



THE MARITIME WORKERS' JOURNAL

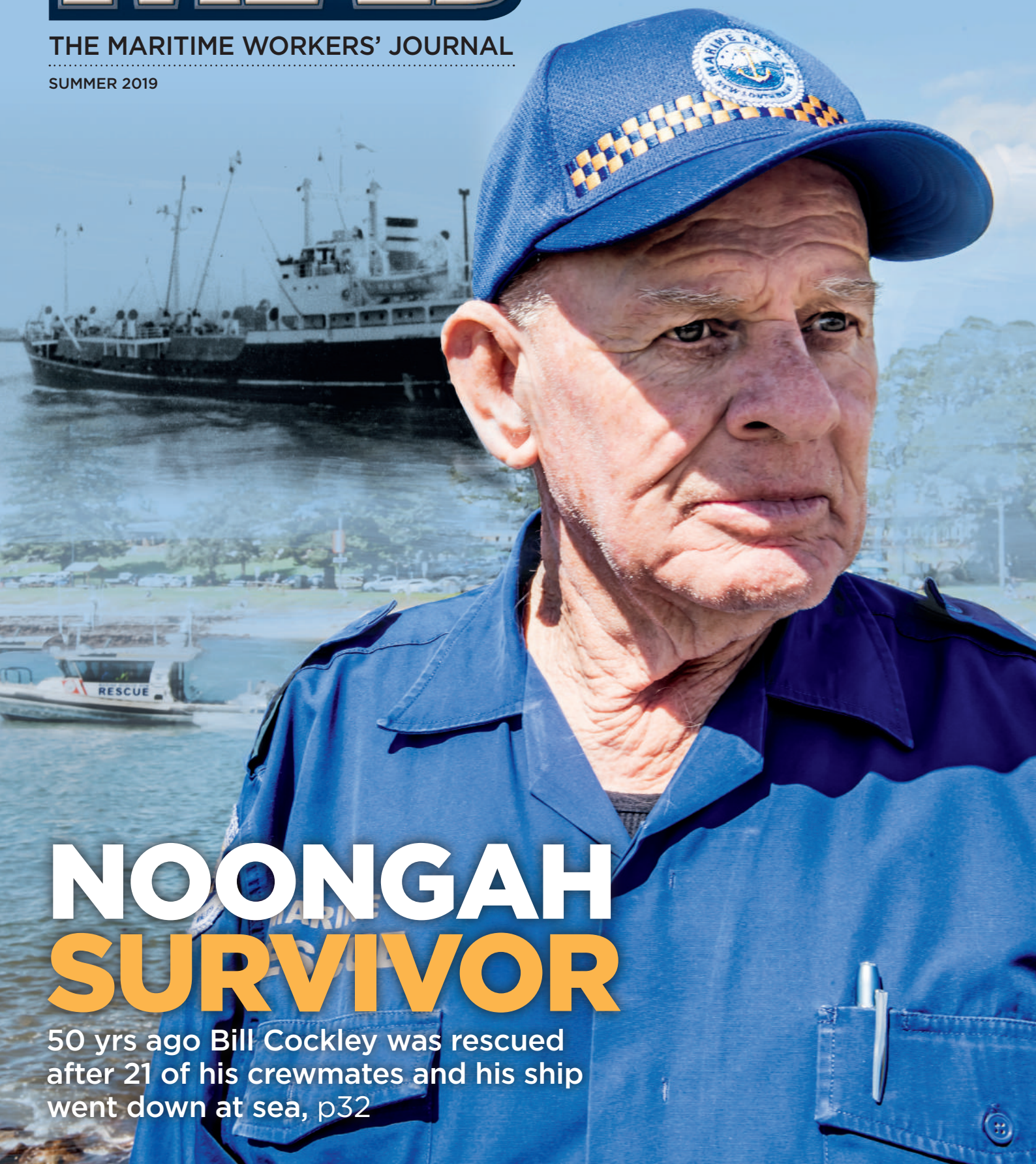
SUMMER 2019

## DP World Dispute Breakthrough

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# NOONGAH SURVIVOR

50 yrs ago Bill Cockley was rescued  
after 21 of his crewmates and his ship  
went down at sea, p32











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# LOGGING ON

## Elders past, present and emerging

PADDY CRUMLIN

One of the important social and community contributions of our Aboriginal and First Nations' culture and spirituality is welcome to country.

Like all the essential values of our first people, it is a reminder and a reinforcement of how mature, functional and durable societies and communities are created.

After more than 60,000 years of diversity in Indigenous language, community and culture, embedded in a deep and abiding respect for the land that we live on, the lessons and guidance of that history are essential to a balanced and full understanding by all of us of what it means to be Australian.

Thomas Mayor is an emerging leader of his people. He is also an emerging leader of working women and men. His book *Finding the Heart of the Nation* is a rich, important and empathetic record of many present Indigenous elders.

The book reveals a diversity of personalities and their local environments, their cultural independence and their overriding love and compassion; not only for the misused and abused within those communities over many generations of

white settlement, but also for many of the institutions and people responsible for those injustices.

The book reflects an understanding that those actions were driven by prejudice, fear and ignorance. It is of enormous contemporary significance at a time when genuine justice, recognition and material support need an Indigenous voice embedded in our constitution.

Thomas's recital of the Uluru Statement at his book launch at the MUA in Sydney was from the heart, not read but spoken with nuance and feeling. It was both an appeal and demand for justice and understanding.

His emerging leadership and those of his Indigenous peers is a statement for all Australians of how we as a nation can regain our dignity and apply ourselves with decent and sustained determination to ensure those mistakes never happen again.

Many great elders have kept Australian, NZ and international maritime workers afloat against the elitist, wasteful and politicised circles who exploit our labour in what is and

will continue to be an industry that lies at the heart of our national interest and world trade. Dave Morgan was one of those elders.

Dave shipped out of Adelaide with his mate Bronco O'Neill in the early sixties. They were keenly aware of and committed to trade unionism and socialism. They were young and forthright delegates in our union campaign for better overtime for weekend work at sea.

Like many young seafarers, they decided to ship out into what was then a genuine international industry; not one with great pay, but a boiler room of political activism, adventure and opportunity. They didn't make it far. NZ was a jumping-off point for Scousers, Canadians, Geordies, and a diaspora of seafarers from many other countries. It had a shipping industry embedded in a culture of militancy and activism stemming from the seamen's union of Australasia – a single union up to 1920.

Bronco came home a socialist, community activist and rank-and-file leader. Dave stayed on and became the Littleton secretary of the NZ SUA and subsequently president of the union. An Australian leader in NZ just as the great



# ***“In our union movement we are used to a robust process of selection of leaders with an understanding that the job is not for the faint-hearted.”***

Elliot v Elliot was a New Zealander who led the Seamen's Union of Australia.

Dave's life in New Zealand was shaped by many industrial disputes in the fight for trade union rights, politics based on justice and redistribution not greed and elitism and, most of all, the right to work in the maritime industry. He led boycotts of Chilean ships after President Allende's murder in 1973 and took his union and the NZ trade union movement into the great struggle against apartheid through international boycotts. He was a senior and respected leader of the ITF in the development of the flag of convenience ship campaign.

Dave was self-educated; wise in practice and experience as well as in political theory and strategy. He was a constant contributor to our national council in all of our national and international considerations over many decades.

MUA retired deputy national secretary Mick Doleman, me and NZ maritime

president Joe Fleetwood, together with hundreds of Dave's comrades, friends and family laid our old comrade to rest on Sunday 10 November at his home town outside of Wellington. We shared a wonderful day that was certainly full of sadness but also a celebration of Dave and his long-term partner Maggie's political community activism and courage.

Amongst the power and spirit of a Maori farewell and the respect, empathy and deep appreciation of most of the NZ progressive political movement, we made our farewell to an elder now past but who still resonates among us.

**W**e have always needed leadership and leaders to inspire us, take us forward and remind us of past mistakes in order not to repeat them. In our union movement we are used to a robust process of selection of leaders with an understanding that the

job is not for the faint-hearted

Our last election has seen rank-and-file leaders leave office and return to the workplace or retire, and new rank-and-file leaders take their place. We have a strong union culture based on accountability from officials to the members.

It is predictable but nevertheless wasteful and unfortunate when this democracy that is essential to our political and industrial independence is ridiculed, vilified and diminished from some quarters internally and externally – whether on Facebook or the front page of *The Australian*.

We expect this from our media and political institutions and hired guns; whether it be the Registered Organisations Commission, the Australian Building and Construction Commission or increasingly the civil justice system.

It is lies and vilification based on internal and external advocates of division and fake news. Those officials who have left deserve the greatest respect for their and their families' courage and commitment to our union and members.

