globe, these pests have been able to reinfest many ships and workplaces including the homes of members who unwittingly take them home in their clothing and luggage. Responsible companies should make sure the vessels are thoroughly checked and vermin infestations are treated, but there is a severe lack of responsible companies in the offshore oil and gas industry in Australia.

Tips for members when joining vessels:

- Take a good look at mattresses, bed linen and pay particular attention to the seams and folds
- Look for molted skins, eggs, debris or bedbug faeces under the mattress. Any black brown dots smaller than a poppy seed on the bunk frame should be treated as suspect,
- If you find anything that looks like a bed bug, report it to the bridge and advise the MUA.
- Personal clothes and linen should be washed in water that exceeds 60 degrees and then put in the dryer for more than two hours.
- ALWAYS check your bags and clothes thoroughly, especially the linings and seams, when you get home.
- Always treat unknown bite marks as if they were bedbugs and set about finding the proof. The last thing you want is for the infestation to go to your home.

A number of members have already discovered them at their homes and how difficult it is to get rid of them.

In the meantime, we will remind companies like Mermaids that they should treat their employees in a much better way that they have in the past. Blood suckers.

The have and the hav nots

What is HAVS? Unfortunately a couple of IRs who are members of the WA Branch know too well what this is and how they got it, They also know they may never work again.

HAVS is a disease that has the potential

for long term incurable damage to the hand and arm, which can end a sufferer's maritime employment. It's been known about since the industrial revolution and comes about from ongoing and continued exposure to vibrating equipment such as needle guns, sanders, grinders, scabblers, drills and other vibrating hand tools.

Excessive exposure to these types of hand-held tools can result in various types of injuries. Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome can affect nerves, joints, muscles, blood vessels or connective tissues of the hand and forearm.

Signs to look for are:

- Tingling 'whiteness' or numbness in the fingers. This may not be noticeable at the end of a working day and in mild cases may affect only the tips of the fingers. As the condition becomes more severe, the whole finger down to the knuckles may become white. Feeling may also be lost.
- Fingers change colour. With continued exposure, the person may suffer periodic attacks in which the fingers change colour when exposed to the cold. Initially, the fingers rapidly become pale and feeling is lost. This phase is followed by an intense red flush (sometimes preceded by a dusky bluish phase) signalling the return of blood circulation to the fingers and is usually accompanied by uncomfortable throbbing.
- Loss of manual dexterity. In more severe forms, attacks may occur frequently in cold weather, not only at work, but during leisure activities, such as gardening, car washing or even watching outdoor sports and may last up to an hour causing considerable pain and loss of manual dexterity and reduced grip strength.

One of the best rules of thumb is that if your hand or fingers are numb after 10 minutes of using the tool, stop using it and ask that a risk assessment be carried out. Some of the cheaper needle guns are very prone to this and the risks to your future income and your career are too great to do nothing.

If you are doing those jobs the Mates like to dish out just to make sure you've got plenty to do, such as grinding, chipping and painting and you already have the symptoms described above, you need to call me.

AMSA medicals

It's been a few weeks since the change from the old system of AMSA medicals where members saw their own family doctors for the Certificate and now have to see a AMSA appointed doctor.

AMSA alleged as justification that it was not happy with the comfortable arrangements some seafarers had with family doctors, but failed to provide any proof that there was any abuse of that process.

There were a number of rumours going around, including one that a seafarer of an engineering persuasion was found to be legally blind in both eyes when undergoing a company medical despite the fact that he passed his own doctor's eye test. And another of a seafarer of the deck type being declared as morbidly obese with over a year to run.

AMSA should have consulted widely and come to a consensus arrangement instead of acting like unelected dictators and imposing a system on seafarers without true evidence of abuse and then engaged in a truly consultative process. Not that I don't mind their diligence, let's just see how they go enforcing safety and controlling the things that kill seafarers when they take jurisdictional control in 2013.

Officials from the MUA National Office attended a session with AMSA and sought clarification of some concerns raised by rank and file. One of the results of that meeting was to identify if any members had problems as a result of the change that a position was to be put before AMSA to try and resolve any teething problems. There were many scenarios put forward such as should a person living in one town have to travel to another town or city to do the medical and AMSA apparently indicated that in many cases the doctor will in all probability still be their own doctor.

All members who have difficulties with the new system are asked to contact their Branch office and outline what the problem is and what their experience was good or bad.

Comrades, I am writing for a couple of reasons.

The first is to say a massive thank you to the MUA and in particular Noel Nielsen, for all he did in settling a dispute I was involved in with a former employer. This company, South Sea Logistics, had refused to pay the 10 per cent redundancy at the end of a contract, which was operating under the propelled dredging EBA.

On my own, I didn't have the resources, legal or financial, to take this company on. With the help of Noel and the MUA's resources, we were able to have a win and I got the money I was entitled to.

The second reason I am writing is just to remind all the other members that no employee should get ripped off and just be content to cop it. If you think you're getting ripped, or you're not sure where you stand on something, talk to your delegate. Or if you're in a similar position to me, where it's a small company, and minimal employees, give one of the officials a call at the office.

Again, many thanks to Noel and the guys in the WA Branch office.

Jerrym Croft (9031131)



Tidewater causing ripples at sea

Tidewater Marine:

The latest report from our members suggests another vessel (Boudreaux Tide) has laid up, leaving two vessels remaining in its fleet.

TDW management can't tell us, as we believe their far too busy plotting to bring in foreign seafarers, whilst we've got hundreds of Aussie seafarers out of work.

No wonder all the long-term staff are abandoning the 'sinking' TDW ship.

Members have queried whether the two clowns will be going down with the sinking ship. It sounds like a case of the lunatics running the asylum.

Swires Pacific Offshore:

Swires have just brought three vessels into service, working out of Darwin, with another, the Pacific Barbarian, due to be in service by the end of August.

OMS:

OMS is reported to be bringing a drillship to the coast in August, which means support.

Samson Marine has several vessels in the pipeline.

Sapura 3000 is reported to be coming

onto coast again soon, which will also require support.

Total Marine Services:

Totals are bringing in some large project vessels - two were inspected - with one of them a heavy lift HEEREMA, the SSCV HERMOD crane barge built in 1978, which had just undergone a refurbish in Dubai and is heading down for the Gorgon project.

Mermaid Marine Australia:

Mermaids is also bringing down several vessels, two of which were recently inspected in Singapore - the DP Vessel Mermaid Leveque and Crest Odyssey 2, that will be used as a Floatel in the Scott Reef area.

Svitzer Offshore:

A consultive committee meeting between MUA consultive committee delegates and management is fast approaching to clarify some outstanding concerns.

Bluewater Conference:

The conference was planned for August 20-21 in Sydney, where the WA Branch

sent delegates and officials for this very important forum.

Perkins/Toll:

The vessel Kimberley Queen has been planned to be replaced by a larger, more adequate vessel. When and how, they're not sure. Hopefully if and when it evolves, it'll have quite a significant less amount of teething problems than the Queen.

I hope Management doesn't forget too quickly the frustrations faced and the amount of team efforts MUA members put in to make this job work.

Dredging:

Port Hedland's dredging program is set to resume in September.

Data Base:

Members are reminded to remove themselves from the database when currently working, or when unavailable for work. The system needs to be up to date to work efficiently.

Delegates Training Courses:

Comrades, if you put your name forward to do courses, attend, as your lack of commitment can stop other members from gaining course access.

This can waste officials' time and resources.

Income Protection:

Comrades, we are still seeing members getting caught out by non-work related illness and injury, sometimes being off work with no wages for months, or even years.

This is avoidable. Get covered with income Protection, either through the MUA Maritime Super (T: 1800 757 607) or arrange your own (if you can find a more suitable scheme).

Most of us will at sometime insure our cars, houses, contents and selves for health and when we travel, but without your income insured, you can lose the lot.

Wharves EBAs:

Members are champing at the bit to

square up with the 'Want all, take all, give nothing bosses'. Wharfies are a determined collective, who don't forget.

Comrades, having worked alongside many other unions over the past couple of years (and being a proud SUA/MUA member since 1974), it's certainly opened my eyes and reinforced my beliefs of how fortunate the members of the MUA are.

While the density of our membership is 100 per cent in most areas, some of our fellow unions don't enjoy half that amount.

This reality is evident with the solidarity in the MUA, from our capacity like no other, to organise with global and national involvement and run successful EBA campaigns with true Rank n File involvement - from MUA members Log of Claims, Ballots (with 100 per cent return), protected action, with successful collective outcomes, also not without mentioning the resources, legal costs, time and efforts of all involved.

Yes comrades, as the 99.99 per cent already know and appreciate, it's a unified approach.

