



QUEENSLAND BRANCH NEWS

NEWSLETTER of the QLD Branch of the MARITIME UNION of AUSTRALIA

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Seafaring Work Prospects Meeting – QUBE Part A - Ports North Towage License ATSB Findings Skandi Pacific – Fidel Castro – Mike Barber - Must See Film

Seafaring Work Prospects Meeting Report Back

ON FRIDAY 25TH NOVEMBER, the Queensland Branch Executive, Will Tracey (National Deputy Secretary) and Chris Cain (WA Branch Secretary) along with 70 Queensland Branch members attended the Seafaring Work Prospects meeting.

Branch Secretary, Bob Carnegie welcomed all members and Officials. Will

Tracey gave a review on the entire Offshore EBA and Offshore Visa Campaign which started in 2012 when the migration zone changes, under Howard, had relaxed the visa laws and left us

with no relevant work visa for ratings or caterers.

This loophole was picked up on by employers, culminating in a 5 day dispute on the Highland Navigator. The Labor government rectified the issue, and then came a political game. One minute we had job security and the next minute we were out of there. Two solid wins in the full bench of the Federal Court and High Court has now changed the game and we are back. It seemed everyone was holding off to see what would happen. I can't imagine how terrible things would look for our employment if we had lost that last case.

Our offshore EBAs are getting signed off and the 34 billion dollar IMPEX project is expected to begin next year. The EBAs we will be working under have locked in our job security, Australian labour, training and conditions and extra qualifications to protect catering jobs, IRs and trainees. In the current climate, these are far more important items to have in the EBA than money. There is no construction bonus but there is room for important areas such as job share and access to the best income protection in the market with Protect.



Chris Cain went on to explain in detail the negotiations that went on around this project that included the clients, operators, contractors and many other unions. There are expected to be hundreds of jobs ranging from construction, pipelayers, tenders, support vessels, accommodation vessels, FPSOs and drill rigs. An important feature was the fact that the entire project will

have NO PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS. All eyes are on us to see how we handle the project and Australian workers, this is our chance to get the title back as the best seafarers in the world. There was full support from the meeting that it is vitally important

we conduct ourselves professionally and during this next phase of our working lives we need to keep in check our member's issues with drug addiction, drunken obnoxious behaviour, bullying and violence. These things we need to act together on and keep in check if we are to maintain our excellent wages and conditions on these jobs and our right to work in our own country.

We will require a good delegate structure, professional HSRs and good communication through the Branches, especially with crew lists, so we do not see the re-emergence of the "Gangway Hopper."

It seems there is a light at the end of the dark tunnel for our seagoing members and we will just have to put the past 2 years behind us like a bad memory. The ball is in our court comrades. Please remember to revalidate your certificates etc and be on the EAS when things pick up.

Paul Gallagher Assistant Branch Secretary

QUBE Part A Has Landed!

AFTER SOME 40 MEETINGS over 15 months, the Qube Part A has finally been landed. As such, it will shortly go out to the membership along with the Part B, which in Brisbane, is already to go to members for a vote.

Authorised by Bob Carnegie, Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) Queensland Branch Secretary

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On the Union side, I would like to thank all members and delegates who have shown amazing patience and discipline over these discussions.

Qube are a tough employer. They battle over points other operators might concede, however they are probably the largest employer of stevedoring labour in the country and members paid on time each fortnight. A lot of MUA families are fed from employment at Qube.

For the MUA to have reached an Agreement that covers 16 ports from Darwin in the north to Hobart in the south, from Briz Vegas in the east to Port Headland in the west is a significant achievement, particularly in the current depressed bulk and general market.

The National Union Bargaining Team consisted of Gary Keane (Relieving Assistant National Secretary and Southern NSW Branch Secretary), Warren Smith, Adrian Evans and Bob Carnegie. For me it was a huge learning experience and I greatly appreciate the time spent on bringing me up to speed in the Bulk and General Agreement.

In the end, members at Qube, it is your Agreement. Read it carefully before you decide to cast your vote as this Agreement is YOUR Agreement.

Upcoming Ports North Towage License

ON WEDNESDAY 16TH NOVEMBER, the Branch met with rank and file members working on the Svitzer tugs in Cairns. The meeting was to discuss the associated pressures in securing our members future on the next Ports North Towage Contract/License.

