



The Port Worker

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Branch Secretary's Report

Members

As you will read in the Hon. Deputy Branch Secretary's report Glen is coming ashore to take on an important organising role for the Union that will see him based out of Darwin for a while. Glen is taking a significant salary cut to undertake this role and needs to be congratulated for his commitment to the MUA, there is no doubt he is the right man for the job and from a Branch perspective it will give the members phone access to him on a year round basis. It is our intention that once the current round of Enterprise Agreements negotiations are completed Glen, I and the Branch Committee will sit down and work out a division of areas to allocate the Hon. Deputy Branch Secretary specific areas of coverage.

Talking about EA negotiations we currently have EA discussions underway or pending in Patrick (Bluescope) Part B & C, POAGS Part B, Svitzer Lines Port Kembla, Svitzer Lines Eden, AMSS Eden, Illawarra Stevedores, Port Kembla Ports Corporation, AAT, AAT Maintenance, Svitzer Towage and Toll Port Services as well as a proposed EA for a non-Bluescope Patrick document that does not currently have an existing workforce in the port. These EA discussions are a huge drain on the union resources and are very time consuming so if you are not seeing me around the areas a lot lately I would ask you to be patient and once the agreements are settled I will have more time to get around.

Obviously as well as the EA negotiations there is the general business of the Branch to maintain as well as our commitments to the community and union movement issues. As part of these commitments your Branch is currently assisting through our affiliation with the South Coast Labour Council in various campaigns; Against the leasing out of a prime stretch of Killalea State Park at Shellharbour by this disgraceful lemma State Government to allow developers to build a resort above "The Farm" thereby denying access to the public to this magnificent stretch of coastline; Against the development and commercialisation of the Wollongong Harbour Foreshore, in this campaign rank and file members have organised and designed a set of posters that the Branch has funded and congratulations to Wal and Dennis on the good work on this. Also there is the ongoing anti privatisation campaigns against lemma and Costa's stated intention of privatising the power industry, the Sydney Ferries, Railway maintenance and State Government owned lands. The Branch encourages all members to get involved and participate whenever community protests and rallies are notified.

Australian Building and Construction Commission SCLC recently organized a meeting at Wollongong University attended by several affiliated unions at which myself and a delegation of rank and file and MUA Veterans represented the Branch to hear a report by CFMEU National Secretary Dave Noonan on a member of his Union from Melbourne,

Noel Washington, who is currently facing 6 months in jail and a possible \$28,000 fine for doing nothing more than refusing to front the ABCC.

This "Starchamber" Commission was put together by Howard in line with recommendations coming out of the farcical Cole Royal Commission into the Building Industry. A Royal Commission that managed to spend \$68 million of our taxpayers money without landing a single conviction. The ABCC unbelievably has the power to summons any construction worker that has been in a discussion with any more than three employees on or outside a construction site to front the Commission to answer questions regarding the meeting. If the workers refuses to attend or attends and refuses to answer or answers falsely he or she can be liable to a mandatory 6 months jail sentence and a \$28,000 fine. On top of this if the workers attends the Commission, answers all questions (the worker cannot take representation into the Commission) and then tells his or her spouse, union official, solicitor or anyone at all what was discussed in the hearing he or she can face the same penalties.

Noel Washington has refused to attend the Commission and is being prosecuted through the courts. He has fronted court in Geelong once for mention and his union is expecting him to front for a hearing possibly in October with the real possibility of going to jail without being charged with anything other than maintaining his silence, a right he would have if facing a criminal charge.

The fact that the right wing, Union hating Howard Government implemented this appalling legislation is bad enough but equally if not more disturbing is the fact the Rudd Government has not only refused to abolish the legislation but has guaranteed it will be in place until at least 2010 is totally disgraceful. For a Government that got into power on the back of a Union organised Your Rights @ Work campaign to treat workers worse than criminals is unacceptable.