Parasites or Bludgers? Unfortunately, it's the 0.1 per cent (no, not their IQ) that sadly don't know, or fail to give a fuck about anyone apart from themselves.

While they so often cry 'what about me?' (that's if they can find anyone silly enough to listen) they usually have a hard time trying to function normally as it's so mentally exhausted trying to justify to itself why it's unfinancial.

Comrades, ask yourselves when was the last time you saw them put their hand up to get involved, or in a committee, or be a delegate, or to make an effort to better the workplace for all?

More than likely they're too busy wearing the bosses arse as their hat. They don't mind coming to work though, and enjoying the present conditions etc... that have been hard fought for over the generations by the organised collective Rank n File.

But, enough about these grubs, Proud to be union, proud to be MUA.

Stay strong, MUA here to stay.
In unity

Attention MUA delegates and members

Having heard no response either by email or phone, the MUA has decided to reject the \$30 Hard Lay payment offered by Tidewater.

This stance has been taken as we want to ensure the noise issue is fixed immediately.

We do not want compensation for hearing loss or damage, especially if it is as low as \$30.

We believe that by accepting the \$30, it encourages Tidewater not to fix the problem, but to continue to operate a vessel with unsafe conditions.

The limit of four hours exposure per day before the payment kicked in was totally unacceptable.

We believe AIMPE accepted the offer, as it had no other avenue from a legal perspective. The MUA believe in preserving members hearing, not selling it out for \$30 after four hours of exposure.

We hope you support the decision the MUA made on your behalf and we will pursue Tidewater to ensure the noise issue is addressed immediately.

Allen Wattam

The Gym - the most fun workout you'll ever do

If you're feeling a little sluggish this winter, it's worthwhile visiting The Gym to get into great financial shape.

The Gym is an innovative online site which is exclusively available to Maritime Super members.

It has been designed to help you look at the 'big financial picture' (of which superannuation is an important, but not exclusive, component) in order to achieve financial fitness and, ultimately, a comfortable retirement.

Best of all, it's absolutely free of charge for Maritime Super members.

To visit The Gym, go to www.maritimesuper.com.au, click the link on the homepage and log in via MemberOnline.

Features of The Gym

Visit The Gym to access a wealth of interactive financial tools and information, such as:

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Can't hold us back

MUA official wins bargaining rights despite union front claims

15 June 2011 2:19pm

AN MUA official has won the right to be the bargaining representative for a group of oil and gas employees whose work is outside the union's coverage, with Fair Work Australia holding there was nothing in the Fair Work Act that prevented it.

The AMMA, representing Technip Oceania Pty Ltd, had argued that MUA WA branch assistant secretary Will Tracey was a "front" for the union. It maintained that appointing him to represent ROV (Remotely Operated [sub-sea] Vehicles Operators) - whose work is covered by the AMOU - was prohibited by s176(3), under which a union couldn't be a bargaining representative unless it was entitled to represent the employees in the work to be performed.

But Commissioner Danny Cloghan said that when an employee appointed "another person" as their bargaining representative under s176, the only precondition was that the appointment be in writing.

He continued that, subject to Regulation 2.06, "any person can literally be any person. Section 176(1) of the FW Act does not set what classes of persons are within or excluded from the ordinary meaning of 'person'" - which was "in my view, not a defect or omission in the FW Act, but illustrative of the fundamental parties to enterprise agreements".

He continued that: "Simply put, employees are at the heart of collective enterprise agreements. Further, they have a 'right' (s173(1) of the FW Act) to be represented by a bargaining representative. Further, employees can generally appoint whoever they wish as a bargaining

representative."

Commissioner Cloghan said that the dispute settlement provision in the current deal covering the employees in any case provided that the company or employee "may be represented by a person before the AIRC", while neither the Fair Work Act nor the model consultation term in the regulations contained exclusions or inclusions on who could be a representative.

On the s176(3) prohibition on appointing an employee organisation unless it was entitled to represent the employees, the AMMA argued that Tracey was a "front" for the MUA, with all communication from him bearing the union letterhead, logo, or his title, and his phone and contact details the same as the MUA's.

But Commissioner Cloghan said that Tracey was "between a 'rock and a hard place'" on this, and that if he didn't attempt to disguise his role as a MUA official, which he hadn't done, employers would assert he and the MUA were indistinguishable, whereas if he had it was "likely that the Employer will assert that he is engaging in subterfuge, and his actions disingenuous".

In summary, he said that: "the relevant employees have made an active choice to have Mr Tracey represent them. Having done so, Mr Tracey must present and act as an individual despite any negative inferences from the Employer. In this case, Mr Tracey's openness in a fairly small, specialised and close industry has for the Employer, led to a negative inference. Notwithstanding these circumstances and any allegations of subterfuge, Mr Tracey must take steps as a private individual to distance himself from his role as Assistant Branch Secretary of the MUA."

The AMMA in the hearing argued that Commissioner Bruce Williams in *Canning v Fremantle Port Authority* (see Related Article) had allowed Tracey to be a bargaining representative for a group of workers, but the decision could be distinguished. It went on to maintain that Deputy President Brendan McCarthy reached a "diametrically opposed conclusion" in *Mr Douglas Heath v Gravity Crane Services Pty Ltd*, but Commissioner Cloghan disagreed with the employer group's assessment, saying "clearly, McCarthy DP came to the conclusion that there is no prohibition in the FW Act preventing the appointment of a person from an employee organisation to be a bargaining representative for employees. However, for reasons associated with the particular application he was dealing with, he considered the appointment, in that case, unsuitable or inappropriate."

The latest decision by Commissioner Cloghan means all three WA commissioners have found that a union official can be appointed an individual bargaining representative.

Will Tracey on May 12 applied for s229 bargaining orders after AMMA wrote to him following his appointment as bargaining representative by a number of Technip's employees, saying it was not prepared to recognise him and that it was "clear that in purporting to act as a Bargaining Representative for Technip ROV employees you are doing so in your role as Assistant Branch Secretary of the MUA".

Workplace Express understands the AMOU had no members at Technip, and has an informal agreement with the MUA to represent ROV workers.

Divers left on the bottom

Diving – Gorgon Project – Barrow Island

MOST divers would have heard about the second-rate effort by the Australian Mines and Metals Association (AMMA) to reduce rates and conditions for divers on the initial stages of the Gorgon Project, in and around Barrow Island.

Up until this project started, all diving work associated with Barrow Island was paid at offshore rates, under the terms and conditions of employment of the MUA Diver's EBA.

When this project started, AMMA tried to cut terms and conditions by introducing a rate of \$840 per day on an onshore construction type agreement without the normal offshore relativities for supervisors etc, insurances, cyclone cover etc. They did this by what appeared to be stand-over tactics, saying no contractor would be able to work on the Island if they did anything other than go with AMMA rates and conditions.

Many divers, both on and off the project, fed the information on rates and conditions back to the MUA and we set about righting this situation as best we could given the complex set of circumstances.

We took the diving contractors to Fair Work where the Commissioner indicated, after submissions from AMMA, that the work could not properly come under the MUA Offshore Dive agreements.

The MUA put a position that if the work was then agreement free, it meant we were in a position to take protected action in support of proper wages and conditions on the job. This strategy by the MUA got the contractors back to the table discussing a proper agreement, free of AMMA's influence.

Through this strategy we were able to negotiate an agreement that was based on the MUA Offshore Dive agreement. We reinstated all the offshore relativities and conditions of employment.

The rate for the Gorgon onshore dive component was set at 90 per cent of the Offshore Rigs and Platforms rate with the workday 10 hours (approximately \$1,050 per day) and all overtime at around \$100 an hour.

This was an important win and AMMA's approach was all the more startling when you consider that they ran this strategy to reduce diver's rates and conditions less than six months after we landed the Offshore Dive agreements.

AMMA's conduct stands condemned and the widespread support from divers, both on and off the that project, ensured that the unique and complex strategy we ran delivered significant gains for divers in the initial stages of the biggest construction job in the world.

United we stand.



For advice and representation on a wide range of legal matters including:

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- Workers Compensation and Hearing Loss
- Work Place Injuries
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From north to south

DAMPIER



Dear Jeff Weber Managing director - Mermaids Marine

Jeff Weber, I'm writing to inform you that your company's un-Australian actions will be seen for what they are, no more than an hypocritical act of bastardry toward your loyal employees, whom have always believed that a fair day's work deserves an equally fair day's pay.

Sadly, the cost of living in the North-West, is as obscene as Mermaid Marine's style of Industrial Relations...

Common decency costs nothing Jeff.

The MUA is here to stay, so get use to it.

Bruce Doleman

Fair Go Jeff. How about looking after working men and women who don't have the luxury of earning \$1.3million a year...

