



Offshore Update – 12/06/2020

Offshore Members,

A bit to report on given it's been a few weeks between updates. Please share it with your contacts.

Offshore EBA Update

As a result of the current global COVID-19 crisis, the Offshore EBA campaign has been set back several weeks/ months. We had initially planned to have commenced bargaining by now but given the crisis, the price of oil, and the scope of work we need to seek direction from the membership before proceeding any further. The original offshore EBA strategy agreed and set at the Offshore Commission in December of last year will need to be revisited and worked through by the offshore delegates and officials in light of the current circumstances.

It's looking like we will be conducting 2 Zoom conference calls 5 weeks apart to ensure that the delegates on each swing are available to participate in at least one of the Conference calls.

Details of the conference calls will be confirmed in the coming weeks, and members will be notified by their respective branches of the details.

Following the outcome of the conference calls, we will report back to the membership on the decisions and direction taken by the delegates. This will be reported at the Stop-work meetings and through these Offshore updates following completion.

National cabinet meet again today

The national cabinet is set to meet again today and the reopening of state borders will be the main point of discussion on the agenda along with travel and the implementation of the third step to ease restrictions.

South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland, and Western Australia are still locked down with no dates yet confirmed to re-open leaving the ACT, New South Wales, and Victoria without any border closures.

It is also expected that they will be considering updates on indoor gatherings, how airlines operate, infrastructure projects, and creating jobs.

Workers traveling interstate for work

The impact on our casual interstate members traveling across Australia has been significant given the border restrictions imposed by WA, SA, NT, and QLD. Oil & Gas workers along with resource industry workers are drawn from across Australia, requiring them to regularly cross state borders to

go to work. Many of our members have been relocated to vessels working closer to home, or in a state that doesn't require isolation periods if traveling from interstate.

Unlike other unions, we have been able to negotiate outcomes with most Employers that worked in with our member's needs. Not all workers in the Hydrocarbon sector or other industries have been so fortunate with many being stood down without pay or had their employment terminated.

The 14-day quarantine periods have been the biggest COVID issue for the union as most employers pushed back in having this paid for. Most of the operators sought to have our members draw from their accrued leave or **not be paid at all**. Nearly all employers have now agreed to a consensus position with the MUA. We are still left with one operator (Toll Energy) that refuses to pay workers for this period, but we are in the process of dealing with this.

Long List of Issues as we head to the FWC

Over the past few weeks, we have had to lodge basic issues with the FWC as Employers are refusing to hold up their end of the EBA. Here are a few issues set to be dealt with within the next week or two.

Issue 1.

Our members working across 3 different Solstad vessels were forced to work over their swing cycle as the dilemma with the flights through COVID-19 was unfolding. Although there were still flights available, the company, unfortunately, failed to get our members into WA on time – isolated and onboard.

There are many other cases with various employers that are trying this on. The resolution to this outcome should flow on across the multiple other Employers running the same line.

Issue 2

The first day of traveling interstate should be paid as a travel day. again, unfortunately, Solstad is taking this from our member's accrued leave. We expect that this issue is resolved.

Issue 3

Crewing disputes are flaring up across the industry OSM, Solstad, Swine Offshore, MMA and others are seeking reduced numbers on their vessels.

Siem Offshore is one operator who is trying to stand over and bully us. They have been threatening that should we prosecute and be successful that they will remove the vessels from the coast and crew them with overseas labor. They also say that if we lose, then they are going to remove the MUA from their vessels.

Naturally, we don't take too kindly to bullies. They should know this given they insisted on employing Capt Bully back in the day.

What's important to us is that the integrity of the EBA is upheld and we will be pursuing this for the broader industry and the OSM membership engaged on those Siem vessels.

Toll Energy has removed a cook from one of their vessels and undercut a long-held contract previously held by MMA. By doing this, Employers are seeking to undercut each other at our expense. Whilst we are challenging this, we need to get crewing levels addressed in the EBA.

Employer and Unions Set to Meet

The Federal government has set up national working groups to discuss where to from here across the employment landscape as we come out of the current set of difficulties with COVID. At the same time they removed the anti-union Ensuring Integrity Bill from Parliament to give it some clear air.

There will be five groups, each with 10 members; five from employer organisations, and five from various unions. The view is that they will consider changes to simplifying the awards, enterprise agreements, greenfield agreements, and casual workers.

The unions involved are the Finance Sector Union, the Australian Services Union, the Australian Workers Union, the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, and the Construction Forestry Mining Maritime and Energy Union.

This process will convene in the week starting from Monday June 22. Our view is this process will go nowhere and the Federal government is using it as a back door to implement further anti-worker changes at the national level once the process breaks down.

ATLAS seek assistance with Jobkeeper

Earlier this week, Jack McCabe and I met with Atlas management to discuss future prospects work. In short, it is not looking great.

Whilst Atlas have 2 jobs on the coast at present, they do have more crew than berth ratios and proposed that they head down the Jobkeeper path. The MUA can report that we fully support this and that all members that are eligible should sign up to this, when you receive the paperwork from Atlas.

Atlas has provided us with assurances that they don't intend to exercise their rights in respect of Jobkeeper Directions and stand down any of the Atlas employees nor force them into taking accrued leave. Atlas has agreed that there will be no changes work arrangements and the EBA will continue to apply during the JobKeeper period.

In Unity,

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"Australian Democracy was built on Civil Disobedience"

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