A high profile delegation of Union Officials including National Secretary Paddy Crumlin recently traveled to Canberra to lodge a formal protest with Government Ministers on this issue. Your Branch has moved a resolution through SCLC that a follow up local Union/Community delegation be organised to go to Canberra to maintain the political pressure on Rudd and Gillard and remind them who helped get them into Government. This would also give support to our local Federal members, Jennie George and Sharon Bird who have been very supportive on this matter. Also it is proposed that on the day Noel Washington fronts court a bus be organised from this area to transport concerned delegates and community activists to join protestors from other areas to support Noel Washington and protest against these laws. Update to follow.

National Maritime Day/September Monthly Meeting

Tuesday 30th September is the date for this years commemoration of World Maritime Day. As usual we will have a bus going up to Sydney for those members and Veterans who wish to attend the annual march across Pymont Bridge and commemoration service held at the Sydney Maritime Museum. This year however the commemoration takes on a greater significance with the Federal Rudd Governments recognition for the first time in 2008, after years of campaigning by the Union, of the 1 in 8 seafarers who gave their lives in service of the Australian Merchant Navy during World War II. Due to this important milestone day falling on the Monthly meeting day and the logistical impossibility of holding the meeting in Port Kembla and making it to Sydney in time for the commemorations it has been decided in consultation with Sydney Branch that as a one off the SNSW Branch and Sydney Branch will hold a joint Monthly meeting on the 1st Floor meeting room of the National/Sydney Branch Office in Sussex Street after which all attending will proceed to the march across Pymont Bridge to the Maritime Museum.

In order to facilitate those members keen to attend the joint meeting the Branch will provide a bus, leaving the Union rooms at 7am for Sydney returning sometime after the compulsory celebratory drinks and social gathering that follows the World Maritime Day commemorations. Two non drinking members have already offered their services as designated drivers on the day so a good day should be had by all. To ensure we have enough seating available could all interested members notify the office of your intention to attend please comrades.

As stated previously for the Veterans the usual bus will still be provided from the Union Rooms at 9am for 9.30 returning soon after the finish of the commemorations. Apologies to any members that are unable to attend the Monthly meeting in Sydney but a reading through of the September National Office report can be organised for Wednesday 1st October if members in this position let the Branch know of numbers wanting to partake.

North Fort Memorial Walk

Sydney Branch Deputy Secretary Glen Wood has asked the Branch to inform the members of the plan to establish a centre paver section on the memorial walk being established at North Fort on North Head at Manly to be dedicated to the involvement of the Merchant Seafarers and waterside workers who took part in or gave their lives in the numerous wars and military conflicts Australia has taken part in.

Current and retired members have the opportunity to purchase a brick paver to be permanently laid in the surrounds of the centrepiece. Members should check out the full story behind this on the MUA website under the News section article dated 25th August. 08

Thanks Comrades
Garry Keane, Branch Secretary

Hon. Deputy Branch Secretary Report

Comrades,

I have been asked by the National Secretary, Paddy Crumlin, to take on a position in the union as a National Organiser in addition to my role as the Honorary Deputy Branch Secretary. The position will be based in Darwin for the next two years predominantly due to the recent departure from the

post by Mick Killick who has recently returned to work at sea. This will allow the National Office time to work on a longer term solution to the organiser role in Darwin. Paddy has stressed to me the importance of maintaining a strong MUA presence in Darwin and continuing on the good work Mick has done over the past five years, whilst also assisting Garry with the ongoing work in the Southern NSW branch. On top of relieving Garry for his holidays I will be working back and forth between the two branches depending on where I am most needed at the time. I will have the ability to fly back and forth as required. All this means I have had to take a considerable pay cut to take on this role but I feel the experience I will be gaining over the next two years will reap benefits for our branch and my experience beyond what money can buy.