Newly elected officials also deserve respect and support in battling the greatest attack on maritime workers and workers generally that Australia has ever encountered. The Ensuring Integrity Bill is designed to break our union and replace it with exploitation, abusive manipulation of the workplace and criminal activity including tax avoidance and wage theft.

Congratulations to those officials – elders in their own right – who have moved on from office. And congratulations and all our support to our newly elected team of comrades who are now charged with the responsibility to help us all navigate these dark and dangerous waters. MUA here to stay!! ■



Dave and I at the NZSU special Maritime conference in 1986





## Top level talks bring long-awaited breakthrough.

**T**op-level talks between the union and DP World executives, against the backdrop of renewed industrial action and pledges of support from world dock workers, look set to resolve one of the most bitter and prolonged enterprise agreement disputes on the Australian waterfront in recent times.

Paddy Crumlin, MUA divisional National Secretary of the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union and head of the International Transport Workers' Dockers Section, Deputy National Secretary Will Tracey and National President Christy Cain met top executives of DP World Australia at Melbourne airport on 6 November.

The union and company represented by CEO Glen Hilton and Chief Operating Officer, Terminals, Andrew Adam, went a long way towards reaching an in-principle agreement.

As MWJ went to press, the national (Part A) in-principle agreement had gone to the membership to discuss, with Melbourne members cheering the significant win on automation and other key issues. However, talks are continuing over local terminal clauses (Part B) which still have a long way to go.

Before the latest rounds of negotiations, 200 waterside workers' jobs were at stake, along with the loss of union coverage to outsourcing, and further job losses to come with automation. This was all at a time when global stevedoring giant DP World's profit margin hit 50% – around triple the average profit margin for Australian stevedores over the past decade.

DP World had also been attempting to axe income insurance, deregulate the workplace and increase casual and irregular work.

"We don't accept workers and their families being left worse off because DP World wants to use income protection

and the welfare of our families as bargaining chips," Crumlin said.

The company wanted to outsource jobs and leave the way open for technological change and automation to replace workers and undermine job conditions.

### OUTSOURCING

One of the many big-ticket items up for grabs in the EBA was DP World's insistence on outsourcing.

Cargo Care covers operation of reefers (refrigerated containers) on site. These jobs were tipped to go to cheap, non-union labour brought into the terminal. Reefer work was hard won by the union during the advent of containerisation in the 1960s.

Maintenance and refuelling jobs were also up for grabs throughout the country.

"We reject our traditional work being outsourced," the union submitted in correspondence to the Australian Council



Paddy Crumlin addresses  
DP World wharfies, ILWU  
President Willie Adams and  
media at Port Botany



of Trade Unions. "Outsourced work regularly goes to non-union companies, with reduced rates of pay and reductions in safety. It is a union-busting exercise and we are determined to fight it with your support."

### **AUTOMATION**

DP World CEO Glen Hilton's declaration in the *Australian Financial Review* that the company intended to automate fuelled the dispute.

"The union demands a strong automation clause in this EBA document to prevent the wholesale slaughter of wharfies' jobs through unregulated and uncontrolled union busting," said Assistant National Secretary Warren Smith, who leads the negotiations.

"We are opposed to full automation and will fight against it when it is not in the interests of our members, families and communities," he said.

"If DP World declare they want to automate, then we are seeking job security provisions and protections

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**"The key to moving DP World has been industrial action. You can have whatever solidarity in the world, but without industrial action you won't win and sometimes with industrial action alone you won't win."** - WARREN SMITH

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from union-busting abuse. We demand prevention of the transfer of wharfies' work to management, which is a stated aim of DPW [DP World].

"Automation is being weaponised by businesses to cut costs, cut jobs, and cut conditions," he said. "Automation is not a productivity driver; it is purely an anti-union attack and union-busting strategy."

A recent survey by global management consulting company McKinsey – published as *The Future of Automated Ports* in December 2018 – reported that at fully automated terminals, the average number of gross moves per hour for quay cranes – a key indicator of productivity – was in the low 20s. At many conventional terminals, it is in the high 30s.

For the union the key issue is jobs.

"We've got a clause in the Sydney EBA that automation must come with a 32-hour week, which is job saving," said Smith. "The reduction in hours is mitigation against redundancies. They want a 35-hour week. We want 32 hours."

"What we've done is set a principle of lower hours. This is the main union strategy for dealing with automation," Smith said. "No forced redundancies."

"Also, any automation has to stay on the wharves," he said. "All remotely controlled operations have to be internal. We're not copping it going elsewhere, whether that's Chullora, Manila, Dubai or Shanghai."

"Training up for the remote control and automation jobs is not enough," he added. "What's the point of training 30 people for one job? Training is a myth. Training doesn't create jobs, it creates the capacity for one worker who was doing one job to go and do 30."

"What we've done is set a principle of lower hours so if they automate in the future, a 32-hour week will mean no job loss," Smith said.

Officials met in early October to look at what was happening with automation and jobs internationally and finalise the union's position. (See p10)

### **COMPANY CRACKS**

In a major breakthrough for the union, in the September round of negotiations the company dropped any further move to automate or outsource. It had also dropped its claim for compulsory redundancies, axing income protection and a 1% pay rise. Instead, it is offering a 3% pay rise at a time when the CPI stands at around 1%.

But it was still not enough to lock in an agreement in the last round of talks. And DPW came back to the negotiating table in October playing hardball.

"The key to moving DP World has been industrial action," said Smith. "You can have whatever solidarity in the world, but without industrial action you won't win and sometimes with industrial action alone you won't win."

"We've had both. Industrial action across four ports. Then the roll-out of the most spectacular solidarity campaign across scores and scores of unions internationally through the ITF dockers section, through the International Dockworkers Council. Unions are coming out and making very clear statements to DP World that our fight was their fight. And we haven't taken that to the next step yet."

"The message is out there, and I think it's pretty clear to multinational corporations that if you've got 20 dockers' unions all around the world coming at you, it's going to have an impact on your bottom line somewhere."

"But you don't get anywhere without taking action. The workers, to their credit, have just stuck and never blued about escalating the action."

With local union solidarity cranking up alongside community support, the union continues to build critical pressure on DP World.

"The MUA understands this is a very difficult time for many members but what we are fighting for is fundamental to the future of wharfies and whether we ever have a say in our workplaces," Smith said.





"Despite the difficulty there is no option for us but to hold the line and escalate the dispute until the company cracks."

Delegates in all four ports rejected as untenable DP World's earlier refusal to negotiate with MUA bargaining teams. The company's attempts to ram through claims using the Introduction of Change provision in the agreement was rejected "as a dishonest back-door attempt to win claims other than by negotiation".

"This may well be a big industry-defining struggle," said Smith. "We remain determined to win and to push back the corporate union-busting agenda of the big stevedores."

### GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

At the height of the dispute, Willie Adams, President of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union flew to Sydney from San Francisco to support the struggle.

Introducing Adams at a gathering the evening before a workplace meeting at DP World, delegate Naomi Cain gave an impassioned speech. She described how her comrades were fighting for the right to work and to protect their jobs, hours and rosters.

"We are opposing automation as a union-busting tool," she said. "We are opposing DP World's outsourcing jobs to non-union workers and companies

to replace us with cheaper labour. We are opposing DP World shedding permanent jobs.

"We are fighting for 10 days' leave for domestic violence and to maintain our income protection insurance.

"We will continue to stand up and resist the corporate agenda against dockers. We are bound in struggle with the ILWU," she said.

Warren Smith highlighted how the union was not alone fighting a giant corporation. He recalled how the ILWU turned back the *Columbus Canada* in Los Angeles during the Patrick dispute in 1998.

"The workers of the world are behind us," he said. "International solidarity is the lifeblood of struggle. ILWU blues have always been our blues, and our blues have always been theirs."

Willie Adams vowed to stand with the Australian workers.

"We support you, we will die with you," he pledged. "I want to thank DP World. They did us a favour. They united us. People all over the world have weighed in. DP World, thank you so much for bringing dockers together all over the world.

"I wish we had a blue every year, because you know what – a fighter needs a fight every three months to stay in shape. If you only fight every two to three years you become fat, you become apathetic and you don't train," he said.

"When you are constantly under the gun you are hungry, but you are strong.

"They are going to see we still have the militancy and the guts and we're going to fight them. I came here to see the workers of DP World and stand in solidarity with my brothers and sisters.

"I know what it is to be afraid, I know what it is to struggle. We'll ratchet this thing up if we have to. If I have to come back I'll bring my officers and I'll bring my members and we'll go toe to toe with you.