Much discussion transpired in regards to competition and ensuring consistent tenders are placed as we try to maintain the hard-fought wage and condition gains which exist today.

Tough decisions needed to be made and the members need to be commended for having the difficult discussions on the best way to secure their future employment.

The towage employers with EBAs are now using the fear of partnerships to water down the wages and conditions on tugs only to pocket whatever they can gouge.

In most instances tug operations only go to partnerships when a mining company such as BHP hold the exclusive license but we are now beginning to see established EBAs and in particular the rates of pay being used as the reason why established Towage providers are not winning contracts, which is a farce.

Partnerships are used to shift all liability onto workers, completely removing the employer/employee relationship often at the same cost with less responsibility on the employer.

Fidel Castro Passes Away

ON NOVEMBER 25TH 2016 one of the most polarising figures of the last 60 years, former Head of the Cuban State, Fidel Castro died at the age of 90.

Unlike many of the left, I am not going to write an outpouring of grief over his passing. The grim reaper comes to us all and at the age of 90 it is more than a fair innings.

The Cuban Revolution brought many great things to the people of Cuba. Sadly, it also brought several very negative points as well and if the left is to be honest with itself, forever tarnished the Cuban Revolution.

On the plus side of the Cuban Revolution, Castro ridded his Nation of the mafia, the great sugar monopolists like the Bacardi's and the revolution Castro led, put an abrupt end to Cuba being the "Ballad of the Caribbean."

The Education Revolution led by Castro gave almost 100% literacy to the Cuban people. Poor, impoverished working people who, under the British Regime, had no chance in hell of ever rising above their station. The Cuban Education Revolution gave the Cuban people a chance to learn, to dream and to aspire to a better life through the choices education offered.



Of course, the Cuban Health Service is the envy of the western hemisphere, with the exception of Canada. Infant mortality is much lower than its great nemesis, the United States of America. It is one of the great achievements of the Revolution.

Of course, there have been downsides to the Cuban experiment. The lack of true democratic rights and the repression of those with opposing ideas, Trade Unions that are not genuinely independent of the State.

On the economic front, the Cuban Revolution has not reached a pass mark. Command control style economies of the Stalinist Model simply do not work. The over reliance of the Cuban economy on sugar was a recipe for a disaster. Despite what sections of the left might say, the State, in restricting or prohibiting the capacity of small traders and farmers to do business, not only builds resentment and destroys productivity but flies in the face of any sustainable economic outlook.

The Chinese Communist Party realised this 30 years ago, and although in no way am I promoting the Chinese Model, it is food for thought.

With Fidel's death the Cuban Model will come under more pressure. Whether it stands the stresses it will be

placed under is, I think, problematic. History I guess will judge the Cuban story. *Bob Carnegie*

ATSB: Poor Safety Procedures Led to Crewman's Death off Dampier

Sourced from: <http://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2016-11-23/skandi-pacific-bad-management-led-to-crewman-death/8050686?pfmredir=sm>

AUSTRALIA'S TRANSPORT SAFETY watchdog says a series of safety issues led to the death of a crewman on a supply ship off Western Australia's Pilbara coast. Newcastle man Andrew Kelly was crushed to death on the Skandi Pacific, 160 kilometres off Dampier on July 14, 2015.



The support vessel was being loaded with containers from the semi-submersible oil rig Atwood Osprey in the early hours of the morning, when bad weather and rough seas forced the crew to halt work, and the ship was moved away from the rig.

Mr Kelly was one of two crew members securing the cargo to the aft deck, when the vessel's open stern was hit by two large waves sending water over the deck. That water shifted the unsecured cargo and Mr Kelly was trapped between the moving containers, deck chains and the ship's skip. He was taken by helicopter to the Atwood Osprey's on-board hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

In its report on the case, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) found weather conditions at the time of the accident had not been properly assessed, and the Skandi Pacific's safety management system procedures for securing cargo on deck were inadequate.

It also found there were no clearly defined limits for excessive water on the ship's deck, which meant individuals were forced to make subjective decisions on whether they should stop work. The ATSB noted the ship's managers had since taken action to improve cargo handling processes across its offshore supply-vessel fleet and had altered the way crews work in adverse weather.

Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) national training and safety officer Michael Cross said he hoped the ATSB report would prevent similar deaths in the future. "Anytime a worker is killed on the job is a shock," Mr Cross said. "All we can hope for is that the findings of

that investigation go a long way to ensure this cannot happen again."

