

# WHARVES AND WAVES

ISSUE 13 LOCAL NT BRANCH NEWS

JULY 2014

## AUSTRALIAN OIL AUSTRALIAN GAS AUSTRALIAN JOBS!!



*The Abbott Government is hell bent on providing foreign owned, multi-billion dollar oil and gas companies the ability to replace Aussie workers in the offshore...*

....and that's because the Abbott Government has a mandate: To pay back those friends who have donated money and manipulated the public on the Liberal National Party's (LNP) behalf. The greedy oil and gas companies were salivating at the bit this month when their puppets the LNP introduced Regulation that would have allowed them to employ foreign workers before Australian workers with no obligation to test the Australian labour market, and at rates of pay that are far inferior.

When the Senate disallowed the Regulatory changes, the Abbott Government thumbed its nose at our democratic processes, vigorously maintaining the attack by using a 'Legislative Instrument' to bypass the Senates wishes. This latest act leaves our offshore workers facing the axe. There is no gain for Australia out of this. Aussie workers in the offshore pay tax. They spend their money in their community. They work in an industry that exploits our resources to such an incredible level of profitability that Australian people deserve to be paid the best Australian wages that our collective strength can achieve.

SIGN THE PETITION: <https://www.change.org/petitions/petition-to-secure-australian-maritime-jobs>

**IF YOU ALREADY HAVE, ASK YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND WORKMATES TO SIGN IT!!**

# PORT MANAGEMENT DISGRACE

The first half of 2014 has seen the Branch taking on what can easily be described as disgraceful treatment of workers by employers. The most significant being the treatment of Darwin Port Corporation members.

Electrician members were given 6 working days to respond to the DPC's decision to make their jobs redundant. Workers with many years of service for the port. The union has argued in the Fair Work Commission that these jobs were not truly redundant. We have good reason to believe that the jobs have been outsourced to contractors. The workers at the port are wondering who is next.

Considering that this is the busiest and most profitable time the Darwin port has ever seen, one must wonder why port management would let go of decades of experience at the port. The infrastructure is ageing; following an inspection that I have done on suspected contraventions, numerous hazards have been identified to which the union alleges that they are an example of a lack of due diligence from the PCBU officers. Management has failed. Empire building is their occupation.

These issues have been raised with NT Worksafe. The MUA has requested that NT Worksafe undertakes a comprehensive investigation into the numerous safety issues raised, several of which we have claimed as potentially catastrophic in consequences. The union believes that DPC Management have been aware of the scale of these identified issues for at least several years and therefore, DPC Port Management should be held accountable.

DPC members have reported that there is a reluctance to report safety hazards because they have been ignored. Worse, there have also been reports of bullying and harassment from Port Management as a result of a workers raising safety issues. This has also been reported to NT Worksafe and the DPC CEO for investigation.

The Branch is seeking action from NTWS against Port Management who we believe have been negligent in their duty of care and who have chosen to manage by intimidating and attacking workers rather than be genuinely consultative. That goes for any manager who chooses the easy path, rather than providing a safe workplace for our members.



**Photo's: The state of repair at the BLB Berth at East Arm Wharf is alarming. Members had raised this issue years ago.**

# INTRODUCING: THE NT BRANCH COMMITTEE

We are expanding into remote ports, and we have the massive INPEX project on our doorstep. The NT Branch has acted to increase our capacity to organise and service the membership; and to keep the employers accountable.

## Wayne Kurnorth

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MUA Leader and Larrakia Man.*



Hi comrades my name is Wayne Kurnorth , Just a little bit of information about myself .

I'm a Larakia man, one of many grandchildren to Jone ("Jonup") Fijo Kurnoth . My grand farther Ernie Qunoy worked on stokes hill wharf from the 60's till he passed in the mid 80's.

I'm a boilermaker/welder by trade completing my apprenticeship in aluminium boat building. I've been in the trade for 15 years now mainly working in the marine industry.

I am currently working for VanOord on the INPEX project dredging Darwin harbour,

I love the Top End way of life, 4 wheel driving , camping , relaxing with a cold beer in the tinny waiting for a nice size fish to take the line or going down to watch the local footy with mates.

I first became a MUA member 7 years ago working at Perkins shipping which now is Toll Marine .