"The younger generation are going to take dockers into the future of new technology and automation," he said. "We can't fear automation and technology. Why do you think we've been around so long? Because we've been fearless. We need to show the employers. We need to be leading."

The next day, Adams addressed the workforce and TV cameras in the DP World car park after the company denied officials access to the terminal. Adams again stressed his support and said the ILWU, the IDC and ITF dockers all around the globe were standing in solidarity with DPW workers.

Newly elected federal Labor senator and former Transport Workers' Union secretary Tony Sheldon also addressed the workers.

"What's happening at DP World is the same fight that is happening





**“They are going to see we still have the militancy and the guts and we’re going to fight them. I came here to see the workers of DP World and stand in solidarity with my brothers and sisters. We’ll ratchet this thing up if we have to. We’ll go toe to toe with you.”** – WILLIE ADAMS



right across our economy,” he told the workers. “The government is failing to act with this new technology and automation. People’s jobs are going and yet there is no career path, no job path.

“We’ve got stagnant wages, we’ve got insurance going up, we’ve got private health cover going through the roof. We’ve seen families not being able to pay their bills and we’ve got companies talking about outsourcing – just to bust Australian wages.

“The battle you are taking up is the battle for everyone. My heart is with you. I am your servant in this battle,” Sheldon said.

Warren Smith stressed the need for an agreement that can deal

with technological change, without threatening jobs.

“We will not stand to have automation, technology and outsourcing used as a union-busting tool and be stood over. We are not going to cop that. What we’re seeing is that many, many workers around the world are standing up and saying that’s not good enough.”

Paddy Crumlin called for permanency of employment and quality family time.

“We’re prepared to work hard, we’re prepared to work with the company, but we’re not going to cop this shit,” he emphasised.

“Workers everywhere deserve the same rights, the same respect, freedom of association and the right

to collectively bargain. This company is trying to manipulate the situation through bad industrial laws and by not bargaining in good faith.”

Speaking on behalf of Port Botany workers, branch secretary Paul McAleer said the dispute was a stark reminder that the system protects bad bosses and attacks good workers.

“Never have I seen DP World management act with so much hostility and contempt for their workforce,” he said. “Their attempts to wind back job security and conditions of employment will be met with equal force. We will be unrelenting in delivering a safe and dignified outcome for our membership.” ■





# ROBOTS DON'T FEED THE KIDS

Key waterfront union officials gather in Sydney to review global port automation and develop the union policy – no fully automated terminals; no job loss, no jobs to go outside the terminal.



**D**igitised ports risk becoming a global industry controlled and operated offshore by non-union labour in the far away offices of global network terminal operators.

Despite poor productivity and glitches that come with the developing technology, port automation is expanding, taking critical national infrastructure even beyond government control.

With port digitisation, advanced terminal operating systems like Navis N4 (the brains of automation) can, reportedly, be used from any geographical centre to operate multiple geographical centres.

Even attempts to operate yard cranes, RGBs and quay cranes remotely offshore are underway in Australia and Norway. Perhaps elsewhere. Artificial intelligence is on the way. Governments appear to remain indifferent.

Port maps show automation is mainly centered in high-wage nations, indicating it is also a union-busting tool.

Key MUA officials from around the terminals got together in Sussex Street in October to brainstorm a collective nationwide stance at the union's Waterfront Commission review into terminal automation.

Strategies of key global affiliates and the International Transport Workers' Federation came under the microscope.

"International automation studies (like the ILWU Canada Prism Economics report) estimate that in brownfield sites automation leads to 50% job loss," Assistant National Secretary Warren Smith reported.

"With fully automated terminals on greenfield sites there is 90% job loss.

"Wave one is like the ATM machine," said Smith. "Wave two is us. Wave three is when cranes have AI and can think for themselves."

Loss of waterfront jobs was also a loss for communities. The economy needed workers to buy things. Robots don't shop.

"The problem we have with automation is job loss," said Deputy National Secretary Will Tracey. "We know the world is changing. To stop the loss of jobs, we need to reduce hours, not people."

In Adelaide, Branch Secretary Jamie Newlyn is confronting Flinders Ports over moves to bring in autostrads. Hutchison is pushing for fully automatic stacking cranes. Patrick halved its workforce with automated straddles in Sydney, but is now hiring most of them back as casuals. It has a joint venture with NSW Ports to automate rail. The fully automated VICT Melbourne terminal is offshoring landside operations to Manila. The ITF has targeted it as a port of convenience.

Sydney Branch Secretary Paul McAleer argued against any automation. It was a



death warrant for the union, he said with passion. It should be stopped completely.

"Not everyone sees it as Luddite," he said. "The community have supported organic, sustainable things like handmade vinyl records."

After debate, a consensus was reached on opposing fully automated terminals.

Participants at the round table examined the different response dock-worker unions had taken around the world. They concluded one of the best models is that of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) on the US East Coast. The ILA negotiated a contract that excludes fully automatic terminals, protects jobs and provides royalties based on container movements when semi-automatic operations are brought in.

The ILA also has a policy based on productivity. Remote-control cranes only notch up half the productivity rate of drivers in traditional cranes. The union has campaigned that if the automated equipment is not as good as human beings, the companies cannot install it. A crane driver can punch out 50 forties (40-foot containers) an hour, a remote-control crane 24.

"We live in an age of automation and technology, but we ask why should robots and machines be used in a way that does not contribute to any positive social development?" the (draft) MUA automation position paper arising from the meeting states.

"Advanced new technologies are giving the employers the opportunity to displace

human beings with machines and algorithm-driven computer programs.

"The gain is only for employers, who make huge profits at the expense of their redundant workforces."

The position paper concludes that the way automation is going is not "a pro human or pro community view of the world. It is not a union view of the world."

The threat to workers' jobs and economic and social impacts on the community, it says, are very real:

"Robots don't pay tax. Robots don't feed the kids. Robots offer no opportunities for our children."

The following policy motion went to the October national council and will go to a vote of members at the upcoming AGMs in November:

**1** No fully automated terminal will be established or fully automated equipment deployed (including driverless and AI-controlled equipment/machinery. Fully automated for purposes of this clause refers to machinery/equipment) devoid of human interaction in the operation of machine or equipment control functions.

**2** No introduction of semi-automated terminals, or technology except by agreement by both parties prior to its implementation.

**3** There will be no loss of jobs due to automation or technological change.

**4** No existing or future terminal machinery, equipment, terminal operating systems or terminal access and entry gates will be operated by remote control outside of the terminal area to the exclusion of workers covered by this agreement. All terminal machinery and operating systems shall be operated and covered by workers under this agreement. This includes all non-management roles within the terminal.

**5** Therefore, the MUA shall have coverage of all new roles, classifications, categories, and/or jobs that are created as a result of automation or technological change despite the change in the way the function is carried out as a result of automation or technological change. All roles in connection with terminal operating systems and equipment will be covered under a stevedoring agreement. ■

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***"The problem we have with automation is job loss. We know the world is changing. To stop the loss of jobs, we need to reduce hours, not people."*** - WILL TRACEY

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# SPOTLIGHT ON PORT SECURITY

Questions are raised in parliament as a key security expert warns that offshoring automated port operations is fraught with risk.

**A** Labor senator has raised security questions in parliament around the offshoring of jobs at the Victorian International Container Terminal (VICT), Melbourne.

Speaking to the Senate Estimates Committee on 21 October, Kimberley Kitching questioned Paul Grigson, Deputy Secretary Security and Resilience at the Department of Home Affairs.

Kitching asked whether some critical functions at VICT were outsourced to a company in Manila in the Philippines.

She also asked whether the security gates, automatic stacking cranes and terminal operating systems were offshored to Manila and whether Philippines workers had to undergo any of the security checks Australian workers do.

Grigson said he did not know, but would take the questions on notice and find out.

Kitching then raised the question of security gate breaches at VICT.

"If you are a truck driver you show up at the Port of Melbourne and your entire interaction would be with someone who is in Manila, in the Philippines. Correct? So, I guess the question is, without physical verification, what is to stop multiple drivers from using the same card?"

Grigson said he knew of no such incidents.

"Theoretically could someone in Manila remotely open a security gate without a security card," she asked.

"I'd have to check for you the operating technology in play," Grigson responded.

"So, someone who has not gone through any level of security screening could let anyone they liked into a major Australian port?" Kitching persisted.

Raising the spectre of cyber security breaches, Kitching asked if there was any oversight of the cyber security infrastructure and measures employed by ICTSI Manila operations. Had Home Affairs done an audit of the Port of Melbourne.

"We do the audits, but I don't know if we have done that asset," Grigson replied.

A cyber security attack brought the Maersk/APM global shipping and port empire to a standstill in 2017, Kitching said.

