

ISSUE # 14

LOCAL NT BRANCH NEWS



UNDER THE CLP - NT WORK SAFE OR NT BOSS SAFE?

WHARVES AND WAVES

THE MUA TAKE IT TO THE CLP - DON'T SELL OUR PORT!



NOVEMBER 2014

BRANCH SECRETARY REPORT



In the past few months the union has taken on some massive challenges. Challenges that are, without exaggeration, about the very survival of sea going maritime employment in Australia.

The Federal Liberal Government has attacked Australian seafaring jobs in a way that can be described as traitorous. What else can you call it when there is not a skerrick of good for the nation in their policies; no social advantage, no environmental advantage, no economic advantage? Rather, their move to oust Australian seafarers for cheap foreign labour only gives advantage to their large corporate donors and therefore their blood sucking political interests.

Ultimately, the pressures on the resources of the union and the significance of the attacks mean that we either step up,

or we lose. That goes for the Branch Committee, the rank and file, and for me as a Branch Secretary. True to our reputation I believe that our union has stepped up to the plate. I have heard nothing in the way of complaint from members who have been asked to contribute a little more to fund the legal battles. Not from seafarers, wharfies, port workers, divers; not one complaint. The rank and file are stepping up and it makes me proud as an official and a member.

I have seen our membership step up at a recent rally. The MUA membership was a clear majority at the rally against port, insurance, and electricity supply privatisation; and to highlight that we won't accept a weak safety regulator. Our voices were heard loud and clear. **WE DON'T WANT THE CLP TO SELL OUR PUBLIC ASSETS AND BOSSES WHO BREACH SAFETY LAWS SHOULD BE PROSECUTED!** Our union is respected because we don't just talk the talk, but we walk the walk as well. We all need to make the effort to show our numbers at future rally's, pickets, and protests.

This will be the last Wharves and Waves for 2014. I hope to see as many members as possible at the MUA Christmas party. Thank you to the members that have been volunteering their time to help out in this busy time. Financially, the union's capacity is nowhere near that of the employers. It is the membership who help out in the Branch office, on the streets and at the rally's; on the job with courage and determination; those traits of this union keeps us in the fight to the benefit of us all.

IN UNITY, Thomas Mayor

NT Branch Secretary

NT BOSS SAFE

To workers, what was formerly known as NT Work Safe is now in the hands of the CLP. The bosses safety seems to be protected against prosecution for unsafe workplaces.....

The NT Branch of the MUA, along with other Unions affiliated with Unions NT, have had enough of a Regulator who is answerable to a Government who already has a distinct lack of respect for the working person. Not only has the Government launched an attack on workers compensation laws, lowering the protections for workers who are maimed on the job, but it has become increasingly apparent that they have tied the Safety Regulators hands up behind closed doors.

The Unions have witnessed employers who deceive, connive, and blatantly break the law; and despite the workers adhering to the legislation and raising these issues, despite the Unions adhering to the legislation and highlighting the contraventions; the Workplace Safety Regulator reluctantly sends inspectors to take action, the Regulator refuses to prosecute deceitful maritime employers. This has got to change.

Members will remember in the last edition of Wharves and Waves the example of Sea Swift's deception. This PCBU lied to the Regulator. The Union has been formally informed that there will be no prosecution.

The boss can sack a worker for working unsafe, but when a worker and their representatives call the Regulator to sort out the boss THEY DON'T EVEN GET A SLAP ON THE WRIST! We will take this fight up to the CLP; blood will be on their hands if workers are left without backup from a strong Regulator...



SALT WATER PEOPLE

The NT Branch of the MUA wishes to congratulate our indigenous brothers and sisters for their success in the maritime industry.

Larrakia and Tiwi men Kevin Allison and Chris Long completed the long cold college component of their Intergrated Tickets in Tasmania recently and have now stepped on to the Ndeavor rock dumper to commence knocking over their sea time training. All credit to these members for overcoming the difficulties of being away from home and culture. They join Larrakia and Noongah man Andrew Sutton who has already completed several months seetime with Tidewater.

Young indigenous woman Myra Leong has also taken the big decision to step up from working in the industry as a deckhand to being an IR. Myra is a descendant of the Gurindji people who fought for fair wages and conditions at Wave Hill, eventually winning after a long and difficult struggle when Gough Whitlam made the iconic gesture of giving back part of the Gurindji land: “Vincent Lingiari, I solemnly hand to you these deeds as proof, in Australian law, that these lands belong to the Gurindji people, and I put into your hands this piece of the earth itself as a sign that we restore them to you and your children forever.”