All we are asking is for people to be able to work and live as normal humans. Is it so much too ask that a man and his family can enjoy such luxuries as a house (not shared), a bathroom (not shared) and a toilet (not shared).

This is 2011, Australia! We done not and will not have working men and women living in Third World conditions.

Check out a mirror mate. Look for your heart or soul; forget the bottom line and see your most important asset.

MUA, here to stay

MUA Christian members

Having worked with your marine crew when I lived in Karratha (and paid my own rent) and now with your stevedores loading out Gorgon stock and equipment, I want to offer my support for the claims for fair living conditions.

I know your marine crews receive rent assistance, so how can it be fair to withhold it from your wharfies?

Craig - MUA 921157

It breaks my heart to hear what's going on with your outfit there on the Mermaid wharf.

When is your type going to see that we the working class are the ones getting you your big contracts, like the Gorgon Project; everyday hard working Australians.

Your outfit started as a small company and we, the MUA seafarers and wharfies alike, helped to build it to what it is today. We worked your sub standard vessels. And this is the reward we get! Bullshit offers in one of the most unforgiving areas to work on Australia...

Does your family know that you're screwing the Aussie battler over, destroying the Australian dream for many workers? I don't know how you sleep at night.

Tommy Wilson - proud MUA member





WA branch delivers

ESPERANCE



EPSL set new benchmark for Port Authority EBAs

Danny Cain, organiser

After nine months of negotiations and a total of 14 days protected industrial action, the Esperance Port Authority agreement has been finalised.

The benefits of this agreement are as follows:

- Union membership increased to all but two employees;
- Wage increases of 6%, 6%, 7% over the three year term;
- Back payment to January 1, 2011;
- Immediate collapse in classification structures to provide a further 5% increase in base rate in first year;
- Second collapse in classification structure at 12 months mark to provide a further 3% increase in the base rate at the beginning of the second year of the agreement;
- Contractors clauses providing maximum job security so no redundancies can occur while contractors are working on site;
- Trade union rights clause;
- Clause committing Port to encourage Union membership;
- A trade allowance of \$18/day for all tradespersons;

- Redundancy of 4 weeks/year with no cap;
- Gym membership;
- Superannuation paid for all hours worked;
- Shift rates for entire shift if commence work outside spread of hours.

Although there are only eight listed above, there were approximately 30 claims won by the MUA Rank and File during this campaign.

This agreement is a reflection of what a group of employees who are militant members of a Rank and File union can achieve.

You only have to look at what the other government bodies have achieved in their EBA's for evidence.

This was Esperance's first taste of industrial action over an Enterprise Agreement and I was honoured to stand alongside the Rank and File, day and night, on the picket in a fight for better wages and conditions.

The Picket was covered 24 hours a day with the night shift coming in to relieve the Rank and File that had been manning up since the early morning.

It was also great to see family members coming down to

the picket line to show their support for their partners and enjoy some of the food put on offer.

On the ground, there was a great atmosphere and a strong feeling that we were going to have a win.

The 24 hour stoppages were having an effect on the Port and its customers, but it was voted that multiple 24 hour stoppages were required to get this agreement over the line.

After a total of 14 days industrial action, over 25 meetings and one *resigned* CEO, the agreement was finalised.

Massive thank you to delegate Dave Batchelor; without his efforts this agreement would not have been possible.

Also thanks to the negotiating committee Jason Shaw, Grant Bracken, Balesy, Horse and Bryce-o for outstanding contributions throughout the negotiating process.

Thanks to Pink Lake Butchers for supplying the meat for the picket.

Finally, thank you to the EPSL Rank and File - without your full support and militant attitude this agreement would not have got up.

MUA, here to Stay

In Unity



Comment on Mermaids



Hi Comrades

After 20 days of Protected Action, the MUA Rank and File broke the back of Mermaid Marine and secured agreement on key threshold issues as part of a new Enterprise Agreement. In an agreement reached between MMA and the MUA, the company has agreed to:

- Wage increases for members on fixed rosters of 27 per cent over the life of a three year Enterprise Agreement.
- A net increase (after tax) in the local living allowance of \$330 per week to a total net payment of \$745 per week (for most members).
- Superannuation to be paid on gross earnings with an additional 1 per cent increase in super in the first year.

Mermaid Marine has committed to having further negotiations with the MUA with a view to reaching agreement on a Dispute Resolution Procedure (with arbitration), Delegates Rights Clause and a Consultation and Change Clause.

We have also made it unambiguously clear that agreement needs to be reached on the Permanent/Casual ratio, contractors clause, Gorgon Allowance, call outs and other key aspects of the Union's Log of Claims.

I want to thank all members who have supported the Mermaid Marine wharfies during this dispute. The support provided by our Offshore membership in particular was critical to our success and demonstrates that militant collective action underpinned by a philosophy of "Touch One Touch All" will always defeat the industrial bastardry of the bosses.

The leadership of Chris Cain and the industrial strategy put in place by Will Tracey shows once again why we have the best branch of the best union in the country.

The actions of our activists and delegates working for Mermaid Marine in manning a 24/7 picket line and the support provided by our comrades from the Transport Workers Union, have been second to none.

This is a dispute which has not gone un-noticed in the Pilbara. Workers have seen how a disciplined and militant campaign has resulted in a great outcome for workers. This dispute has also made employers rethink the dumb strategy of being confrontational during Enterprise Bargaining negotiations.

Members voted to return to work – Protected Action was suspended for a period of four weeks to allow the company and the union to negotiate the other conditions of employment.

Once again, thanks to all members for the support during this dispute.

Dare to struggle, dare to win.

*Doug Heath
Pilbara Organiser - MUA*

A great win for the guys in Dampier's Mermaid Marine operation.

This is a classic case of the saying, 'Unity is strength'.

Congratulations to all our members in Dampier and well done ALL of the officials and organisers who put in some great, hard work to achieve this victory.

This win makes me so proud to be a member of this mighty union.

Good work Comrades.

TOUCH ONE-TOUCH ALL.

Phil Lawson

Comrades, congratulations on a splendid result. To all officials, Rank and File members, Chris you should put in for the Everton job, you're getting more wins than David Moyes.

In unity, on behalf of MUALads Stu Clarke, Delo.

CREW- Lady Caroline

Firstly, on behalf of the MUA members aboard OMS Endurance, we congratulate yourself (Doug Heath), the other MUA officials and the Rank and File membership at Dampier on your victorious

outcome with your dispute with Mermaid Marine.

The big task now will be keeping them to their word. We hope that this result will strengthen the resolve of the port membership and those that may not yet be members, and alert all the workers in that port and other ports to the fact that 'united we win'.

Yours in unity, Barry McDonald

Hi Comrade,

Thanks very much for your support here Barry and for the efforts and backing of the MUA Endurance membership.

There is no doubt the ongoing support from our Offshore membership was one of the critical factors contributing to our success against Mermaid Marine.

In Unity Doug Heath

G'day Doug

Congratulations to yourself, Chris Cain, Will Tracey, the MMA wharfies and all involved on a great victory over a company that prides itself on bastardry and intimidation.

Note: These letters of support were received by the MUA WA Branch at different stages of the Mermaid Marine negotiations.



**STAND TOGETHER:
On the picket line.**



Not only is it a win for the wharfies, but the whole industry and it all comes down to solidarity in our Rank and File and fellow unions that has formed this outcome.

Great work comrades

In Unity - Touch one, touch all

MUA Crew, Far Sword

You will have to get a bigger victory board.

Another great outcome.

Roscco McQueen and the crew of the Mermaid Voyager

Could you pass onto the comrades at Mermaid Marine our continuing support and what a great win this is for all workers who have the right to a decent wage.

In Unity

MUA Crew - Far Saracen

To all organisers

We want to congratulate you and show our appreciation to you all for the hard work and tireless hours that you all put into the EBA negotiations on behalf of the whole union membership.

A great result in the Dampier dispute.

Well done - touch one, touch all

Finnmarken crew

Chris

Congratulations comrade for an outstanding success with the struggle with Chevron/Mermaid and all this skank companies watching on the sidelines, hoping, no doubt, that the MUA solidarity would collapse.

Give my best wishes and hearty congratulations to Doug, Will and all at the Branch who have sustained the workers on the pickets and all comrades and ships that have rallied to the legitimate cause. Your sentiments express exactly what it was all about and make the success as sweet as it was.

As Paul Keating said when he won the unwinnable election way back: 'This is the sweetest success of all.'

Mike Barber - 6224

Comrades, well done for a fantastic win in the recent action MUA members undertook at Mermaid Marine, Dampier, in pursuit of a fair and just outcome covering their wages and conditions.

The biggest step working people can take is to withdraw their labour, a decision not taken lightly, but as we see time and again one that needs to happen in pursuit of decent wages and conditions when you have a recalcitrant employer who doesn't recognise or appreciate the value of their workforce.