I will be undertaking several ACTU Organiser courses as part of my training which will be aimed at the growth section of the union with the primary goal of growing the union membership. Personally this is a great opportunity for me to gain the necessary skills and experience required to be an effective union official and to allow me to better represent the membership into the future. If anyone has any questions or would like anymore information regarding any of the above I will be available 24/7 to all members whether I am in Darwin or Port Kembla so please do not hesitate to call me. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Garry Keane for his support, advice and encouragement over the past six weeks as I have thought long and hard before accepting Paddy's proposal.

Delegate Training

Garry, Madge McGartland and I have been developing a delegate training course to be delivered by the officials and the senior delegates in the branch. It is intended to begin with basic training for the newer and younger members in November. Once we have established this process we will be looking to combine our resources with the Newcastle and Sydney branches and run a more in depth delegates training course for the more experienced delegates and as further step for those who have completed the basic course, bringing together members from the three branches down at St Georges Basin over a two or three day period. The branch would encourage all members to advise us of your interest in these courses so we can begin planning now to deliver these courses ASAP.

Darwin Update

Well it has been five weeks since I arrived in Darwin and so far everything is going pretty good. I am still finding my way up here but starting to make some headway with a few non union employers. This has the potential to grow the membership up here by more than one hundred new members so it is a very important break through as these employers have been operating in the Top End for years, mostly unchecked. I have arranged to visit some of the offshore oil rigs which will be the key to organising in this area. Recently the workers on the rigs have seen their conditions eroded with the casuals having there 20% loading reduced to 5% and their redundancy provisions virtually wiped out. We are campaigning to have an industry wide agreement negotiated for these workers and are starting to see a little bit of progress but we still have a long way to go. There are still many challenges up here but now that I am land based I am starting to learn more about the different areas of the industry which for me is very satisfying. I have now completed my first round of organizer training which has opened my eyes to the scientific approach to recruiting new members to the union.

I have also attended the Offshore/FPSO Conference last week in Fremantle which was a great success. A detailed report from both conferences will be made available to members in the very near future.

In Unity
Glen Williams Hon. Deputy Branch Secretary

Linesmen

MUA linesmen in Port Kembla are close to finalising our enterprise agreement for 2008 / 2011. Through further negotiations with the company and after learning some serious lessons over the past three years we should be able to increase our permanent positions and increase salary to accommodate the expected increase in trade. We would like to thank the branch secretary for his efforts and guidance and the staff at the union rooms for their ongoing support and assistance.

Phil Hawke

PKPC

We are in the midst of negotiation our new Enterprise Agreement, which should have been finalised by 1st July, 2008. We have been at it for 3 months now and it is as close to being resolved as it was when we started. The main problem we are facing is the 2.5% limit the NSW Government has put on all crown employees and state owned Corporations, if you want more you have to trade something off.

Well after years of reform and restructure we do not have anything left to trade off and also with inflation running at 4.2% and possibly higher after the June quarter is released, makes the 2.5% look very said and unacceptable.

The CEO has put a submission of Treasury for an increase above the 2.5% but has been knocked back. Now he is taking it to the Industrial Steering Committee that has been set up to check all increases before final rejection or acceptance. My understanding is it will be heard on Friday, 25th July or Monday 28th July 2008. (We believe it will be rejected, but may be proven wrong)

So we only have one way forward and that is the NSW Industrial Relations Commission for an agreed Arbitration restricted to the increase above 2.5% only, and seeing as the Port is moving ahead like we have never experienced in the past, we should have a reasonable work value case to put forward on productivity. We have other issues Garry and I are working on with the PKPC CEO and the first is the way casuals are being paid, totally away from what our current EA says, which goes back to our first EA in December 1993. We are moving closer to resolving the issue around casuals except for the hourly rate of pay.

The final issue is full time employees working excess hours outside the intent of the EA and paying them at the normal hourly rate. This is a very slippery issue as the wording in our agreement is such that this should never happen, but it has and I think that Paddy Crumlin is the person with the answer for us to move forward to have it resolved and what to do about it in the future.