I look forward to working with our committee members to support the great work that Thomas is doing for all our MUA members. I will be helping Tommy with, Social events, building the ATSI committee.

I will be learning as I go along but at least it's a challenge worthwhile because it is all about our workers' rights that we must protect an also to give our indigenous brothers & sisters a chance at training an employment opportunities while there is plenty of work going on around the top end .

**"MUA HERE TO STAY!!"**

### Wayne's Portfolio:

- Social Events
- Indigenous
- Towage
- Newsletter

# NT BRANCH COMMITTEE cont.



## *Julian Kear*

*Ex Construction, Community Barge Seafarer, TIR*

My name is Julian Kear and I have recently been elected to the NT branch committee.

I live in Jingili and have been back and forth to the territory since the early 90's.

Darwin has always been hard to find traction with regard to meaningful employment high costs, low wages and dangerous conditions.

Working on Ro'Ro's along the East coast for Perkins is where I started my seafaring career. But my introduction to the trade union movement came in the mid 80's when I started my apprenticeship.

From there I moved into construction. The MUA has given me the most and now I'd like to take this opportunity to repay some of support that has been shown to me by putting in as a committee member.

I look forward to hearing from you as we take on the struggle.

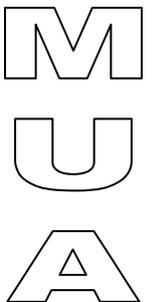
In unity,

Julian Kear

**MUA-NT BRANCH**

### Julian's Portfolio:

- **WHS**
- **Dredging**
- **Off Shore**
- **Political**
- **Projects**
- **Tiwi Campaign**



**Meetings Held:**  
*Last Tuesday  
of Each Month,  
SHW 10am*

**ATTEND THE BRANCH MONTHLY MEETINGS, LEARN ABOUT THE UNION, HAVE YOUR SAY!**

## NT BRANCH COMMITTEE cont.



### **Chrissy Von Wooten**

*Seafarer, Unions NT Committee*

Comrades,

My name is Christine Von Wooten, and I have been living in Darwin since the mid 90's.

I started my seafaring life on the back deck of a prawn trawler when I was Eighteen.

I have had an association with the MUA since working behind the bar at Stella Maris.

Stella Maris was a seafarer mission here in Darwin where I rubbed shoulders with all the maritime characters young and old.

I have been fortunate enough to work on the INPEX site with Van Oord and I'm currently pursuing my time as a TIR.

I am looking forward to participating in building the NT branch and I understand there is strength in unity. I believe in Australians for Australian jobs.

I'm passionate about leaving a legacy for my son and future comrades in the maritime industry.

In Unity.

#### **Chrissy's Portfolio:**

- **Merchandise**
- **Women**
- **Community Barge**
- **Inshore**
- **Networking**
- **Newsletter**

## ***NT WOMEN IN MARITIME DINNER***

***18 September 2014 at Crustaceans***

***Stokes Hill Wharf from 1830hrs.***

*Call the Branch Office for more information – 0889 812 135*

## NT BRANCH COMMITTEE cont.



### *Jason Murphy*

*Wharfie, Port Welfare Centre Committee*

My name is Jason Murphy I started my life in the rubble of Darwin in 1975. I completed my education in Melbourne and travelled back to Darwin in 1998. I have been a proud member of the MUA and worked as a Dwarfie for the past 8 years.

I have a long tradition in the maritime industry. My late father was a member of the Painters and Dockers in Melbourne. Two of my uncles were seafarers and members of the Seamans Union of Australia, one was involved with the Stella Maris in Freemantle. Unfortunately they have all passed and their legacy now lies with me.

My family have passed down values to me that have and will stay with me for life.

Our Union comrades have built on these values.

Through our Union I have travelled to South Africa where I attended a mining and maritime conference. This broadened my mind and helped me realise what is meant by internationalism, and that our struggles are shared by others world wide. It was shocking for me to find out that fellow Unionists in Africa, Mexico and other around the globe are still being shot and killed for standing up for basic human rights. Comrades this was us over 100 years ago.

I have also had the privilege to represent the MUA and show our solidarity with the traditional owners of Muckaty in their fight against a radioactive dump on their land. Which has been a great victory.