"Are you concerned that running many critical functions of the Port of Melbourne offshore, where we have no or little oversight, puts it at a greater risk of a similar data breach?" she asked.

Again, Grigson said he would need to look into it.

"Under the Security of Critical Infrastructure Act (SCI) there is a register of critical infrastructure assets whereby owners and operators of relevant critical infrastructure assets had six months from 11 July 2018 to register ownership and operational information on the register," said Kitching. "Has ICTSI registered the VICT terminal?" she asked.

"I'll check," said Grigson. "We have 207 assets on the register."

Under SCI, a minister has the power to direct an owner or operator of critical infrastructure, Kitching pointed out.

"If there has been outsourcing of critical functions at the Port of Melbourne and there is potentially a lack of oversight here, onshore, in Australia, could this direction be applied?" she asked.

The reply was measured.

"That direction has very significant power behind it," said Grigson. "Before we got to that point we'd work through with the companies concerned other mitigations that might be in place. There are significant expectations around the owners and operators of all critical infrastructure to look to their cyber security."

The last word went to Kitching.

"If we were ever in a conflict scenario and we have a port where the software is being run from overseas that would be a problem," she concluded.





It is a view shared by strategic consultant Air Vice-Marshal John Blackburn RAAF (retired), a former Head of Strategic Policy for Defence.

"We have to look at the economic risks, the cyber risks, the technical risks. You need a risk analysis. Then some sort of port audit," he said.

Blackburn questions whether the assumptions behind the move were being made through the lens of a business, rather than national security.

"It's industry people driving this, but it should not be their responsibility to decide. It is government responsibility," he said.

Blackburn said that while cloud-based technology can have secure capabilities, it cannot apply to time-critical control factors.

"What's happened here is systematic of a much bigger problem we face in Australia," he said. "We have to ask 'Why are we doing it? Is it about lower costs?'"

Blackburn points to the security implications of the government decision to privatise Darwin port, some of which have since been addressed.

"It was not thought through," he said. "Ports are critical infrastructure. The number of port, gas and electricity (assets) owned by foreign companies is staggering. I'm stunned and surprised by the scale of it."

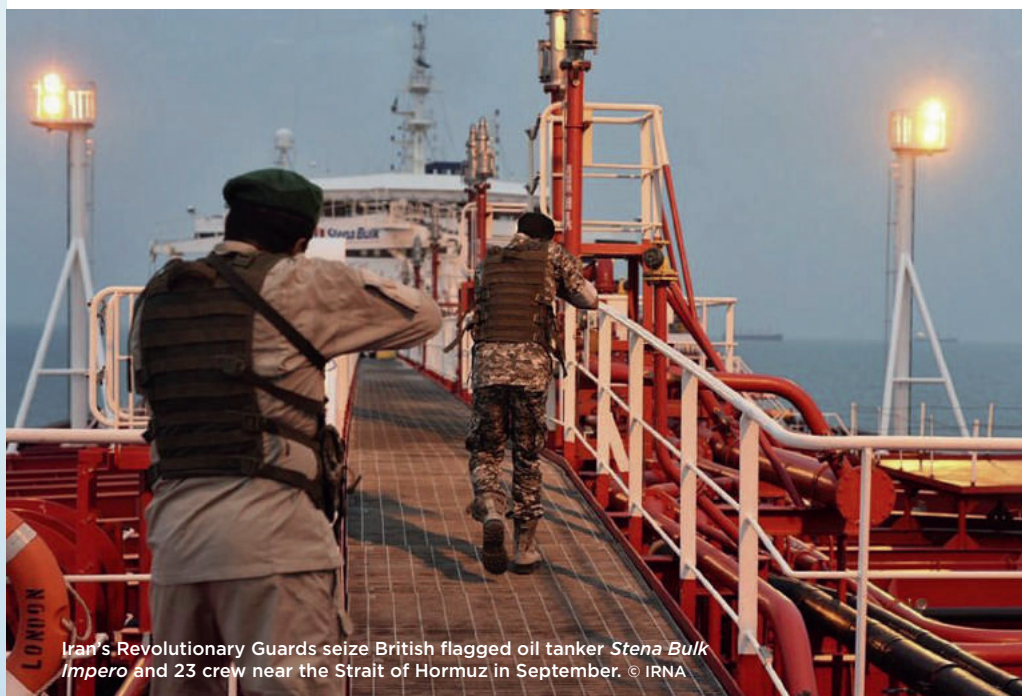
Deputy National Secretary Will Tracey said the union was making formal approaches to the Victorian State Government over automation at the Port of Melbourne. The union has also met with federal politicians.

Meanwhile, a *Safety at Sea* and BIMCO cyber security white paper released last month has found operational technology (OT) in the maritime industry the most vulnerable to attack.

OT is the industrial control systems responsible for controlling machinery.

"Carrying out a formal risk assessment of IT and OT infrastructure spanning an organisation is paramount to the development of effective cyber security policies and procedures," it concluded.

The economic costs of large-scale cyber attacks are already on par, or in some cases exceed, losses caused by natural disasters, the report noted. ■



Iran's Revolutionary Guards seize British flagged oil tanker *Stena Bulk Impero* and 23 crew near the Strait of Hormuz in September. © IRNA

## Fuel security scare

### MUA push to get Aussie tankers back on the coast.

**A**s the Morrison government conducts a review of the nation's fuel security, the MUA is lobbying all sides of politics for urgent action to put Australian flagged and crewed tankers back on the coast.

Recent attacks on tankers and oil infrastructure in the Middle East, including a drone strike that knocked out half of Saudi Arabia's crude oil production, highlighted Australia's exposure to global energy shocks and the need to overhaul shipping, refining and storage capacity.

Australia imports more than 90 per cent of its fuel, yet it has the lowest fuel reserves of any member nation of the International Energy Agency (IEA).

During the last financial year, Australia had an average of just 23 consumption days of petroleum in storage, 20 days' worth of diesel, and 25 days of aviation fuel.

However, according to media reports, the federal government is working on a plan that would not see Australia meet the IEA's 90-day fuel stockholding obligation until 2026.

MUA Assistant National Secretary Ian Bray said the closure of Australian refineries and storage facilities (FOC) and reliance on flag-of-convenience tankers has exposed Australia to sovereign risks never seen before.

He pointed out that two million tonnes of petroleum product is shipped from Kwinana, WA to the eastern seaboard each year.

"Not one drop of that goes on an Australian vessel," Bray said. "That alone equates to enough work to support two Australian-crewed vessels and four crews."

He said imports should also be carried on Australian-registered tankers.

"Having the Red Ensign means it comes under Commonwealth legislation enabling the ships to be seconded in a crisis. You can't do that with a FOC vessel. So, there is a strategic element," he said.

Bray said the lack of fuel security worries politicians in all camps as well as members of the military.

"Over the term of the Morrison government, we will be lobbying to get bipartisan support to at least introduce tankers to supply Australia's eastern seaboard," he said.

The MUA last year commissioned a report by shipping expert John Francis titled *Australia's Fuel Security – Running on Empty*. It found the country relies on the equivalent of almost 60 full-time fuel import tankers to supply petrol, diesel and jet fuel.

Many of these vessels travel through potential conflict zones such as the Straits of Hormuz and the South China Sea. ■





# Downward spiral

The MUA has put forward a comprehensive plan to rebuild and sustain Australia's shipping industry.

**T**he MUA has given a Senate inquiry into Australian shipping 29 detailed recommendations aimed at reversing the industry's "downward spiral".

The union's submission to the inquiry says 17 Australian cargo ships and at least 544 local seafarer jobs have been lost since the election of the Abbott government in September 2013.

"In every case where the trade volume remains (the majority of cases), the Australian crew were replaced by non-national crew when an Australian ship was lost to the coast," the submission says.

It blames a combination of:

- ◆ "Administrative and policy negligence" by the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities
  - ◆ Flaws in the 2012 shipping reform laws that were "ruthlessly exploited" by shippers, ship operators and ship's agents in "a race to the bottom"
  - ◆ Policy positions adopted by the Abbott, Turnbull and Morrison governments.
- "Corporate greed, exploitation and sectional interests have prevailed over the national interest," the submission says.

"The remaining Australian registered and crewed ships are not there because of cabotage laws but as a consequence of industrial negotiation and commercial opportunity by shipping operators committed to the Australian maritime industry."

It says the MUA is not advocating for a "US Jones Act solution", which would require all domestic shipping be reserved for Australian registered and

crewed ships. Instead, Australia needs to restore a "responsible" maritime cabotage regime, involving partial reservation for Australian ships.