Congratulations are deserved to these courageous members who are leading the way for Territorian Indigenous maritime workers.



P.O.M.S HAVE IT WRONG IN BING BONG

The MUA members on the vessel Aburri at the port of Bing Bong, after seeking for the ability to hold a ballot for protected action against P & O Maritime Services at the port of Bing Bong, have achieved an agreement in principal that delivers a salary increase in the vicinity of over \$10,000 in the first year including allowances.

The Aburri members are on a non union EA that left pay increases at the companies discretion. Like any Enterprise Agreement where a company is not bound to give payrises and can decide themselves who and when (if at all) a payrise happens, the Aburri crew pretty much got nothing since 2009. Crew had a go over the years though without a coordinated united approach with the support of the unions expertise progress was slow.

The MUA members stood solid in the face of veiled threats from management in the lead up to the Protected Action ballot application. Their determination have now moved a company that previously refused to budge.

With agreement in principal now reached for an EA that not only delivers salary outcomes, but also vast improvements to conditions and clarity in the EA; the delegates and Branch Secretary Thomas Mayor are working on drafting the final Agreement with the company. **Well Done Aburri Members!**

JKC MODULE OFFLOADING FACILITY NOT A WHARF?!

Well, According to JKC and INPEX there is no stevedoring being done at the Blaydin Point Module Offloading (MOF) Facility, it is purely construction... They probably believe that the ships delivering the modules are actually trucks as well. They should get their heads out of the sand and stick them in the ocean to see there aren't any wheels on those trucks.

When Branch Secretary Thomas Mayor gave notice that he intended to enter the site he was confronted with the ludicrous notion that there was not stevedoring and therefore no MUA coverage of the workers. It is amazing how far JKC and INPEX will go to keep a decent union from standing up for their employees.

The MUA has been to Fair Work Australia over this matter and will soon be taking the matter to the Federal Court. It is the unions view that JKC is breaching the law in its hindrance of the union.

The workers on the MOF have said they want MUA coverage. JKC likes to treat workers like idiots it seems, but the workers know that they are tying up ships not trucks....



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CONTACT LUKE MILLER

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TO BOOK AN APOINTMENT

BUSY PORT MUST ADD UP TO JOBS!

Although the wharf is at its busiest in many years, our stevedore membership are still being forced to fight for permanent jobs.

PORT OF DARWIN STATISTICS

- Vessel visits to Darwin's East Arm Wharf have increased by **107% in two years.**
- Since the year 2000, containerised cargo to East Arm has increased by **332%.** Since 2012/2013 it has increase by **53%.**
- In year 2013/2014 there was **122 Livestock Vessel Visits.**
- **3178 trading vessels** port called East Arm Wharf in 2013/2014.

Stevedore members at East Arm Wharf are flat out. And it doesn't look like slowing down for some time. Despite the port being at its busiest for many years, the wharfies are still largely casualised.

Both QUBE and Patrick rank and file have taken up the fight to see an increase in permanent jobs. As expected, the claims from the membership were met with all manner of excuses.

At Patrick, the members have seen some success through a campaign that benefited from the solidarity of our wider membership, and through the determination of the committee and members. Patrick have recently agreed to employ more permanent and guaranteed wage earners.

The struggle with QUBE continues with the claim being equal to their equally busy competitor. In a port that is as busy as Darwin, 20 permanent positions is balanced and reasonable. Just like with the Patrick membership, QUBE members will need to stick together and push hard for the right outcome.

Congratulations to the new permanents at Patrick, and Solidarity to QUBE members.

MUA UNION AWARENESS COURSE

16, 17, and 18 February 2015

**TIME IS LIMITED, CALL THE
BRANCH TO BOOK YOUR
ATTENDANCE!**



MARITIME SUPER SEMINAR

TUESDAY 2 DECEMBER

Port Function Centre at Stokes Hill Wharf from 1pm

Lunch and Refreshments will be provided

Maritime Super
OUR FUTURE

MUA TAKES ON INSHORE DIVING ISSUES



Inshore divers working in the NT, and no doubt elsewhere, have been paying the price for inshore diving companies who have taken bad advice. The type of bad advice that only the big end of town truly benefits from.

When the INPEX pre construction dive work commenced, the union began discussions with the Australian Mines and Metals Association to ensure that a common, decent set of terms of employment were established for any dive company that gained work.

The first company to win a large scope of work was Tek Dive. Tek performed the pre-construction work prior to the dredging. Some divers joined the MUA while a majority; happy with the way Tek treated them, decided they were happy with Tek and did not join the union.