I have recently been to the Unions training facility at St George's basin where I completed the Delos 3 course.

I will take all I have learnt with me and help educate others. Together we need to continue the fight in sustaining and building on the conditions we all cherish, those conditions that have been fought for by others in the past and us into the future.

A struggle by one is a struggle for all, think of others before yourself that is community that is Union.

MUA HERE TO STAY!  
In Unity,

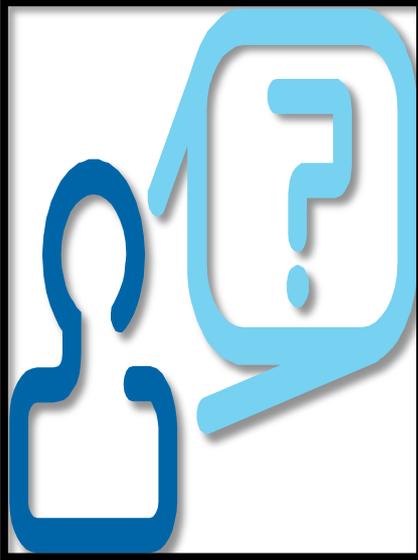
Jason Murphy

#### Jason's Portfolio:

- OHS
- Marine Supply Base
- ITF
- Ferries
- Stevedoring
- Newsletter



## NT BRANCH COMMITTEE cont.



### VACANT BRANCH COMMITTEE POSITION

The Branch Committee is looking for a fifth Branch Committee Member and a new National Youth Committee Representative.

The Branch declares these positions open for nominations.

Nominations can be registered via email to:

[Chelsea.crossen@mua.org.au](mailto:Chelsea.crossen@mua.org.au)

Nominations will be registered from 1 August, closing 14 August 2014.

Only members who will dedicate themselves to the advancement of the Branch by participation, training and volunteering time need nominate.

The Branch Committee is elected each 4 years at the Quadrennial Branch Conference. The next being in 2016.

This is the same for the national women's, youth, and ATSI committee representatives.

#### Current Reps

Women: Erica Seipel

ATSI: Wayne Kurnorth

Youth: Vacant

**“No cuts to education, no cuts to health, no changes to pensions, no change to the GST, and no cuts to the ABC or SBS”.**

**Tony Abbott – during his successful election campaign in 2013...**



# THE LOST ARC

## THE LOST ARC HAS BEEN FOUND!

After months, even years, of searching the high seas for a place to call home, the Maritime Union of Australia scanned the horizons and saw a glimmer in the distance. Hearts racing, they set sail and discovered The Lost Arc. From that moment on, they knew their lives would never be the same again.

### OPEN

**11am until Late**  
**MONDAY - SATURDAY**

**7am until Late**  
**SUNDAY**

Not only does The Lost Arc serve an array of your favourite beers chilled to perfection, we also offer a delicious lunch and dinner menu.

The mastermind behind our menu is fellow MUA member, Serge!

**THE LOST ARC • MARITIME UNION OF AUSTRALIA**

# BRANCH SECRETARY REPORT



It has been six months between editions of Wharves and Waves with some significant events between.

On the positive side the Project Agreement for the Inshore of the INPEX project, where the union fought long and hard to ensure some commonality of terms and conditions, was picked up by other players immediately once the deal was done. Broadsword and Quest Marine workers now enjoy the benefits of the work of the union, in particular those members at Bhagwan who stuck to their guns to get the right result for all inshore workers, not just themselves.

We have also seen the election of a revitalised Branch Committee. A committee made up of the most active and staunch members whose dedication to the movement has already had an impact on the capacity of the Branch. The work that the committee has done in the first few months,

work done for the union in their own time, has been invaluable. With the very competent admin support from Chelsea in the office and from Deputy Secretary Andy Burford we are improving our ability to stretch our limited resources in an extremely busy Branch.

The new challenges that have arisen are varied. INPEX/JKC have finally come clean about their ignorance on what a stevedore does. They have refused to acknowledge MUA coverage at the MOF. We will work through the legal process on this and provide updates at the stoppy. The Darwin Port Corporation is suspected of contraventions of the WHS Act and the Regulator NT Worksafe seems reluctant to move on them. At the port it also seems that the CEO believes that if a manager is accused of bullying and harassment towards employees it is not as important as if it may be the other way around.