Local ships could be supplemented by foreign registered ships in some trades under specified circumstances through a commercially oriented ship licensing system.

"The model we're advocating is similar to the Canadian model of cabotage, that is integrated with a foreign seafarer visa regime based on a Canadian-first employment policy," the submission says.

It mounts a strong argument that rebuilding the Australian shipping industry would benefit our economy by reducing capital outflows to foreign corporations and supporting many small businesses that provide services to ships.

It would create new jobs and "secure the maritime skills base, helping create a more seamless transport and logistics labour market".

The submission says Australian ships are efficient, reliable and safer than foreign ships.

In addition, the environment would benefit from increased use of Australian ships to move freight and passengers.

It would reduce road congestion, making cities cleaner, and make a significant contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Greater use of local ships would also help to protect Australia's oceans, coastlines and tourism icons such as the Great Barrier Reef from marine accidents and pollution. ■

# Stronger RUF system a priority – ALP

**T**he ALP's Queensland state conference has called on the state Labor government to restore a strengthened Restricted Use Flag (RUF) system to cover foreign ships operating in Queensland waters.

This should be done by amending the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 and Regulations*, as an early step in rebuilding intrastate shipping, conference said.

The call to bring back a stronger RUF system was part of a shipping resolution sponsored by the MUA and adopted by the August conference.

The resolution noted that a recent state parliamentary inquiry provided strong evidence for the intrastate industry's growth potential.

It urged the government to accept all the inquiry's recommendations and adopt practical measures to attract investment into intrastate shipping.

It also urged the government to:

- ◆ Introduce a new regulation to provide for the issue of towage licences by port authorities and to extend licensing and licensing conditions to all types of port and maritime services.
  - ◆ Commit to establish and fund a Queensland Coastal Shipping Commission or Queensland Council for Maritime Commerce as proposed by industry, that involves all stakeholders. Or, alternatively, to establish a Shipping Task Force.
- Federal Labor leader Anthony Albanese reaffirmed Labor's commitment to Australian shipping when he spoke at the conference. ■

**"Corporate greed, exploitation and sectional interests have prevailed over the national interest."**

- MUA SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE SHIPPING INQUIRY





# AMSA ‘writing blank cheques’ for foreign shipping

**MUA** National Secretary Paddy Crumlin has

blasted the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) for granting too many temporary licences to foreign-flagged vessels to trade on the Australian coast.

Giving evidence to the Senate inquiry into Australian shipping, Crumlin said AMSA was “writing temporary licences like blank cheques”.

“They’ve got to be held accountable. But they’ll say there’s some loophole in the regulation... so the regulation’s got to have clarity.

“It hasn’t got clarity. It’s ambiguous at the moment. That ambiguity has got to be taken away and then the public service...need to apply it in the true spirit.”

Temporary licences are granted under 2012 legislation which replaced the previous permit system established under the century-old Navigation Act.

The MUA’s submission to the inquiry calls for an urgent review of the 2012 legislation which, it says, rapidly degraded “standards of ship safety, cargo integrity, passenger safety, occupational health and safety, [and] crew certification”.

Labor Senator Alex Gallacher asked Crumlin: “What went wrong in 2012? We didn’t set out to do this.”

Crumlin replied: “It’s a failure of the public service process... I think the public servants have basically failed in their duty.

“AMSA had an ambitious thing, Tinny to Tanker, to have a national framework, and they failed.

“What they effectively did was dilute the areas that were properly regulated – the merchant marine and other areas.

“Sure, maybe fishing boats are better regulated or pearl-diving boats are better regulated. But they’ve superimposed a minimum regulation at the bottom of the market onto an industry that relies on foreign seafarers, on large ships travelling interstate and intrastate that are involved in trade, and they’ve diluted it. They know there’s a problem.”

Crumlin said the MUA had been excluded from the board of AMSA: “They give us a hearing, but it never delivers.”

He said two BHP-owned Australian ships on the coastal trade had been replaced by temporary licence ships and “BHP have now got foreign seafarers carrying exactly the same cargo in.”

“You shouldn’t be writing temporary licences for people who just use them to bastardise the system,” he said.

“There should be accountability as the original legislation intended – there should be accountability to get a temporary licence to build an industry and build a commitment to Australian flag vessels, including training.”

BHP, ANL and the Federal Government to their great shame were not only not in attendance, but remain actively campaigning against Australian seafarers being employed on our coastal ships, he said.

In other evidence, the Senate inquiry heard that Australia is heading for a shortage of maritime skills amounting to some 560 workers by 2023.

Lloyd, Chief Executive Officer of Maritime Industry Australia Ltd (MIAL), said the forecast shortage was revealed in a MIAL survey of shipping and port employers in 2018.

Ms Lloyd said that, in order to gain those skills, “we need assets on which to train and on which to work.”

“We can conduct training to entry level through a variety of means, but it’s the work experience that takes us beyond the 18 months or three years of training that’s really important.”

MIAL’s submission to the inquiry calls for the strengthening of the Australian International Shipping Register, to provide training assets under local control.

“For a country like Australia to have completely, frankly, squandered the opportunity that we have to be a powerful maritime nation is a huge disappointment,” she said. ■

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**‘I think the public servants have basically failed in their duty.’** – PADDY CRUMLIN

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# Coastal shipping proviso

Government subsidies to the mining industry should be re-examined in light of the need to promote jobs for Queensland seafarers, a parliamentary inquiry has found.

**S**hould government subsidies to mining companies be made conditional on them employing Australian seafarers?

The question has been raised in a report by the Queensland Parliament's Transport and Public Works Committee.

The report contains the findings of the committee's inquiry into a sustainable Queensland intrastate shipping industry.

The committee recommended the state government investigate conditions attached to the mining industry's "substantial" government subsidies and concessions "with a view to increasing local employment".

"The committee considers that investigations should be undertaken of whether these subsidies should include conditions, such as ensuring Australian crewed ships are utilised for interstate and intrastate transfer of cargoes," the report said.

It added that the issue also falls within the federal jurisdiction.

The committee said that "...if companies are benefiting from the resources of this state then they need to give back, and they can do this by employing local people."

The committee also recommended the state government investigate methods to provide incentives for industry to employ local ships' crews.

It said it obtained "substantial" evidence supporting the economic and labour market benefits of a sustainable intrastate shipping industry in Queensland.

"The majority of stakeholders supported the expansion of the industry to include not only bulk commodities but also the expansion of regular services of other types of goods," it said.

The committee also called on the state government – "together with federal and interstate jurisdictions" – to investigate ways of expanding the maritime industry to provide training opportunities in order to guard against expected skills shortages.

The issue of the treatment of international crews was raised during the inquiry. The report said that the committee was given examples of

international crews not being paid, working extremely long hours and being given insufficient food.

"The committee considers the poor treatment of international workers operating in Australian waters to be shameful," it said.

"The committee also considers that this poor treatment could impact on the safety of shipping in Australia."

The report said companies operating in Australia should "take some responsibility" for ensuring that workers on ships carrying their cargoes are treated fairly.

committee is troubled by the fact that Rio Tinto committed to an agreement in 2010 to carry 70-80 per cent of its cargo on Australian crewed ships by December 2012, and yet in 2019 has only approximately 40 per cent of its Australian cargoes shipped on Australian crewed ships."

"Crews have fulfilled their part of the agreement to reduce crews from nine to seven, and yet Rio Tinto considers the Australian crewing target to be 'aspirational'.

"The committee finds this attitude to be deplorable." ■

## "The committee considers the poor treatment of international workers operating in Australian waters to be shameful."

However, the committee noted that this is a federal issue.

The committee heard evidence that many companies with large Australian operations have outsourced shipping to ship management companies that employ international crews, thereby "removing themselves from any responsibility for the welfare of those crews."

Rio Tinto told the inquiry that all vessels transporting its bauxite from Weipa to Gladstone are internationally flagged ships, with 40 per cent of the movements crewed by about 130 Australians on four ships.

Rio Tinto said its coastal shipping operations in Queensland represent more than 80 per cent of total volumes of intrastate shipping.

Rio Tinto's fleet are managed and crewed by Anglo Eastern (UK) Limited and ASP Ship Management Limited, with ships sailing under a Singapore flag.

The committee said that, "unlike some other companies, Rio Tinto has some Australian crews. However, the

### Operators sidestep Fair Work Act

The Queensland shipping inquiry found that under the ship licensing system introduced in 2012, the Fair Work Act was intended to be applied to all seafarers working regularly in the Australian coastal trade.

Therefore, some foreign crews would benefit from Australian workplace relations laws and a legislative safety net of employment terms and conditions, the inquiry report said.