Following the first stage of diving work, when the diving workforce went from around 60 divers to 8 divers, an Enterprise Agreement was rushed through by Tek without the union knowing until it was up for registration with the Fair Work Commission. A company that had once had a good dialogue with the union suddenly would not answer the unions calls or emails; eventually responding that they will not respond unless through Australian Mines and Metals Association representatives. Clearly, they were advised on how to rush a non union EA through.

The EA that was rushed through without union input was disappointing in its terms and conditions. Terms and conditions that were far less than the union knew to be possible. It was especially disappointing in that it started a race to the bottom. Neptune soon followed suit and again the divers did not seek the advice and support of the union; another step in the race to the bottom.

With the door opened to any company with a snorkel, Seaforce soon entered the scene undercutting both companies who had been in Darwin for many years. Now Seaforce has driven divers to a point where it is either continue to dive for little money, with terrible conditions, and woeful safety standards; or join the union and have a go. And have a go is what we are doing.

This is not a shot at divers, but for the union to be effective we need members, and we need unity. Without those things we have no way to change the status quo. We need to learn from the past as well.

Seaforce has been contacted by the union with a range of safety and industrial matters that must be addressed.

S.O.S. SAVE OUR STELLAS!

Stella Maris Darwin, a part of Darwin's history that has been special to many maritime workers and generally the Darwin community. Former Stellas bar maid and proud MUA Branch Committee member Christine Von Wooten organised a reunion of Stellas stalwarts in October. The event was arranged to send a message to the NT Government who blew over a million dollars of NT tax payers money on an inquiry that only produced fantasized headlines; the message was that unions do have a strong historical link with the site and it is a special place that we will not let go of easily.

At the gathering, a Save Our Stellas (SOS) committee was formed to take the fight to the CLP and any developers. They will have the support of the unions. It is a worthy fight to have.

The CLP soon announced that the lease will be handed to the National Trust. The SOS committee has welcomed the news that the lease is going to a community organisation. The SOS committee has informed the union that they have requested a meeting with the National Trust to discuss how the historic link with the Darwin community, unions and maritime workers can be respected.



BARGAINING ROUNDS

The union has kicked off bargaining on Groote Eylandt for the BHP GEMCO replacement EA. This will be the first time that the MUA will participate in this area. The MUA now covers the workers at the Port in connection with the loading of manganese. The first round of meetings is now set for December and the membership have endorsed a log of claims.

Bargaining is also commencing at Toll Marine Logistics. The TML seafarers EA is reaching expiry at the end of November and bargaining will commence on 25 November of this year. With bargaining commencing with Toll, all community/coastal barge companies are in bargaining giving landing coastal community seafarers their first industry wide push to improve their salaries and conditions.

The EA discussions with Bhagwan continue as the company faces deserved criticism on a number of fronts. Bhagwan has used the loyalty of their long time employees in Western Australia to hand them a substantial pay cut. A majority of the WA Bhagwan crew chose to go it alone, ignoring the unions advice, and heeding the whimpers of Bhagwan's top brass who cried poor. Those workers were rewarded with a substantial pay cut delivered through a sneaky clause. A pay cut that could potentially add up to tens of thousands of dollars. Now there are also accusation against Bhagwan for ripping off indigenous workers and treating trainees like slave labour. With their growing reputation of skulduggery, if there is truth in this it would be hardly surprising. The NT Branch will be discussing this matter with the WA Branch as it is very possible that indigenous trainees may have been exploited by Bhagwan in the same manner in Darwin. Unfortunately Bhagwan's bad form does not end there. QLD Organiser Jason Miners has been having trouble engaging in meaningful discussions with Bhagwan in the East. It should be noted by all that Bhagwan is a company that posted a

Defence Maritime Services (DMS) bargaining has commenced with the first round of bargaining being about DMS allowing delegates to attend negotiations. The MUA stands firm with members to ensure that they are at the table. DMS will be reluctant to give any decent outcome to DMS crew if they are not united with strong representation; DMS is owned by Serco Sodexo, a company that has been known for the appalling treatment of their workers around the world.

Sea Swift has called on employees to submit claims for a new Agreement. While we are not yet formally in bargaining (according to the company) the pressure that the union has put on and the demands of the members are achieving progress towards a deal that lifts their pay and conditions up to the industry standard. If the Sea Swift members stay solid and put their faith in the union a win is possible.

DON'T FORGET THE MAGGOT ABBOTT SAID THIS:

“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...