I've only identified a few of the positives and challenges. We cannot drop the ball in our region, though our biggest challenges for the membership here are the national issues as we face an ideological crusade against us from a government that hates organised workers that can't be easily exploited. A government that only serves themselves and those elites whose greed and gluttony drives them to support Abbot's toxicity. All members need to sign the petition to save our offshore jobs and turn up to the monthly meetings. We need to be at the rallies and the pickets. This union is only as strong as our member's activism.

IN UNITY, Thomas Mayor

# SEASWIFT - SAFETY OR DECIET

Branch Secretary Thomas Mayor has witnessed what can potentially be described as a deceitful and illegal act. Thomas believes that SeaSwift are, and should be aware that the Work Health and Safety Act in relation to an entry to inquire into a suspected contravention relating to or affecting a relevant worker, s.118 (1) of the WHS Act provides that the WHS entry permit holder (Thomas) may, while at the workplace, do all or any of the following in relation to the suspected contravention:

- a) inspect any work system, plant, substance, structure or other thing relevant to the suspected contravention;
- b) consult with the relevant workers in relation to the suspected contravention;
- c) consult with the relevant person conducting a business or undertaking about the suspected contravention;
- d) require the relevant person conducting a business or undertaking to allow the WHS entry permit holder to inspect, and make copies of, any document that is directly relevant to the suspected contravention and that:
  - (i) is kept at the workplace; or
  - (ii) is accessible from a computer that is kept at the workplace;
- e) warn any person whom the WHS entry permit holder reasonably believes to be exposed to a serious risk to his or her health or safety emanating from an immediate or imminent exposure to a hazard, of that risk.

Further, that a person (such as a CEO) under Section 144(1) of the WHS Act must not, without a reasonable excuse, refuse or unduly delay entry into a workplace by a WHS entry permit holder.

The union believes that the company lied that the operations had ceased for the day when the Branch Secretary exercised his WHS Right of Entry. Not only that, but while Thomas exercised his rights, they called the police and threatened that he was trespassing. "It is a real concern that this company is being manipulative and deceiving to keep a trained official from exercising a lawful right to inspect the workplace on behalf of workers" "If this company will go to the length of breaking the law when a union official inquires into a suspected contravention of the WHS Act, what are they hiding? How will they treat a worker who speaks up so that they can work and go home safely"

The NT Branch Secretary has formally raised this matter with NT WorkSafe as a clear breach of work health and safety laws and with comrades in QLD, will continue to assist SeaSwift workers in their struggles for a better deal from their employer.

# **NT BRANCH PICNIC DAY 2014**

**MONDAY 4 AUGUST FROM 10am**

**At the JINGILI WATERGARDENS**

***GREAT DAY FOR THE FAMILY!***

***FREE FOOD AND DRINK, JUMPING CASTLE, CLOWN, FACE  
PAINTING, AND THE ANNUAL TUG OF WAR AND FOOT  
RACES FOR ALL AGES!!***

# REMOTE RUMBLINGS



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***With no union for many years in remote Northern Territory ports, remote workers have fallen behind. The MUA is bringing a positive change; ...***

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... positive change could not have been achieved without strong new delegates in these remote areas and without focused strategy and investment from the MUA. In small remote ports, support can seem too far to reach, and the intimidation factor that incompetent bosses will play is amplified in effect in such isolation.

Groote Eylandt members have taken on what can be described as incompetent management that thought they knew better than the workers. Introducing change without genuine consultation and attacking safe manning, they didn't last long once the members said enough was enough using collective strength to expose the inconsistency and hypocrisy. The MUA has been actively supporting remote workers to address some serious safety and industrial issues.

At Bing Bong, negotiations continue with Carpentaria Shipping Services (P&O) towards their first solid union Agreement. For years the CSS members have faced substandard conditions. Their salaries had also lagged behind the rest of the industry substantially with GPH pay at only \$74,000 per annum.

Without the union the status quo in remote ports will continue: employers exploiting workers with substandard wages and conditions. With the workers united, we can make change for the better.

Below: Groote Eylandt GEMCOO Wharf

Melville Island Ezion Wharf in construction