"However, this outcome has not been achieved, with shipping operators developing practices which limit the application of the Fair Work Act to international crews," the inquiry found, adding that this was an issue for the federal government.



# Pilot exemptions

Exempting Australian-flagged vessels from pilotage would help to expand intrastate shipping, Queensland inquiry told.

Queensland's parliamentary inquiry into local shipping has recommended the state's Department of Transport and Main Roads works with port authorities to reduce potential barriers to an expanded intrastate shipping trade.

The inquiry heard evidence that eliminating high-cost pilotage would be one way to help the intrastate shipping industry to grow.

Hermes Maritime Shipping and Logistics said the state government could consider a moratorium on pilotage fees for "competent" start-up coastal shipping services like itself.

Foreign-flagged vessels are obliged to take a pilot into Queensland ports but the Master of an Australian-flagged vessel can apply for an exemption from pilotage to become an Exempt Master.

In a written statement, Hermes said that it aims to have four ships operating

four different liner services by 2021.

Its first ship would operate a weekly shuttle service between Brisbane and Townsville requiring two pilotages in Brisbane (one in and one out) and two in Townsville (one in and one out). The annual cost for pilotage in both ports would be \$657,000.

For Hermes' vessel, pilots would require one tug for each movement, or four tugs a week. The annual cost for tugs would be \$832,000.

"Exempt Masters know their vessel better than pilots and typically use fewer tugs. Tugs will only be used in conditions where wind strengths exceed 20 knots," it said.

"Based on typical weather patterns in both ports, we have estimated tug costs with an Exempt Master to be \$320,000 – a saving of \$512,000.

"An Exempt Master can therefore save the company \$1,169,000 per annum." ■



# MODERN SLAVERY AT SEA

Big business urged to take responsibility for exploitation in their supply chains.

**B**ig business should be held responsible for modern slavery in their supply chains, according to Paddy Crumlin, National Secretary of the MUA division of the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union.

The call comes after International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) inspectors uncovered three cases of wage theft totalling around \$314,000 on the Australian coast in the space of one week in September.

"Too many big businesses refuse to take responsibility for exploitation in their supply chains," Crumlin said in a media release. "This is why we need political leadership to ensure Australia's maritime trade isn't built upon the systematic abuse of vulnerable foreign seafarers.

"Companies that do not take responsibility for slavery in their supply chain risk losing millions of dollars in workers' capital investments," Crumlin said.

Crumlin co-chairs Worker's Capital, an international labour union network established by the International Trade Union Confederation, the Global Unions Federation and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD,

an intergovernmental economic body.

All the vessels with exploited crew were contracted to carry goods and materials for major businesses.

The *Xing Jing Hai* was in Brisbane to deliver clinker to Cement Australia, while the *Xing Ning Hai* was in Port Kembla to carry steel from BlueScope.

"When BHP axed the last two Australian bulk carriers earlier this year – replacing 80 Aussie seafarers with foreign-crewed flag-of-convenience vessels – we warned that the ongoing failure of the Australian Government to tighten shipping laws was sparking a race to the bottom," Crumlin said.

"What these three incidents show is that this isn't an occasional issue involving one rogue operator; it's a central part of the business model of a

growing number of companies that are contracted to supply Australia's fuel, carry our resources, and move cargo to and from our ports," he said.

In all three cases, the crew contacted the ITF which then tipped off the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA). AMSA detained the vessels, banning two of the three bulk carriers from Australian ports for between 12-18 months.

The third ship was later discovered to have also owed crew more than \$100,000.

## FORTUNE GENIUS

AMSA first detained the 29,941 gross tonne Panamanian-flagged coal carrier *Fortune Genius* in the port of Gladstone, Queensland on 6 September for underpaying its crew \$74,000.

An inspection confirmed the ship was operating with two sets of wage accounts on board.

"The crew were found to be deliberately underpaid," AMSA said in a statement.

Matt Purcell, Assistant ITF Australia Coordinator, said that







ITF inspector Sarah Maguire carried out an inspection of the *Fortune Genius* as soon as it docked in Gladstone because the owner has previously been found in breach of the Maritime Labor Convention.

"The men reported that they had been bullied and forced into working excessive hours for which they weren't paid," Purcell said. "They asked for assistance to be repatriated to Myanmar, fearing for their safety if they remained on the vessel."

*Fortune Genius* is owned by China-based Marine Fortune Union Company and chartered by Korea's Five Ocean Corporation to transport coal from Taean in South Korea.

The ITF also called on AMSA to investigate the Myanmar-based manning agents responsible for recruiting and exploiting the crew.

Paddy Crumlin welcomed the detention of the vessel, but noted the current system relied on the efforts of ITF inspectors and whistle-blowers among ships' crews to identify problems.

"This means countless cases of exploitation are slipping through the gaps," he said.

### SISTER SHIPS

Five days later, on 11 September, the ITF again tipped off AMSA that crew on board the Hong Kong flagged *MV Xing Jing Hai* bulk carrier in the port of Brisbane were owed wages.

AMSA confirmed the crew had not been paid for two months, amounting to about \$140,000 in wage theft.

"It is completely unacceptable for shipping companies to take advantage of their seafarers by withholding their wages and we will not tolerate that," AMSA General Manager Allan Schwartz said in a media statement. "The operator of the *Fortune Genius* has acted in a

dishonest and predatory fashion towards its seafarers, while the operator of the *Xing Jing Hai* has demonstrated a systemic failure to ensure its seafarers are paid properly," Schwartz said.

"These two operators will not make a profit in our waters on the back of modern-day slave labour."

The ITF also discovered the sister ship, *Xing Ning Hai*, in Port Kembla had also failed to pay its crew wages since June. They were owed more than \$100,000.

AMSA had detained the same vessel in Devonport, Tasmania in July last year after uncovering wage theft of \$215,000.

ITF President Paddy Crumlin said that the spate of ship detentions and bans exposed rampant exploitation of seafarers.

"It is not an anomaly, but a central feature of the business models of many shipping operators," he said.

The wage theft was covered by the national broadcaster the ABC, Channel 9, SBS TV and trade media.

Paddy Crumlin and National ITF coordinator Dean Summers report that in 2018 the **ITF Flag of Convenience Inspectorate** visited more than 10,500 ships globally and recovered almost US\$38 million in backpay. ■

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**"Modern-day slave labour is a central part of the business model of a growing number of companies that are contracted to supply Australia's fuel, carry our resources, and move cargo to and from our ports"**

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- PADDY CRUMLIN

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# Ensuring Integrity Bill

The Morrison government ignores rampant wage theft and bank fraud while pushing to criminalise union activity.

**S**cott Morrison's Liberal/National government is trying to bring in a new law that will make it harder for unions to help members win pay rises and protect their jobs.

In July 2019, the government introduced the so-called Ensuring Integrity Bill (EI Bill) into parliament.

The EI Bill would give the government, employers, or any other party with a "sufficient interest", the power to intervene in the running and work of unions.

The Bill would make it easier to disqualify people from union office, block union mergers, restrict the use of funds or property of a union, and deregister unions.

The Bill was examined by the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee, which had to report to parliament by 25 October 2019.

This is the Coalition's second attempt to get this union-busting legislation adopted. An earlier version of the Bill was introduced in August 2017 but failed to get enough Senate support.

Labor and the Greens oppose the current Bill, meaning the government needs the support of four of the six crossbench senators for it to become law.

"Morrison has dusted off previously failed legislation to attack working people's freedom to organise," said MUA



National Secretary Paddy Crumlin.

"The Australian union movement is already heavily regulated and the EI Bill goes further than any other Western democracy in interfering in democratic workers' organisations.

"The rights of workers to organise and for members to democratically run their unions is an internationally recognised human right.

"Free unions are essential checks on the powerful in any democracy."

Paddy said the government had chosen to attack workers and their unions while turning a blind eye to millions of dollars lost to workers through wage theft.

"The Bill is fundamentally unfair," he said. "It would not apply to businesses who engage in wage theft, not apply to

bank fraud and not apply to politicians, despite their serious unethical conduct.

"Members of Morrison's own government have not been held to account despite their involvement in numerous scandals, such as ministers going to work for lobbyists, MPs hiding their investments from the public, and questionable uses of allowances.

"If the Bill applied equally to corporations we would see banks, multinational pizza chains and the restaurants of celebrity chefs closed down for repeatedly breaking workplace laws, and their top executives sacked."

The Bill imposes a "public interest test" on mergers of unions, which takes the right to choose away from members.

The merger provision is an apparent response to the failure of big business to prevent the MUA's merger with the CFMEU in 2018.

Currently, the main decider of whether two or more unions will merge is whether the majority of the members of the unions involved vote to approve the merger.