RADIO-ACTIVE WASTE

GOVERNMENT STILL UP TO THEIR OLD ANTICS

In June 2014 the federal government announced it would no longer pursue a site on the Muckaty Land Trust (120km north of Tennant Creek) for location of a national radioactive waste dump.

The MUA in the NT and nationally spearheaded trade union involvement and support for the eight-year campaign, holding a rally at Stokes Hill Wharf, welcoming Muckaty speakers at work sites and highlighting risks to members who would be handling materials destined for the site.

MUA officials joined a union delegation in 2011, meeting Traditional Owners in Tennant Creek and visiting the proposed site, which built momentum for resolutions of industrial action if the plan progressed. Maurice Blackburn Social Justice Practice launched a federal court challenge to the site nomination, greatly raising the profile of the campaign. In mid-June half way through proceedings the government agreed not to further act on the nomination.

Minister Ian Macfarlane- who called the Muckaty process “a disaster”- gave the Northern Land Council (NLC) and Central Land Council (CLC) three months to find a new site on Aboriginal Land, again pressuring communities that are suffering due to widespread cuts to essential funding and services.

Preliminary meetings were held to discuss a site near the old Tanami gold mine, but CLC has since issued a statement saying the site does not meet the government’s criteria of being ‘uncontested’.

Unions NT assisted Walpiri Traditional Owners to travel from Alice Springs to attend the preliminary meetings and voice their objections.

Macfarlane has indicated intention to open a nationwide site volunteer process, inviting public comments on the idea. MUA endorsed a civil society submission calling for the government to use this juncture (with no site nominated) to initiate a Commission of Inquiry into all radioactive waste management options, not limited to a centralised remote facility. Sadly the Northern Land Council has recently announced it is preparing an anthropology report and will soon open consultations on the possibility of nominating a new site at Muckaty. In response, Traditional Owners Dianne Stokes and Penny Phillips wrote:

We fought hard for our people to get Land Rights. The old people that have gone, they fought hard and now people are trying to sell their soul and country- again. We had just relaxed after stopping the waste dump and now they came back and kicked us in the guts. It looks like the same mob are going to be fighting again.

Progressing radioactive waste management requires moving beyond the Muckaty style approach of offering essential services in exchange for toxic waste. Workers on the frontline have stood firmly against this radioactive racism. This unity will continue to ensure safety of workers and justice for remote communities.

November 12, 2014

Natalie Wasley- Beyond Nuclear Initiative

WOMEN'S REPORT

The women's committee got together in October with the biggest turn out to date, with staunch delegate representation amongst us.

The Branch sends a big thank you to all that attended. We had Erica Seipel Our NT National Rep and special guest Mich-Elle Myers from national office. There was much on the agenda for discussion.

With the high number of members going through depression due to work injuries, Mischell Hodgson has been working with the Branch Secretary Thomas Mayor and the branch committee to start a support group within the branch. The concept will be called Mates in Maritime providing a network for members to share experiences and offer support. The women's committee strongly endorsed the idea and are calling for any input from members, and or volunteers.

There was also interest shown in starting a buddy program or sister mentoring program within the branch. This would be where a new member would have a direct contact to another member to talk to about any issues, the history of the union, and to get the encouragement they may need. This would also in turn create more activism with solid unionism.

Other items on the agenda were political engagement, the Port Welfare committee, and the importance that the branch has in showing support on the front line by getting involved with the committee

Next meeting TBA.

Christine Von Wootten
Branch Committee Member





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MUA PICNIC DAY IN BORROLOOLA!

The members of the Aburri in Bing Bong decided mid this year to put some of their rolling funds in to building relationships with the community they work in. The crew teamed up with the NT Branch and United Voice who also have members in the region to put on a picnic day.

Staunch MUA member Christo Beck performed magic for the kids. The local Aboriginal kids were amazed with Christo fast becoming a celebrity. Adding to the entertainment was a tug o' war competition and a jumping castle and waterslide. The NT Branch BBQ trailer came in handy with its 12 burners, worth the tow all the way from Darwin.

Branch Secretary Thomas Mayor made it along thanks to a last minute Charter Plane opportunity, bringing good news to the crew of the Aburri regarding the mornings Fair Work hearing that kept him in Darwin. He thanks the Labor Party leader Delia Lawrie for the spare seat on their outing for consultations with the Borroloola people.

It was great to be welcomed, with the women and children performing traditional dance and sharing their stories.

Local Borroloola resident and delegate on the Aburri did a great job organising the day, using his local knowledge and contacts to pull it all together. A special mention must also go out to Branch Committee Member 'Shrek' and Beth Luck from United Voice for their efforts with the Amazing Christo and the MUA Branch Office staff.





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