To all the MUA members at Mermaid, congratulations on your struggle and great outcome, an example to all working class people on what can be achieved as a collective who stick together and are prepared to have a go.

Dare to struggle, dare to win.

If you don't fight, you lose, solidarity to all.

*Mark Brien, AWU Organiser
WA Branch*

On behalf of the seafarers, I would like to express the support I offer to the wharfies strike at Mermaids in Dampier.

The Maersk Seacher donated \$500 in support of this dispute and sat on the picket line with our comrades.

Donations from Rolling Funds from vessels and personal contributions is encouraged to show your support.

At a time like this we need to support each other and show that we will never be divided.

Touch one touch all

John Ryan - Delegate at Svitzer

Hi Comrade

We appreciate your time at the Walkabout and bringing us up to speed with what's happening in the North-West, especially with EBA negotiations and members' struggles with Mermaid Marine.

It was great to get all the delos together with you and talk. Anyway, just a quick Thank You, in unity

Postnik Crew



A chance to have your say on important issues

From: Ian Lamey (9004583)
To: All MUA members
Subject: YOUR Stop Work Meeting

Message:

Comrades

I write to you all out there, with the hope that the penny might drop with those that have been shy in attending the monthly Stop Work Meetings.

This address goes out to all around the Nations branches, in the hope that it be realised the high importance of getting along to your Stoppy.

The WA Branch consistently has a large contingent of regular attendees. But there are still large numbers not interested in getting down to the Union's rooms.

We know that everybody does not live on the doorstep, but the effort and necessary arrangements must be made to attend these meetings on the given dates at each month end (see this page).

Why should we all be making this effort?

I should not have to explain, but I will.

First, it is necessary and in our best interest to keep up with what is going on. We need our fingers on the pulse with what is fast becoming a changing industry, the Government the ship owners and bosses and the people that directly employ us are constantly moving the goal posts. We need to be acutely aware of what we are dealing with and be under no illusion. These people are not are friends.

We need to protect our livelihoods and the livelihoods of our families and of future generations to come. The only way to do that is to have up to date Knowledge, to have an active interest in our great union and to fully and genuinely participate in the correct manner whenever it allows it to be possible.

I am very concerned that as our membership numbers grow, as they must and will in the next year or so, that our strength will diminish.

We could, in fact, become smaller. We need all of you out there to stand up for your rights and your union principles. We need you all to do your bit in a genuine manner.

There is nothing to fear from the boss. Play your part in the workforce and apply yourself correctly and the union will take care of any problem outside of that.

We all know everything is not always black and white; there are variables, but the principle is there and it is simple.

We look in hope at our younger members; to step up to gain the knowledge and interest that it is going to take to build and strengthen and maintain our union.

Without the nurturing, the caretaking and the husbandry of the movement, we are all but lost.

I have seen the decline and breakdown of Maritime unions elsewhere in the world; the amalgamation of the UK Maritime Union from the NUS to the RMT (National Union of Seaman to the Rail Maritime and Transport Union, respectively) is one example.

The Maritime Union of Australia has always been extremely revered and highly regarded around the world for as long as I have been at sea, going back to the late 1970's. Huge stories still circulate the global oceans, tales of the union's triumphs and of its solidarity.

Let us not lose that esteem; let us not lose our unity and strength. It would be nothing short of a tragedy.

Comrades, I urge all of you to become more proactive, get to your Stoppys, get to the rallies, get along to whatever you can and take an Interest.

We all have busy lives and families, but the time must be made to become more actively involved. If any of you think you can run your own agendas, or your own race out there, for the sake of longevity, you would be wise to think again.

I would like to close on these last words - have some respect for what your officials and organisers are trying to do for you.

Without some form of recognition (ie: attendance and involvement) it's like a kick in the teeth to them. They're not in it for international acclaim; they're in it because it's in their blood.

Let it enter your blood and be part of you.

Dare to struggle, dare to win

In unity



Members, due to the limited hall space in the Union rooms, we have had to separate the Seafarers' monthly meeting from the Wharfies' and Port Workers' monthly meeting, to maximise the space and to have the ability to have more members in attendance.

*** Wharfies and Port Workers' Monthly Meetings will now be held on:
*the last Wednesday of each month, at midday.***

*** The Seafarers Monthly Meetings will continue to held on:
*the last Tuesday on each month, at 9am***

Be there to have your say in your union.

**Can ALL member please contact the WA Branch on
08 9335 0500 and confirm your current contact details:
Email, mobile phone number and postal address**



Report by Matthew Elliot, Organiser

Runs on the board, now watch them flow

DEFENCE Maritime Service (DMS) members have finally gone from a Howard legacy bullshit AWA back into a union collective environment.

It was a long and, at times, difficult struggle for our members - nearly two years to get here - but finally it arrived.

Over 95 per cent of the workforce voted yes of around 90 per cent - a great turnout and result.

For me, as my first agreement with the MUA, it was a real eye opener to how the three workers either work, or, at time, do not work together and this agreement was littered with bullshit politics and union bluing.

It was Western Australian members who united this process. Regardless of our union membership, DMS Western Australian workers united and dragged the country along.

It was the WA members who talked to members around the country and got them involved.

MUA members prepared a log of claims that became the national log and where protected action ballot was called again, it was WA members and workers whose actions became the national action.

Well done to our members and the workers here in WA. It truly was a display of "workers united will never be defeated".

By the time this is published, my second agreement will have been completed, for the security guards in Geraldton Ports. These poor bastards were on a \$22 flat hourly rate of pay for any work completed, on any hour of any day.

On top that, this was the casual rate, with no agreement in place.

Workers were just stuck between a rock



The members in Geraldton

and a hard place. After months of long and delayed negotiations, we went to the ballot for protected action and the following occurred:

* The employer opposed the ballot and wanted to argue the MUA's constitutional coverage of security guards. MUA lawyer Luke Edmonds won this, hands down, and it now secures our right to protect workers at the gate.

Then the employer agreed to the following conditions, without the ballot even occurring:

* \$30 per hour composite rate; all employees to be made full time; 5 per cent pay rise in 12 months; and any worked completed on either a closed port, or public holiday, attracted an additional day's leave.

This is a great win for these workers in Geraldton and well done to them for seeing it through. It was hard, but they stuck solid.

Now nothing comes or goes from the Port of Geraldton without an MUA hand involved.

I am currently in negotiations with Svitzer for a new agreement for the lines

and launch operations at the BP Petroleum site in Kwinana; Van Oord for their operations in Cockburn Sound; WA Shell Sands, Geraldton Port Authority, as well as Mercantile Stevedores in Geraldton.

I am sure with members as dedicated and solid as our MUA members, more good news is to come.

The MUA regional conference in Geraldton was held on August 8-9. This was an opportunity for members from all industries to attend a conference with the whole WA Branch state executive in attendance.

In addition to Chris Cain, Adrian Evans and Will Tracey speaking, safety expert and woman's committee official Noel Nielsen spoke, as did Kate Dempsey on MUA layering workers compensation, as well as Maritime Super and Members Equity bank.

Delegates from all over the port met on the 8th to discuss port issues and the status of what is going on.

This was a great event for regional WA MUA members to get involved in the running of their union and to hear from and meet your officials.



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ADRIAN Evans and Chris Cain address the first group of indigenous trainees through OMSA's pre employment program at Durack Institute in Geraldton. There are three trainees on the course through the MUA's social alliance with the Nollamara Football club and OMSA.



Report by Danny Cain, Organiser

Youth must stand tall

Comrades, a lot has happened in the maritime industry since the last edition of the Rank & File went to press.

I have been involved in many commission conferences, EBA negotiations, yard meetings and protected action over a couple of weeks.

All of the above have been valuable experiences. There are a number of EBAs currently under negotiation that I will report on when an outcome has been reached.

I'd like to speak about the younger members of the rank and file - the youth. Young members are vital

to ensuring both the MUA and the union movement have a strong future in our society.

Although our density of members is high in the majority of workplaces, there is a concern that the younger Rank and File members are not as active as they possibly could be.

I have been involved with the MUA as an organiser, but also as the youth organiser.

I urge all senior Rank and File members to encourage the youth of the MUA to become more active within their union and share their valuable knowledge.

If you are a youth member, you need to be attending the stop work meetings held on the last Tuesday and Wednesday of every month to hear what's going on within your union and have your say.

Don't hesitate to nominate yourselves to attend the delegate training conducted by the MUA and become delegates yourselves in your respective areas.

We have a strong youth membership, so let your voice be heard and have an impact.

The youth are the future of the MUA, stand up and be counted!