Tony Fenech

Patrick Stevedoring

Currently at Patrick we are experiencing some major changes to the stevedoring operations; these include the acquisition of new plant and equipment. Included in the equipment is a new Liebherr shore crane and five new Heister fork lifts, these coupled with an increase of new members shows promising signs concerning the Patrick operation driven by solidarity and comradeship by the members.

We are currently having ongoing negotiations with our enterprise agreement with the company still to get back to us on some issues before we call a stop work meeting for a final vote.

I would also like to report to members that retired member Tom Wicks is recovering well in Wollongong Hospital after a minor operation.

Quote of the Quarter from a Patrick Stevedoring Manager to employees " you need to harden the f*&k up"

Patrick have forwarded a proposed non Bluescope EA to the Branch for consideration of an outside operation. Further updates will follow.

Committee

Illawarra Stevedores

The long anticipated sale of IS to Patrick's is now officially off the board for the foreseeable future, which means we will be finalising a formal log of claims and forwarding them to Illawarra and going into Enterprise Agreement negotiations with them.

Some of the members attended Newcastle on a mobile transfer that has raised some issues and both Newcastle and Port Kembla Branches have been asked by the members to notify the company that no further mobile transfers will take place until an agreement is in place to cover terms and conditions. Obviously this will now be incorporated into the EA negotiations.

Svitzer Tugs

The tugs have just completed a quiet period industrially in which the roster and port practices have operated to the satisfaction of both the workforce and the company.

Svitzer has replaced Phil Leaver with Bob Young as local Manager effective from 14th July, 2008. This coupled with the arrival of all the car boats, which will necessitate a new roster, represent an immediate challenge.

Our NSW and National Tug Conference was held in August where the delegates discussed and finalised a wish list for our upcoming EBA negotiations.

Paul Cuthbert

Seafaring

Comrades,

I am writing to you as one of the two elected I.R. seafaring representatives on the branch committee. I would like to bring to your attention the matter of the dismal attendances we continually get to the monthly stop work meetings. Low numbers to stop work meetings is nothing new comrades but there seems to be a real reluctance by some members to front up. As we all know it is only a few hours on the last Tuesday of the month and despite all the tried and true excuses we make up for not attending, the fact is most people are simply choosing not to front. Its unacceptable and we all must make more of an effort come stop work meeting day.

I understand a lot of members live far and wide these days but there are also plenty of us who live 5 minutes away, so to speak, but you wouldn't know it. It is critical for all of us that the membership gets involved and attends these meetings as the more people who know what is going on and are informed and up to date with the latest issues facing the union, the stronger our position is across the board.

Members must understand that each and everyone of us are the UNION and until that mindset is embraced we won't move forward. I am personally sick and tired of joining jobs and hearing our blokes asking what's the union doing about this or that when the individual hasn't lifted a finger, only mouthing off undermining our organization.

Stop work meetings are the time and place for members to table any issues or concerns they may have and they can be quite often dealt with there by the official or followed up after the meeting.

Comrades I accept that things are not like what they used to be years ago as many will remember with the pick up roster and there is no need for us to be in the port like we had to be back then, however there is still a lot of important matters and issues facing our industry and our National Secretary Paddy Crumlin ensures that everything is in the national office report that is delivered each month at every stop work meeting around the country so there are no excuses for people to say they didn't know, apart from the fact they didn't make the effort themselves. It is time to get real and start making an effort and embracing the stop work meeting as it is only going to benefit us all in the long run.

No more excuses comrades and to the people who live 5 minutes away in particular need to have a think on what direction they are going and what level of involvement they take in the union. I personally know a comrade who lives down the coast at St. Georges Basin, 1.5 hours drive away but makes the journey regardless to attend the monthly meetings and has done for years.

If nothing else comrades I hope this letter at least puts stop work meetings back on your minds or into rec. room discussions and leads to more people fronting up at the end of the month.