The Bill requires the Fair Work Commission to consider the impact the merger will have on employers in an industry before deciding whether to allow a merger to go ahead.

The general secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation, Sharan Burrow, called the EI Bill "an extraordinary act of vandalism really, in terms of the democratic rights and freedoms of Australia".

## What the EI Bill does

The "Ensuring Integrity" Bill would allow the Registered Organisations Commission, the government or *any* person with a "sufficient interest" to apply to a court for a wide range of orders, including to:

- deregister a union
- disqualify persons from being an officer of a union
- exclude certain types of people from being members of a union
- suspend the rights and privileges of members or the union
- restrict the use of funds or property of a union
- appoint an administrator to take over management of the union.

Also, the legislation would automatically disqualify a person from being an officer of a union for *any* offence under Australian or foreign law that is punishable by imprisonment for five years or more.





## Free pass for bank crime

ACTU Secretary Sally McManus contrasted the government's push to criminalise union activity with its hands-off approach to bank crime.

In an article in *The Guardian* newspaper, Sally said banks and other financial institutions had admitted to tens of thousands of breaches and the banking royal commission, which Scott Morrison opposed, had uncovered crimes and unethical conduct.

"People would be right to ask why isn't the government cracking down on the banks?" she wrote.

"Why aren't new laws that stop the banks ripping off working people Morrison's first priority?"

Instead, Morrison was seeking the power to "knock off member-elected union leaders and shut down their unions".

"All the union movement is guilty of is standing up for safe workplaces, more secure jobs and fair pay under a regime of oppressive laws that are out of step with the rest of the developed world."

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**"Why aren't new laws that stop the banks ripping off working people Morrison's first priority?"** – SALLY McMANUS

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"Nobody can look at this with an objective eye and say it is anything but an act of some sort of ideological revenge," she said.

Labor industrial relations spokesman Tony Burke told ABC radio the Bill gave employer groups "extraordinary" powers to apply for unions to be deregistered.

As an example, he said the "entire nurses' union" could be deregistered if a group of nurses took unprotected industrial action for better staff ratios.

## CFMMEU THE MAIN TARGET

MUA National Secretary Paddy Crumlin and Deputy National Secretary Will Tracey say the so-called Ensuring Integrity Bill is central to the Liberal/National government's push to deregister unions such as the CFMMEU that stand against employer exploitation.

In a report to the union, they said the proposed legislation would allow the Industrial Relations Minister to deregister individual divisions and branches of unions.

As a result, elected union officials would lose right of entry to workplaces and





the right to negotiate “greenfields” agreements.

Officials would also find it more difficult to be heard in industrial tribunals when negotiating on behalf of the rank-and-file.

“That the entire Construction Forestry Maritime Mining and Energy Union is the main target (of the Bill) is beyond question,” Crumlin and Tracey reported.

“Industrial Relations Minister, Christian Porter, has announced that the government’s agenda is to deregister unions, ours in particular. This is a fundamental threat against our organisation.”

### CRUMLIN JUDGED ‘FIT AND PROPER’

MUA members already knew it, and now the Fair Work Commission (FWC) has made it official: MUA National Secretary Paddy Crumlin is a “fit and proper person”.

In August, FWC deputy president Tony Saunders found Crumlin was a “fit and proper person” to hold a right of entry permit.

Saunders renewed the permit with no conditions despite also finding that Crumlin showed a “willingness” to break or ignore the law in relation to “unlawful action” by the union at Hutchison Ports and Chevron Australia.

“Mr Crumlin has been a full-time union official since 1988 and has held right of entry permits since at least the commencement of the *Workplace Relations Act 1996*,” Saunders said.

“There is no suggestion on the material before me that Mr Crumlin has engaged in such conduct, or has contravened any industrial law, at any other time in his career of more than 30 years as a full-time union official.”

Crumlin told the *Maritime Workers Journal* he sought a right of entry permit because, “We decided that as they are toughening up (the law) to wedge our union, as officer responsible for things other people do, I’d apply.

“I’m out there confronting the unfairness of it all. At the same time, I’m proving I’m fit and proper, a reputable person. I look like Robin Hood,” he quipped.

The Morrison government wants to make it harder for union officials to get right of entry permits.

Legislation aimed firstly at the CFMMEU would make it easier to strip union officials of the right to go onto a job site and represent the workers who elected them. ■



**B**usiness lobbyists have been frequent visitors to Parliament House in Canberra since the Liberal/National Coalition was returned to office in May.

They have urged the government to bring in new anti-worker legislation despite record low wage growth and worsening job insecurity.

In August, 17 Coalition MPs attended a private briefing by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which represents the interests of small and medium business.

The briefing was organised by Liberal backbenchers Tim Wilson, Jason Falinski and Andrew Bragg.

Following the briefing, the trio described Australia’s IR system as “union-dominated” in an article they wrote for the *Australian Financial Review* (AFR).

The government needed to “bring back some sanity” they said, adding: “Unfair dismissal cases have exploded with a constant stream of around 15,000 cases

before the Fair Work Commission at any one time.”

In a separate article, the AFR said Prime Minister Scott Morrison faced growing pressure from his backbench MPs to make “meaningful changes” to IR law, including exempting small and medium business from unfair dismissal laws.

These protections were wound back when John Howard instituted WorkChoices but restored when Labor won power federally in 2007.

“Other targets are the enterprise bargaining system and modern awards,” the AFR said. “All these changes would risk putting the government on a collision course with the labour movement.”

Morrison has asked Industrial Relations Minister Christian Porter to come up with a new IR policy.

An unnamed MP told the AFR that although the backbench was prepared to give Porter some time, “what isn’t acceptable is inaction”.





Queensland Liberal-National Party Senator Amanda Stoker also chimed in, describing unfair dismissal laws as a “block to growth”.

Meanwhile, a major lobby group for big business, the Australian Industry Group (AIG), wants Porter to change the law to allow employers to convert permanent jobs into casual jobs with less rights and less job security.

The ACTU warned that AIG has urged changes to the law so that employers are able to designate any job they like as casual.

The AIG move follows a Federal Court ruling last year that casual truck driver Paul Skene was entitled to paid leave because of the regular and continuous nature of his work.

The CFMEU subsequently launched court action on behalf of 600 coal miners who they argue were misclassified as casual by labour hire company Workpac.

Another outfit representing big companies, the Business Council

## “All these changes would risk putting the government on a collision course with the labour movement.”

– THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW

of Australia (BCA), has added its voice to the clamour for anti-worker legislation by suggesting that the basic fairness test for enterprise agreements be scrapped.

The Better Off Overall Test (BOOT) ensures that every worker is better off under a new workplace agreement.

The BOOT is a basic safeguard, but the BCA wants it gone.

The ACTU warns this would mean a return to the disastrous WorkChoices

era, when thousands of workers were pushed onto substandard agreements because there was no genuine legal safeguard to prevent the abuse of the bargaining process.

ACTU Secretary Sally McManus said the BCA's proposal would leave the most vulnerable workers even more exposed to the excessive power of corporations.

“Young workers, casuals and part-time workers could be targeted by businesses using the BCA proposal,” she said. ■





# ELECTED: Meet our new leaders

Union democracy brings six new labour leaders to the struggle for workers' rights on the Australian coast. Who are they?

**M**ick Cross, SNSW branch secretary was elected unopposed alongside his honorary deputy secretary Scott Carter.

"It was all part of the succession plan down here in the branch," says Mick. "Someone thinks you may have what it takes. You get a little bit more responsibility or a tap on the shoulder and it goes from there."

Bit by bit, Mick took over from union veteran Garry Keane in the months leading up to the ballot.

"First and foremost, it's an honour to be involved with anything to do with the maritime union," says Mick. "It's pretty humbling as a seafarer. I'm proud to be the branch secretary in the town I grew up in. I'm born and bred in Port Kembla. I grew up under the old stack before they knocked it down, mixed in footy, cricket and surf club circles and met a lot of wharfies and seafarers before becoming one myself."

Mick went away to sea on the *Pacific Triangle* in 2006 after working in the steelworks as a youth. He stayed at sea until 2016, before he took up the role as National Safety and Training Officer for the MUA. He was acting branch secretary in the months leading up to the election.

His first big campaign, even before stepping into the role was the fight to save the last two BHP iron boats and Australian crews that serviced BlueScope Steel, Port Kembla. The fight continues, in parliament and, soon, using workers' capital and BHP's (anti) modern day slavery policy.

"First and foremost, my aim is to maintain the branch," says Mick. "It's small (under 500 members) and small branches always risk being restructured."

"A small branch culture is very different," he says. "It's unique. There's a real family atmosphere. Two bulk and general operations employ most of our membership now. Everyone tries very hard. Carol is a wonderful administrator. She goes above and beyond her duty."