MUA, here to Stay

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Piracy adds to already dangerous conditions

THE ITF has been helping seafarers since 1896 and today represents the interests of seafarers worldwide, of who over 600,000 are members of ITF affiliated unions.

Piracy

62 seafarers have died in the past four years in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, through deliberate murder by pirates, suicide during the period of captivity, death from malnutrition and disease, death by drowning, or heart failure just after the hijacking. The ITF helps crews regardless of their nationality, or the flag of their ship.

More than 1000 seafarers were held hostage, often for months without proper nutrition, access to medical care, or contact with their families.

Seafarers are being subjected to increasing levels of violence at sea, including physical and psychological abuse - even torture - according to a new report.

The report, the human cost of Somali Piracy, published by the Oceans Beyond Piracy Project, which looks into achieving a long-term, sustainable solution to piracy, claims that in 2010, more than 4000 seafarers were attacked - some vessels and crew multiple times. It also outlines how 342 seafarers endured hours, or days, of persistent attacks while sheltering in ships' citadels or fortified safe rooms; pirates have reportedly fired rocket-propelled grenades at citadel doors at close range and used plastic explosives.

They even set fire to three ships while terrified crews huddled below decks.

Meanwhile, 516 seafarers were used as human shields in attacks on other vessels as the crewmembers of some captured ships are forced to continue to operate these ships as "mother ships" to capture others.

In addition, up to 21 of the 53 vessels reported to have been hijacked in 2010 claimed that as many as 488 seafarers suffered significant psychological or physical abuse. In the worst cases, torture was alleged.

Dipendra Rathore, a 22 year-old Indian deck cadet, was held hostage for eight months on board the Merida Marguerite. He is just one of the pirates' victims.

"At my age, you can still bear pain ... watching people twice my age being tortured, crying and begging for help is what really measured me. I felt so bad for them, but I could do nothing about it, except for praying ... and then came the time when I lost faith and stopped praying too."

Dipendra has found his faith again, and he is one of those who refuses to let these thugs win and is determined to go back to sea. Others may never recover from the psychological damage and will lose their livelihood rather than go back to sea.

Regina - "Lost at Sea"

The Regina visited Fremantle in November 2010. Over the Christmas period I was contacted by the crew stating "the mess-boy" had gone missing at sea.



We understand an investigation was held in Singapore with the Insurance Company.

The ship berthed in Bunbury and I had the opportunity to visit. Some of the crew alleged foul play, however no one could definitely prove what actually happened.

I videoed the crew (with the masters approval). The intent was not to direct any blame at any persons, but to highlight the concerns of seafarers and investigations.

Unfortunately, another seafarer went missing at sea on the "Yayoi Express" last month (June) off the WA Coast (NW off Exmouth) and a complex search was conducted by the Australian Authorities. he was never found.

Eco prosperity

The Seafarers on the "Eco Prosperity" first visited the port of Geraldton and delegates got wind of some complaints from the crew.

The Ship sailed to Townsville and Graham Bragg (ITF inspector) visited the ship. The crew alleged low wages and conditions. Three crew members refused to return to the ship.

Fortunately, the seafarers would have been subject to Australian immigration laws and would have been sent home.

An agreement was reached with the Malaysian owners; the crew would return to the ship, we would address all issues in Geraldton.

The ITF met with the ships charterers in Melbourne and went to Geraldton to meet on the ship on arrival. Management flew from Malaysia and meetings were arranged in Geraldton.

Agreement was reached:

1. ITF approved fleet agreement for their vessels.
2. Crew members repatriated home at company expense.
3. Crew paid all pay entitlements.
4. ITF indemnity letters signed for each of the crew.

Thanks to all involved. These foreign owners know that Geraldton isn't a port where they can escape the ITF/MUA.

Merkur Sky

The "Merkur Sky" was first subject to safety issues and concerns from the stevedore's members in Fremantle.

During a routine ITF inspection, the Master informed the ITF the ship's owner had a policy that doesn't allow the ITF to have any information about the conditions

of employment for their crews.

"We have no ITF agreement and the crew is very happy," he said. "Our company has been trading around the world for 180 years and weren't about to change anything."

In other words, go and get stuffed! Mistake number 1!

The crews were reluctant to talk, however we were aware something was wrong when we received conflicting messages. When we approached some of the crew they knew others were watching and they couldn't speak.

We knew the vessel had three Australian ports to visit and we gave the crew the ITF information and contacts.

When the vessel sailed to Melbourne, we were contacted by the crew stating they had been stood over by the Master and told to sign a document stating no assistance is required from the ITF.

Mistake number 2!

The ITF had put the vessel in dispute after receiving reports of physical abuse to the Filipino and Burmese crew.

When the vessel arrived in Melbourne, Mat Purcell (ITF inspector) and Kevin Bracken (MUA Victorian branch official) approached the Master. They were told they were not welcome on board and were handed the letter signed by the crew.

Mistake number 3!

The MUA members (Dockers) refused to work the ship until they were satisfied the crew were being looked after. Australian ITF coordinator Dean Summers called for the Cypriot based management company Bernard Schulte to settle the dispute.

As a direct result of the ITF/MUA action, this ship is now industrially and socially covered by a fair workplace agreement and the crew protected from intimidation and exploitation.

Vemmin is a German shipping company and now have taken to their first ITF agreement and the benefits of a collaboration approach to seafarers working and living conditions.

The MLC 2006 is some 12 months away of being implemented; the ITF Australian inspectorate sent a clear message to all ship owners, that we won't tolerate seafarer's rights being abused.

Kerveros

This vessel was subject to investigation after crew complaints of double book keeping.

Problems arose whether or not the agreement had been terminated or still current. The ITF claimed the agreement is still valid and typical. Evidence showed the ratings had their salaries and contracts cut to a lower wage scale.

The crews were intimidated and too frightened to take any action. The vessel was berthed in Bunbury at Alcoa No 4 berth. After some long intense discussions with the company, they agreed to further discussions with the ITF and Swedish Transport Workers Union.

Many thanks to our ITF contacts in Bunbury; Tom Zappa, Tim and Mick.

As a result of this issue, meetings have taken place in Perth with Alcoa senior management in shipping. The ITF and Alcoa are now working closer to make sure vessels trading out of the ports have ITF approved agreements and ship owner's obligations are being monitored.

Other ships of interest

A number of ships have been subject to back pay claims and entitlements under Fair Work Australia legislation and CBA entitlements in Fremantle. MSC Scotland (\$100,000) was negotiated by ITF inspector Mat Purcell (Melb), Kota Lumayan (\$34,000), Bunga Pelangi Dua (\$32,000).

Thor Galaxy

We were contacted and advised the 'Thor Galaxy' was en route to Fremantle and a seafarer was very ill. Authorities and agents made arrangements for the crew member to be taken off by helicopter, but unfortunately he passed away before the helicopter could get out to the ship.

Australian authorities visited the vessel on arrival and an investigation was held.

The Family of the deceased was advised and appropriate arrangements are being made for his death benefit to be made to his family.

A number of ships trading around the world don't have ITF approved agreements, no death benefits and a lot of seafarers don't understand this.

The ITF continue to get this message out to them to make sure their contracts have application to ITF approved agreements.

MSC Sienna

Another vessel visiting Fremantle and no ITF approved agreement. The crews were very happy to see the ITF on board to take up their concerns.

The Master wasn't very helpful and refused the ITF to talk to the crew. He asked crew to leave the mess room and requested the ITF to leave.

(Let's just say some colourful debate and negotiations happened in the mess room.)

We spoke to the crew and made contact with the company. They have agreed to enter into negotiations with the ITF for a fleet agreement.

We were contacted by the cook (alleged dismissal) after the ship sailed. ITF Singapore is going to visit the ship on arrival in Singapore.

Merchant Navy Memorial

The MUA kindly donated funds for a plaque, in recognition to the Merchant Navy seafarers whom lost their lives during the bombings in Darwin during WW2. The plaque was blessed in official ceremony by Pastor Dennis Claughton. A number of MUA retired members and families attended the service. The plaque is located at Memorial Hill - Fremantle.



Tax will protect jobs

Your questions on the carbon tax answered

1) Why do we need a price on carbon pollution?

Our climate is changing as a result of significantly increased greenhouse gas emissions.

Carbon emissions from industry are one of the main contributors.

To date, industries have had no incentive to reduce their emissions. Putting a price on carbon pollution creates an incentive for companies to invest in cleaner technology and production processes. A carbon price will also make renewable energy cheaper.

Unions believe that the greatest long-term threat to workers would be to ignore climate science and refuse to act.

The carbon price package is an important step forward, finally laying the foundations for addressing climate change.

2) How will a price on pollution work?

The carbon price will only affect 500 of Australia's largest companies.