In Unity

John 'madge' McGartland
Seafarers representative
Port Kembla Branch Committee.

POAGS

The members at POAGS Port Kembla have seen a steady increase of shipping over the last few months with the majority of this work being the discharge of cars and machinery. We are expecting the closure of Glebe Island will further increase the shipping to Port Kembla and will generate more work and positions for our members. POAGS EBA has been under negotiation since the beginning of this year and Garry Keane together with the other branch officials and delegates from all over the country have been working hard to finalise an agreement. Port Kembla is rapidly turning into a major working port and we look forward to its prosperity for our members.

David Muscat

Monthly Meetings (except Sep 08 meeting)

All members are welcomed at the Monthly meeting held at Port Kembla Leagues Club on the last Tuesday of the month at 9am. This is a forum for members to discuss issues effecting their industry and their employment.

Credit Union

Hours are Mon-Fri 10am—3.00pm
Phone No. 02 42745722
Fax No. 02 42745733
BSB No 802884
Head Office 1300 362 000

Appointments need to be made when making applica-

MUA Database - EAS

This database is available to all members of the MUA with seagoing qualifications who finds themselves unemployed or wish to change jobs. You must be currently unemployed and a financial members of the Union.

You will need to contact your Branch who will provide you with a password and information on how to access EAS through the MUA website.

Books and DVDs 4 sale at Union rooms

“**Unchartered Waters**” by Greg Mallory \$30.00

“**Fighting Films**” by Lisa Milner
\$20.00—members \$10.00

“**For and Aft**” (mostly sea stories) by Tas Bull
\$30.00

DVD “**Witness to Invasion**” by Rosemary Guillepie (Iraque Invasion) \$25.00

Super Sailors twenty years on

Comrades

As proud members of the MUA and former members of the SUA we would like to take this opportunity to go back a few years and remind everybody of a significant event that transformed the seagoing industry. In 1988 the first Trainee Integrated Ratings (TIRs) went down to the Australian Maritime College (AMC) in Tasmania to study to become seamen. This transformation forever changed how seamen were recruited, trained, worked and eventually manned the ships they sailed.

As some of you may or may not recall before this time young blokes wanting to go to sea, mostly seamen's or wharfie's sons, after getting the nod from the Branch Official went to Deck Boy or Wiper school and previous to this it was straight up the gangway and learn on the job. Deck boys predominately worked on the deck of the ship learning seamanship and wipers worked in the engine room. Once at sea and after doing their time the deck boys progressed to Ordinary Seamen (Bucko's) before eventually becoming Able Seamen (AB's) with the Wipers becoming Greasers. With the sudden and necessary change to the Integrated Rating concept these Seamen were now being asked to go back to school (The AMC) for nine weeks to retrain and become what we TIRs were being called at the time, Super Sailors. Multi-skilling was a new and feared concept at this time and wasn't received very well in some quarters to say the least.

The whole mentality for the existing seamen had to change. With the reduction of crew sizes and the traditional roles of Seamen undergoing a major change this created a great deal of angst as many Seamen who had been in the industry for decades were at the time being told there would always be jobs for ABs and Greasers as it would only be any new ships that would be manned by IRs. The reality was they were faced with the prospect of either adapt to the IR concept and retrain or their seagoing careers would be short lived, it was as simple as that. At the time of its inception it has to be said that many people on the coast were dead set against the concept and were adamant that they would not be going to retrain to IR. In the early days it was these fears that lead some of our own members to openly blame the new entrants for the changes the industry was under going. It should also be noted that luckily there were enough seamen on the coast who supported this visionary concept and along with the foresight of the leadership of the SUA at the time ensured that the IR system was implemented and the transition resulted in the success that we see today.

We first arrived at the AMC as wide eyed seventeen year old sons of seamen on the adventure of our lives, it was a



fairly big deal to us as we were carrying on a family tradition that for both of us went back several generations.