Branch Committee Meeting

THE QUEENSLAND BRANCH Committee will be meeting this Wednesday December 7th 2016. Many topics to be discussed including, ports, automation, partnerships and all other issues that concern the Queensland Branch members. Lively discussion and debate will ensue. A full report will be given after the meeting.

Annual General Meeting

THE QUEENSLAND BRANCH Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday, December 8th 2016 at the Wynnum Workers Club, 35 Bognor Street, Tingalpa starting at 7.00am. All members urged to attend.

Brisbane Aboriginal Sovereignty Embassy Community Food Programme Annual Children's Christmas Party

THE BRISBANE ABORIGINAL Sovereignty Embassy (BASE) Community Food Programme is holding a Christmas Party for Children 16th December 3.30pm at Musgrave Park. BASE welcomes donations of new toys (for children up to 16 years old), gift cards and/or financial contributions. Some ideas for gifts include: educational toys, sport equipment, soft toys, board games, outdoor games, beach/water games, movie passes and Kmart, BigW and Target gift cards.

BASE Community food program has been doing a tremendous job throughout the year supporting families in difficult circumstances by providing weekly food parcels. The MUA encourages members to show solidarity with BASE as they continue the struggle for Aboriginal sovereignty. Your support to ensure each child receives a Xmas gift is greatly appreciated.

We ask you to please drop your gifts (new toys or gift cards) at the MUA Brisbane office before 14th of December.



Please contact Lara Watson, QCU Field Officer, at 0408 892 245 for bank account details to make a funds transfer. Thank you!

Mike Barber – Rank and File Militant, Branch Activist and Socialist

I RECENTLY HAD the opportunity to have a few beers and a feed with one of the most genuine men I know, Mike Barber, on his birthday.

Mike and I go back over 30 years with a lot of lost hair and gained inches around the waistline. Mike's life has stayed true to the cause of unionism and socialism all his life. Mike's first taste of industrial action came during the famous 1966 Strike of British Seamen.



Mike is a man who speaks his mind and is not afraid of shaking his head, not just nodding it in agreement. It is a characteristic I really appreciate. Fellow worker Barber is also (even more importantly) a good mate. During a long period of darkness in my life, Mike stayed a true friend, unlike some, whose friendship was based only on what I could

do for them. It was for me, a time of despair but also, when I now think about it, a time when I learnt a lot about the human condition.

It's why I place far greater importance on human values than political ideologies. Human values such as decency, looking after your mates and kindness are the key ingredients for building a better society and values to instil in working class people. Happy Birthday Comrade!

Bob Carnegie

Industrial Action in Brazil

INDUSTRIAL ACTION TOOK place in Ports across Brazil on November 30th 2016. The IDC supports the established Industrial Action that occurred in all Brazilian Ports for 24 hours.



This action is a response to the port privatisation process, which threatens the welfare of port workers.

Must See Film

I, Daniel Blake directed by Ken Loach

ON SUNDAY BOTH Melissa and I went and saw a film by the great Marxist film maker, Ken Loach. The film is named after the main character, Daniel Blake, a



carpenter.

This film deals with the tremendous difficulties that can befall working class people when back luck, bad health or bad life choices strike.

Daniel Blake is a fine chippie (carpenter) very proud of his trade who falls into difficulties when he has a heart attack at work and comes up against the almost impenetrable and

totally uncaring, privatised (delivering government services) bureaucracy that has become part of Britain since the Thatcher and Blair years.

Daniel is given the total run around by a bureaucracy that seems just to have learnt double speak from Orwell's great novel, *1984*.

Daniel's trials into appealing an unfathomable decision to deny him benefits sets him on a downward spiral, eventually he has to sell furniture to pay rent and heating.

At the job centre, Daniel befriends a young woman and her two children who have fled domestic violence in London and runs into bureaucracy that 'sanctions' her for being late for an interview.

The woman had to cart two children around a new city (the film is set in Newcastle-Gateshead area).

Despite all of the young woman's efforts, she is turned to prostitution to put proper shoes on her children's feet.

I, Daniel Blake is a black film, it is not a Hollywood feel good film. It is what can happen to many of us should we fall through the cracks and have no one to speak up for us.

I urge every reader of the article to make an effort to see this wonderfully moving film.

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