From the middle of next year, these companies will have to pay \$23 for each tonne of carbon pollution they emit. There are further moderate price rises until 2015, when a full emissions trading scheme starts and the market will largely determine the price of carbon pollution.

The price will encourage polluters to change

their operations and consider alternatives that consume less energy and have less impact on the environment.

All of the money raised by the carbon price will support households, workers and industries in the move to a low pollution economy.

3) What will it cost me?

The carbon price will only be paid by 500 big companies - it does not apply directly to individuals, households or small businesses.

Some costs will be passed on to consumers at an average of \$9.90 a week. This is equivalent to a 0.7 per cent inflation increase (the GST increase was 2.5 per cent).

That's why the package includes household assistance to minimise impacts on workers and their families. Nine out of 10 households will receive compensation. For two of three households, this assistance will cover the entire average price impact.

Electricity and gas prices will increase as a result of the carbon price, but unlike Colin Barnett's electricity increases, the increase will be low and households will be compensated by tax cuts and an increase in the pension.

4) Will it cost jobs?

It was crucial that the carbon price pack-

age included protection of jobs in emissions intensive industries.

Heavy industries must be helped through the adjustment period for the carbon price.

Unions successfully argued for assistance for industries such as steel, aluminium, cement and zinc manufacturing to remain viable thus securing thousands of Australian jobs.

This financial assistance will ensure industries remain competitive while providing incentives to invest in clean energy technologies.

5) What good will it do?

The carbon price package provides:

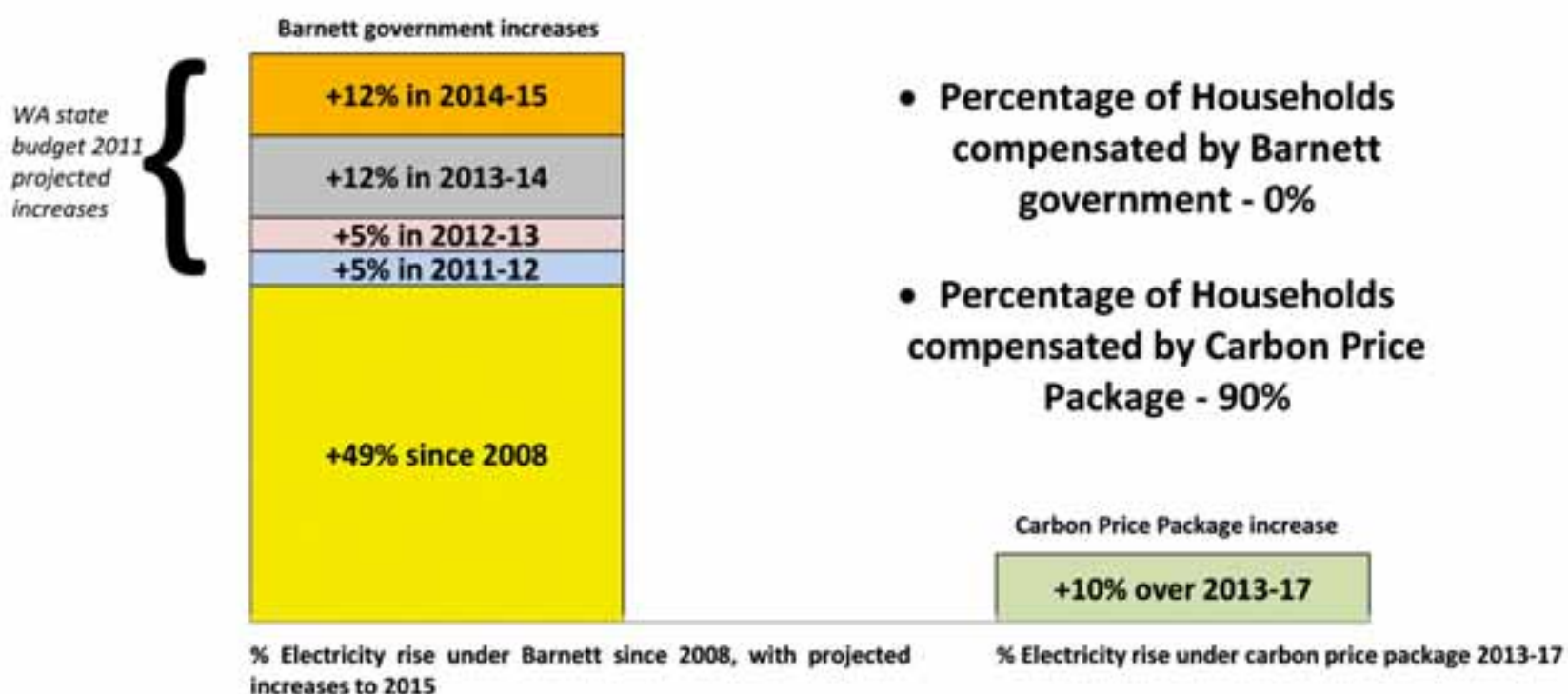
- Fair compensation for the majority of households meeting new costs;
- Job protection in trade exposed and emissions intensive industries;
- Investment in clean energy technology, innovation and new greener jobs;
- A clear path to reduce our emissions by 80% by 2050.

Climate scientists have told us we need to cut our carbon emissions significantly in order to avoid dangerous levels of climate change.

Other countries are already moving to cut their emissions.

Delay will only damage Australia's future economy and environment.

Electricity Price increases compared – under Barnett government and under the Carbon Price Package (percentage points)



Sources: ABS 6401.0 - Consumer Price Index, Australia, Mar 2011; WA government, Budget Paper No.3: 2011-12 Economic and Fiscal Outlook; Australian government, Strong Growth, Low Pollution: Modelling a Carbon Price, 2011.

FROM THE MEMBERS



The WA Branch has the best reputation over here for being militant and taking no shit from ANYONE.

Fuckin gold!

Mark Vigona, Gladstone

If only more members would go to stop work meetings and listen to what is actually happening in our industry with the maggots such as Tidewater, Woodside, Chevron, OMS and other companies... and the struggle in front of us with the foreign crews wanting in. Then maybe they will understand the importance the Rolling Fund will play.

You will also find that these are the ones that will jump up and down and whinge and bitch that enough is not being done.

Please pass on to the members about how important stop work meetings are for us all.

The union and Allan Wattam are the inspiration here, I am just doing my bit for my fellow members and for the future of the industry, for my son to be able to enjoy the wages, conditions, and safe environment when he grows up that our fathers have fought for.

Yours in unity

Darren Guy - Pacific Vigour

Comrade, your e-mail is FUCKING spot on and we will address the Rolling Fund increase at our next meeting.

I have just joined this vessel and read the minutes and the Rolling Fund was \$20, but for some reason the last swing voted to reduce this back to \$10.

It will be sorted, this swing. Love your work fellow member, you should be on more money.

Yours in unity

John Lee (5019045) - Delo on Vigour

As a Rank and File elected member of the Tidewater Consultative Committee, I applaud this decision to put the health of our members first - before any financial gain.

For too long this company has tried to have our member's work in sub-standard vessels.

No amount of money will compensate for a worker's health being neglected.

In unity

Alan Smith

I am writing in regards to my life membership.

I retired from the workforce and we are living on an allocated pension from the Maritime Super, but I am not retired from the union.

I first joined the Maritime Workers Union in 1969 at Cape Cuvier; Paddy Troy was secretary and he was a legend - a great man.

I later went offshore when Terry Rawlings was SUA secretary, then at Terry's request went back to Cape Cuvier until amalgamation and the formation on the MUA in 1987.

It has then been a long journey and times and conditions were very hard in the old days, but it has been a pleasure to have been actively involved in getting to where we are today.

The principles, mateship, selflessness and dedication of our members and officials over the years has been a privilege to be involved in. Kind regards,

Les Turner - Touch one, touch all.

I am to start work with Van Oord in Mackay on the August 25.

Thank you for all your help while I've worked in the West. Someone has always gotten back to me when I've asked for advice.

I hope I've contributed for my part in some way to strengthen our union and workers' stance. I'm told the project will run until the year's end, but who knows? I may be back West sooner than later.

In Unity

Garry Palmer

'Give the MUA Rank and File a voice!'

Comrades, that was the banner raised a few elections ago and as history has shown, it swept to power. With this 'Rank and File' ticket the responsibility of the members themselves must come.

We have been working closely with Comrade Allen Wattam (WA Branch Organiser) since the last Offshore EBA was in the infant stages and it is well into its third year of running.

This bloke never stops... never complains and gives his all for the members.

As all officials, he has many areas he needs to cover in both Seagoing and Stevedoring issues. They are all under the pump each day, quite often late into nights and most weekends.

Most have families, but willingly give up their time when called upon and give real meaning to the word *solidarity*.