On the 31st of January 1988 ninety new entrants converged on the Australian Maritime College (AMC) in Launceston, Tasmania. It was a mixed bunch as ages varied from teens through to forty year olds, from all states and various backgrounds. Many complained of the low wage we received at the AMC of \$120.00 per week but for us going straight from pocket money to \$120.00 per week it was like Christmas. Over the next twenty weeks we learned all we could and most of us got on well. Some great friendships were formed and are as strong as ever today. We lost a few people over the course of the twenty weeks but the vast majority made it through and in June 88 we left the AMC to go into the real world, shipping out. Over the next twenty weeks as TIR's we worked on several vessels whilst completing our TAGS books, a learning guide, which had to be sent back the AMC for assessment.

After completing our twenty week TIR time, which we accumulated no leave for, we then had to do another thirty six weeks on the same leave system as everyone else as Provisional Integrated Ratings (PIRs) where we worked as Bucko's, greasers or PIRs. After this our training was officially over and we received our IR certificates. By this stage there had also been several re-trainee schools through the AMC, commencing in 1987, so there were many IRs around by now. Many seamen who were reluctant to retrain eventually went to the AMC to do the course and in 1993 all ships went IR and those that chose not to re-train left the industry.

It was a time of major change in our industry as seamen who had spent years on deck suddenly found themselves on the gear down below in the engine room and whilst some greasers loved the chance to get some fresh air up on the bridge or steer the ship into port, a thing they could only dream about in the past, and in some case dreaded. We should also remember that there was a certain amount of resentment in the older blokes as it was always the Scaly Backs (ABs) versus the Firemen (Greasers), an old score that goes back a long way.



Since the mid eighties when ships first started coming out with smaller crews, the trend has continued ever lower and now we are seeing 180,000 ton bulkies manned by 16 or 17 crew which would have been unimaginable a decade or two earlier.

Despite all the ship bar and pub analysis, debating the merits of the AB/Greasers versus IR concept, it must be stated that as an industry we are still here despite being told by some old hands early on that the game was finished and we would be better off ashore. All this considered seamen today are required to be even more versatile and skilled in areas such as rigging, crane driving, scaffolding, boat handling and high pressure water blasting etc. As IR's we continually have to adapt to technological and industrial changes as the industry evolves, this plus the weight of international labour competition continue to place the same pressure on Australian manned vessels as it did twenty years ago. Whilst some things change comrades, some remain the same.

Never the less a milestone has been reached and we should take this opportunity to reflect on the changes, good or bad, and recognise that the hard decisions that had to be made over twenty years ago were justified and as a result we still have a vibrant if not somewhat smaller Australian merchant fleet. With the recent election of the Rudd Labor Government and its commitment to reviewing coastal shipping and the issuing of permits to cheap foreign flag vessels there is a hope that we will see a return to re-manning of the vessels lost under Howard



and also new tonnage coming over the horizon manned and flagged in Australia by Australian seamen

Of the new entrants who started with us back in 88 some have gone on to become leaders in the industry. Some have chosen to further their studies and progress upstairs and become Officers, which we should continue to encourage our members to do, and some have become leaders within the union and now hold positions from Branch Secretary to prominent delegates on the coast and in their branches.

From very humble beginnings twenty years ago when we were known as the original super sailors, factory produced seamen, the guinea pigs and other names we cant mention in these pages, we are proud to be a part of such a major historical period in Australian shipping and look forward to the challenges of maintaining our place and presence in the industry for the next twenty years and beyond.



As the great E.V Eliot once said comrades "Stay on Course".

In Unity
John "Madge" McGartland
Glen Williams
Port Kembla Proud

Coming Events

WA State Conference February 2009

Maritime Day/Monthly meeting Sydney 30 Sept 2008

National Council Oct 2008

Delegates Training Course possibly Nov 2008

Delegation to Geelong re ABCC TBN

Old Timers Xmas Dinner Dec 2008

Kids Picnic Jan 2009