Those who call upon them, from whatever section of our union, always seem to believe that their issues are most important and need fixing immediately.

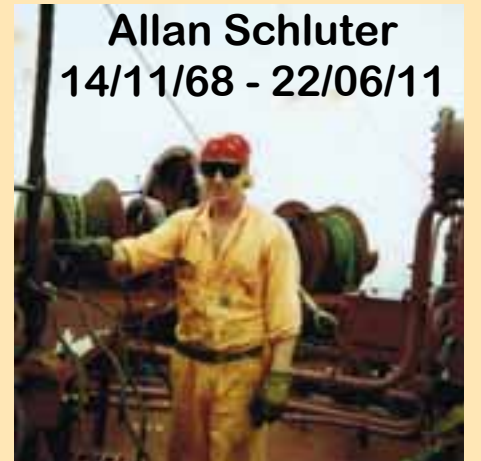
The signatories of this article cannot speak for the stevedoring members, as we are seafar-

Comrades, it's with saddened thoughts that I inform you Allan Schluter, our boson from the Taurus II with Boskalis, lost his fight with cancer this morning (22/06/11).

Al was an MUA member of over 20 years with the Brisbane branch.

Words can't describe how much of a top bloke and mentor he was with all crew throughout his career in the industry.

He not only pushed the union movement to new and old members, but took a lot of the youth under his wing and, through his experience of a life at sea, passed on many skills and attributes to



**Allan Schluter
14/11/68 - 22/06/11**

all. The MUA lost a very good member today and he will be sadly missed.

Deepest sympathies to Allan's family and friends.

ers, but there are many similarities.

Help stop the burnout of dedicated officials.

The winning of your voice requires members to take over basic roles on board the vessels. You have all signed an Oath of Fealty to this union (check it out, it's in your book) the day you joined up.

Emailing or phoning officials for basic problems, like stores issues, wages not paid properly, maybe a PAB payment warranted, are all issues that should be first approached by the MUA delegate on board with a claim to the company in question first.

Sure, there are a few out there who don't want to get involved, would rather sail without an elected delegate, HSR etc; won't even take the minutes at a shipboard meeting, organising private little deals for themselves with companies and are quite happily sitting back taking the previously won 37 per cent pay rise, hard won by the officials and elected negotiating delegates with solid action by the members of vessels taken to ensure the fruition of the claims.

Well, for those who fit the above description, we have bad news for you. The companies don't think you're nice blokes, but will use you up till they don't want you anymore. Yep, all of a sudden, you'll be just another number.

Comrades, we urge ALL seafarers to become familiar with your EBA in its entirety. Take an active role in HSR issues and ensure a rep is elected on each swing. Don't leave a wharf without an elected delegate on each swing and STOP WAITING FOR A MAGIC BLOODY WAND to be waved by the often same people. YOU GOT YOUR VOICE, USE IT!

In Unity

MUA/Tidewater consultative committee delegates, Alan Smith and John Lawrence

I was invited to a recent WA Labor Shadow Cabinet meeting in Southern River by Hon Kate Doust MLC - Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council; Shadow Minister for Energy; Science and Innovation Member for South Metropolitan Region - to discuss the massive increases in the power and water bills, along with local issues in the Gosnells/Canning shires.

Families and pensioners are now paying \$1073 a year on household bills and expenses while Colin Barnett continues to waste our money and spend recklessly, including a new obscene \$27million office for himself, plus a further \$100million on Parliament offices.

Yet the Liberal government tells us they do not have the funds to build infrastructure or increase public transport services.

Further reckless projects are Riverside Dr, which will virtually cut off the Eastern Southern suburbs to the Northern Suburbs. Add to

this the cost of the new stadium at Burswood Peninsular, which they are already talking of the current indicative cost of approximately \$700million, excluding costs associated with upgrades to transport infrastructure,

Of course, the total cost will be determined after the design process has been completed, which is bound to go up. This is your money they are spending.

Have your say and get involved.

Mick Delaney (6003112)

Comrades, sometimes on reflection things become more evident than how they had first appeared.

I would like to take the opportunity not only to apologise for my recent, perhaps hastily, chosen words, but also to congratulate both Will Tracey and Chris Cain for the outstanding work they have done in resolving the issues with both Far Saracen and Far Shogun and the resulting additional manning achieved.

Well done guys and on behalf of all MUA on board, thanks very much.

In Unity,

Carl Allan

I have just completed the three day advanced delegates course organised by the Fremantle Branch of the MUA.

It was an ACTU course run at the union rooms, with six other delegates from within the industry - seagoing and stevedoring.

As someone who has been in the industry for over 30yrs, I found the course informative and well structured. Over three days, it was explained to us the importance of workplace networking, strategies, problem solving, tactics, consultation and dispute procedures... just to name a few.

A subject also touched on was the role of mentor, meaning older blokes like myself needing to pass on experiences and necessary knowledge to involve and educate the younger members coming through the industry who will one day inherit the union after us older comrades have gone.

Emphasis was put into day-to-day skills that I was able to take back to the job and put into practice as a MUA delegate for my area within the industry.

For me, the biggest reward from this course was not only the standard of teaching, but it was a credit meeting up with the other delegates who also share the same passion, direction and belief as myself.

I would like to recommend to all other delegates and members to consider participating in this course to obtain the necessary skills required in today's workplaces.

A special thank you to Noel Nielsen for his

TO M.U.A. W/A BRANCH OFFICIALS
I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY THANKS
TO CHRIS CAIN AND THE UNION OFFICIALS
AND THE OFFICE GIRLS AND ALL OFF THE
M.U.A. COMRADES THAT HAVE SUPPORTED
ME FINANCIALLY AND THEIR MORAL SUPPORT
THANKS TO ALL THE COMRADES THAT PHONE
ME UP AND VISIT ME IN HOSPITAL. I CAN
NOT EXPRESS MY THANKS ENOUGH. I HAVE
BEEN FIGHTING CANCER FOR ONE AND
A HALF YEARS NOW. AND ALL THE M.U.A
MEMBERS THAT HAVE SUPPORTED AND HELPED
ME THROUGH OUT MY TREATMENT THANK
YOU ALL AGAIN.

BRUCE BAILEY
W/A BRANCH M.U.A.

FROM THE MEMBERS



Members can email correspondence to muawapaper@hotmail.com. Please include phone number and member number

RUSSELL 'SLIM' COOK
42 KENNEDY RD
SOMERS VIC.
PH 0407 802959

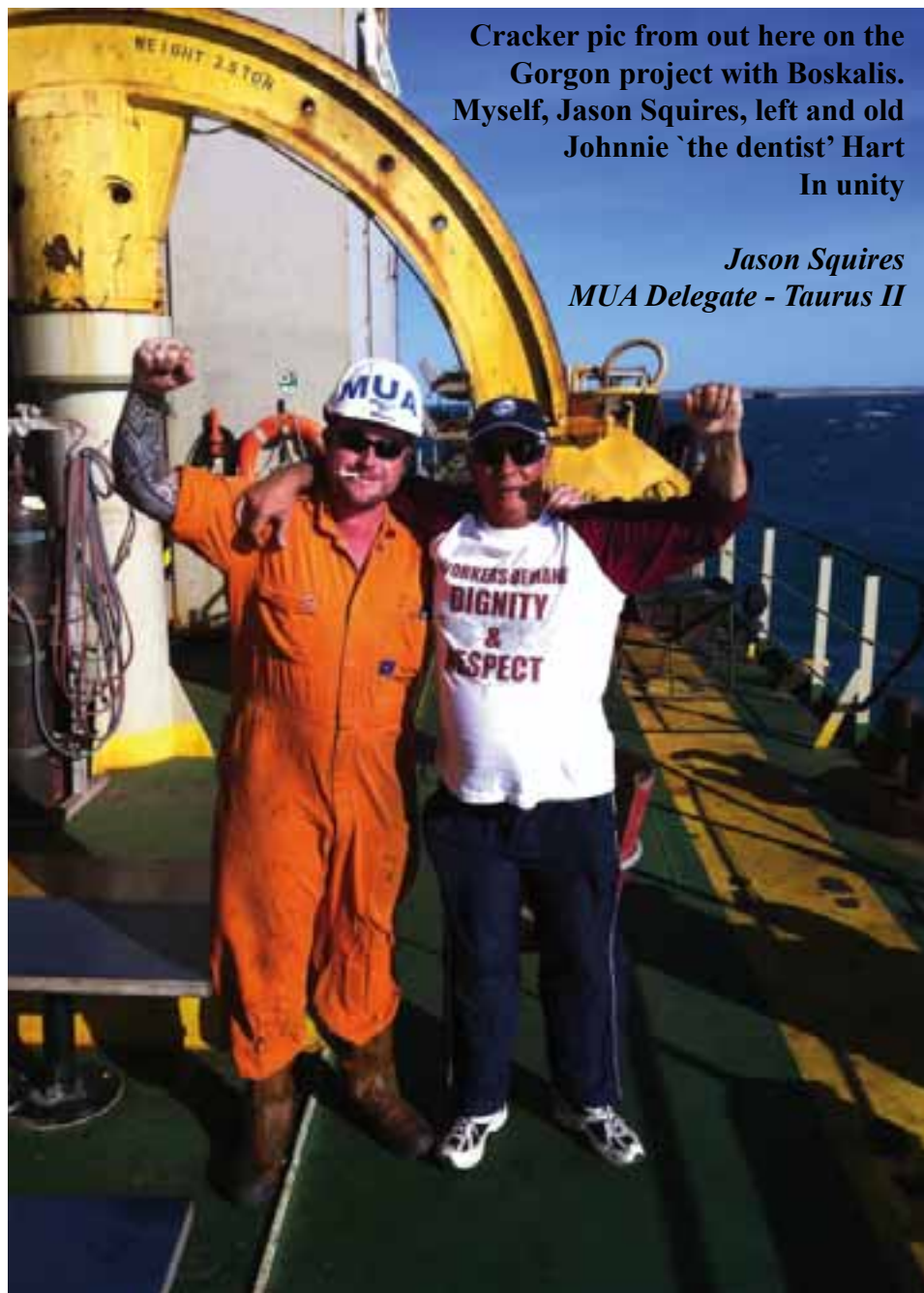
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,
PLEASE ACCEPT A DONATION OF \$1,000—
AND I APPRECIATE THE SUPPORT I
RECEIVED FROM CHRIS CAIN & THE TEAM
IN THE WA STATE OFFICE, DURING THE
DISPUTE WITH BOSKALIS ON THE GORGON
PROJECT WHILST I WAS EMPLOYED
THERE.

THANKS
R. Cook
(SLIM)

organisation and input into this course.
Peter Nelson 9032511
Bunbury Tugs

To MUA members of the Esperance Port
Dear Comrades, it is with sincere encourage-
ment that all members aboard the Dampier
Spirit (FSO) support the collective action you
continue to take to resolve outstanding issues

surrounding your well overdue EBA.
We are aware that the strike action you take,
24/48 hour stoppages is at the cost of your
pay. We hope that a resolution to the dispute
is arrived at in favour of the members and that
key conditions (1): annual wage increases (2)
redundancy (3) leave entitlements (4) trade
skills recognition; are met.
We members will continue to follow the



**Cracker pic from out here on the
Gorgon project with Boskalis.
Myself, Jason Squires, left and old
Johnnie 'the dentist' Hart
In unity**

Jason Squires
MUA Delegate - Taurus II

progress of your struggle.
In Unity,

MUA members, Dampier Spirit

I would like to formally resign from the MUA
as of January 1, 2011.

Sorry for the delay in sending this email, but
it was not an easy thing to do after being part
of such a great union for 28 years.

I am also a member of the AMOU, as I now
work at sea as a second mate, since January
2008.

Thank you to all for such a good career at
sea with the coverage that you have provided
and for the conditions and wages that we all
prosper from - also, to know that the genera-
tions to come can still get a job on the Aussie
coast.

Regards

Stuart Ross (6003778)

We, the MUA members on the Lady Kariann,
support you in your actions against Patricks
EBA claims.

If you require assistance, do not hesitate to
get in touch with us.

In Unity

MUA Members Lady Kariann

Comrades, I fully support and commend you
on your stance to obtain a just result for your
EBAs.

P Finselbach 138.Lsl. Far Swan

Dear Comrades. Us, the crew of the Far
Supplier, would like to forward our support
to our comrades at Patricks in their efforts to
conclude their negotiations for a fair and just
EBA.

Good luck with the fight for your wages and
conditions. MUA Here To Stay

In unity

**Dean Kappen (MUA delegate), Fred Allen,
Matthew Finch, Marcus Gaffney,
Mary Jo Hanly**

Comrades, on this 2011 May Day, the tradi-
tional day of celebration for workers of the
World for all that has been attained for our job
security, dignity, decent wage outcomes and
a strong militant Branch in WA particularly, it
is ironic and unacceptable that two officials,
Chris Cain and Will Tracey face being sued
and possibly fined large amounts for actions
taken to protect workers safety and conditions.

We Rank and File members of this great union
have seen the WA Branch under Christy's
leadership, coupled with strong, dedicated
working class officials and organisers, take the
prominent role in **Fighting from the front** as
we would expect from any officials.

The MUA has placed stoppages throughout
the country at Patrick's workplaces in
pursuit of legitimate claims within the legisla-
tion that allows protected action over those
claims. But the other issues that Chris and
Will face is by the Fair Work Australia Act and
clauses within it.

As Chris said during the WA State Confer-
ence, "we make no apologies for defending
workers at the work place, delegates and safety
concerns."

This FWA legislation enacted by the Aus-
tralian Labor Party is the political party that
gained office on the backs of the very success-
ful 'Your rights at work campaign' that ensured
the defeat of the Howard/Costello right wing
coalition.

It is an offence to workers' sense of fairness
that such action by the FWA Act, ensconced in
ALP platform policy, would pursue trade union
officials in protecting workers' rights and con-
ditions after trade union' in particular, ensured
they gained political power in the first place.

We should not be surprised as the ALP has
continued to shit on its trade union constitu-
ency for a long time. The type of response and
action and protest taken to ensure Ark was

dealt with fairly and eventually cleared on the
charges he faced, is now what is needed to sup-
port our officials in the West.

We donate and continue to donate to the ALP
via our unions affiliation to the ACTU, and we
have used our Rolling Fund proceeds to bolster
those funds from the very same workers who
continue to bear the brunt of adverse industrial
policy by the ALP towards workers' interests.

I would urge all comrades to send all dona-
tions to the WA Branch during its swing cycles.
After all, it is the least we can do for the
amount of principled defence the WA Branch
has engaged in on our behalf during the period
since Chris came to Office.

You in the union and you taking action to
protect our officials, is what should be ad-
dressed without any resistance from individu-
als aboard any vessel.

Mike Barber. 6224

Farstad Consultative Committee member.

It's been over a year since the MCSV
Finnmarken come onto the Australia coast
line and started work off Barrow Island as a
support and a accommodation vessel for the
Gorgon gas project.

And thanks to the MUA officials and del-
egates who worked tirelessly and continue to
work tirelessly to achieve the good conditions
and extras we have received since the start
of the project, we the crew, Rank and File
members of the MUA take this opportunity to
give our thanks and appreciation for the efforts
you have put in for the crew on board the
Finnmarken.

A special thanks has to go to the WA Branch
in Christy Cain and Will Tracey for their role
in setting up the Finnmarken on the Gorgon
project and for taking on Boskalis in the num-
erous commissions we have had to go to over
manning and safety issues and for getting the
conditions to a respectable level that has been
achieved by the MUA in the offshore industry,
this has definitely been a milestone from the
beginning of the project, especially after being
impeded under the conditions of a Greensfield
Agreement.

We have 58 MUA crew on board and we are
coming up to our second Easter and second
Anzac Day commemorations. Not that there is
time off for these events, but we had a surprise
guest on the April 19 - comedian Kevin Bloody
Wilson, for achieving 200,000 safe passenger
transfers since the beginning of the project.

It was a nice surprise for a change for our
MUA crew to be recognised for our impec-
cable safety record and professionalism in our
handling of crew and passengers during these
sometimes difficult and dangerous operations.

A special thanks should also go to Paul
Brown, one of our chief cooks on board who
had a hand in getting Kevin to come out to the
Finnmarken to perform two shows.

It was a great night to be had by all and in
typical Australian tradition Kevin Bloody Wil-
son got straight into his act by taking the piss
out of the bosses, much to the delight of our
crew. He even wrote a song especially for the
Finnmarken and the Gorgon project.

A very enjoyable night; even Kevin Bloody
Wilson said he enjoyed himself immensely. A
good break from his usual rigorous routine.

So from all of us on the Finnmarken (the
Love Boat), we thank you for your support.
MUA Here to Stay.

Regards

Finnmarken crew.





They're Aussie jobs and we'll fight for them

Members...

The attack on your jobs from many of the offshore oil and gas majors is upon us.

Multi-national companies and their contractors intend to bring foreign labour into their projects. Work that has been done by Australian labour since the start of the oil and gas industry, some 35 years ago, is now being threatened by these anti-union un-Australian outfits.

I urge you all to get to your Stop Work meetings for a full report.

Be there and fight for your right to work in your own country.

Regards, in struggle

Christy Cain