Looking ahead Mick can see the future holds big challenges for the union.

"The Morrison government, like previous

conservative governments, is out to destroy us," he says. "We've got to be thinking ahead of the game."

Once an iron boat port, now car imports are the lifeblood of Port Kembla.

"The number of cars that come through this port is mind boggling," says Mick. "LNG imports will commence once costings have been signed off. Unfortunately this project has become a political football at a state level, and once again, workers, good permanent jobs and financial benefits for the region are the things that suffer."

A new railway linking Badgery's Creek and the port is on the drawing board and looks set to proceed.

In the meantime, the branch is readying itself for Qube enterprise bargaining in the new year.

"It's always a pretty torrid time," says Mick. "Our members are very much looking to shore up their jobs. We'll be trying to get as many permanent jobs locked in as we can."

Last time around the union won a successful agreement, bringing in more permanent jobs.

"There's a peaks and troughs clause which really comes down to hours of work," says Mick. "We have a labour review every 12 months and if x amount of hours is met, there's x amount of permanent jobs each year."

It has made life so much easier, he notes.

"Under the old agreement you went to the boss cap in hand and the hours worked were tabled and discussed."


"We would ask for more permanent positions if the hours were there over the past six months," Mick says. "To counter that, the company would forecast a six month quiet period with very little evidence. They would then use the excuse if we put people up now, there may need to be redundancies down the track."

"When things are quiet, there are triggers in place before redundancies are even considered," he says.

"It starts with people going on leave and taking time off," says Mick. "We will be fighting to keep the clause going in the new EBA." ■







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**“A small branch culture is very different. It’s unique. There’s a real family atmosphere”**

– MICK CROSS

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# WOMEN'S VOICE



## KAREN WHEATLAND, WA

It's an interesting moment to find myself here again, for the third time.

Life is cyclic and there is a passion and a reason that I keep coming back. It's my belief in our movement – my belief that what we are doing is vital for the working future of our children, and our children's children.

As working men and women it's so important that we keep pushing for a safe and honest working environment. When we go to work, we must do so in a safe environment, with processes that protect us physically and mentally, where behaviour is respectful and free from harassment and discrimination.

As women we need to bring issues that affect us the most, to the table. The isolation that is felt in a male dominated industry, the exclusion by employers when our numbers are few.

We need to raise our voices, put these issues in front of our union and work colleagues and enlist them to help us fight for women's rights.

If we aren't using our voices, then we can't be heard. We cannot sit back and expect our brothers to do all the work, we need to join the fight as well.

As women we need to enter into debate and to share the dialogue that we share with other women. It's a scary arena sometimes but I have found that the words you are saying in your head are much better voiced out aloud. It's the only way to effect change, and that is together.

Sisters, let us MUA women move into this exciting new era together. Arm in arm, loud and proud.



## KRISTA GRACE - VICTORIA

Since joining my first vessel in 1985, it has become apparent that for women to work harmoniously in the maritime industry, the workplace environment needs to continuously evolve in order to create critical opportunities that encourage women to have a full, wholesome working life.

As an active mentor, delegate and friend, I champion women's rights, assisting women challenged in their work life and its impacts on their personal lives.

I encourage women to get involved with their union to empower themselves and develop the necessary skills to "stand up and fight back"



## ANN GRAY - QUEENSLAND

I am chief steward on the LNG carrier *NW Snipe*. I am a member of the Queensland Women's Committee and I hold the position of treasurer on the National Women's Committee.



## VICKI HELPS - WA

This World Maritime Day highlighted empowering women and overcoming gender imbalance in the maritime industry.

It's critical that woman be involved in the shipping industry. There is absolutely no reason why women can't be on ships at every level.

It's a workplace like every other. We need gender balance in sea-going life.

We also need a career trajectory. But there is no formal career path in Australia in a male-dominated industry for women to progress except by funding their own study.

Traineeships are rare. With foreign workers carrying Australian cargo on the coast, the opportunity to get a traineeship – whether you are an Australian man or woman – barely exists. There's no protection for jobs in Australian waters. There's almost no Australian industry left.

I am a strong advocate for Australian shipping and Australia as an incubator of world class maritime skills.

If the jobs are available, I believe women are capable of doing the work alongside men.

The nature of the work means you are away from home for such a long time. It's a male dominated industry and not all women are happy working in that environment. It has its challenges. But in terms of women's capability to do the work, women are fabulous out there!



## BONNIE CROW - TASMANIA

I am a cook on Spirit of Tasmania 2. This is my second term on the National Women's Committee and this term I have been elected chair. I have been a seafarer and MUA member for just over nine years. ■



# NEW TEAM

Seven new branch officials elected in national union ballot

**N**ew officials have been elected in Victoria, Queensland and Southern NSW as a result of the national ballot for the Maritime Union of Australia division of the Construction Forestry Maritime Mining and Energy Union declared in June.

Of the 31 officers' positions (five national and 26 branch), 20 were uncontested, with 25 candidates contesting 11 positions, Returning Officer Bill Giddins reported.

## CONTESTED

- National Secretary Paddy Crumlin retained his position winning (4707 votes) against contender Vincent Francis (1001).
- In the branches, three new officials were elected in Victoria. Challenger **Shane Stevens** was voted up (902) as the new branch secretary in a three-way contest against sitting official Joe Italia (389) and contender Paul Smart (89).
- **David Ball** won the position of deputy (950) against Mark Jones (421).
- Long time official Robert Patchett (1106) and newcomer **Robert Lumsden** (897) won the two positions of assistant branch secretaries against Ian Harvey (218) and Jeff Hoy (371).
- Queensland Branch Secretary Robert Carnegie lost his position to **Stephen Cumberlidge** (473 to 457).
- Paul Gallagher (550) and **Paul Peterson** (447) retained their positions of deputy and assistant Queensland branch secretaries against Aaron Johnstone (410), Robert Maguire (81) and Brian Gallagher (174).
- In Sydney, long time official Paul Garrett (875) and newcomer **Nathan Donato** (604) took the positions of assistant branch secretaries against Daniel Crumlin (450) and Matthew Goodwin (363).
- Western Australia Branch Secretary Christy Cain also held his seat as branch secretary (1186) against contender Christopher O'Sullivan (119)

## UNCONTESTED POSITIONS:

NATIONAL OFFICE: Will Tracey, deputy national secretary, Warren Smith and Ian Bray, assistant national secretaries and Mich-Elle Myers, national women's representative (honorary) were all re-elected unopposed.

In the branches the following officials were also unopposed:

- **SYDNEY:** Paul McAleer, branch secretary, Paul Keating, deputy branch secretary (Sydney).
- **NNSW (Newcastle):** Glen Williams, branch secretary, Dennis Outram, deputy branch secretary.

- **SNSW:** Two new officials **Michael Cross**, branch secretary, **Scott Carter**, (honorary) deputy secretary were elected unopposed.
- **SA branch:** Jamie Newlyn, branch secretary, Clem Clothier, deputy branch secretary.
- **TASMANIA:** Jason Campbell, branch secretary, Alisha Bull, deputy branch secretary.
- **WA:** Adrian Evans, deputy branch secretary, Daniel Cain and Jeffrey Cassar, assistant branch secretaries.
- **QLD:** Jason Miners, deputy branch secretary.
- **NT:** Branch Secretary Andrew Burford, deputy branch secretary Thomas Mayor.

All WOMEN's positions for the MUA National Women's Coordinating Committee were unopposed: Mich-Elle Myers, Hannah Matthewson, Aimee Russell (NSW), Karen East (NT), Anne Gray, Lisa Lodge (QLD), Sue Douglas (SA), Bonnie Row, Kym Farmer (Tas), Brenda Easton, Krista Grace (Victoria), Vicki Helps and Karen Wheatland (WA).

- Mich-Elle Myers was also elected to the CFMMEU National Women's Committee alongside Anna Gray.

National Secretary Paddy Crumlin thanked returning officers Bill Giddens and Neil Swanson for their objective, professional and transparent hard work in delivering another successful quadrennial election.

"The membership continues to rely on the thorough and independent application of democracy within our union," he said, also thanking support staff, lawyers, scrutineers and the candidates. ■



Mich-Elle Myers newly elected to the CFMMEU National Women's Committee, with Sue Virago, Port Botany wharfie, the union's first women's officer and leader, who is retiring from the stevedoring industry.



# THE TICKET

## Meet our new leaders



**S**hane Stevens, newly elected Victorian MUA branch secretary, was working at Appleton Dock, Melbourne in July, 2010, when his workmate Steve Piper was crushed to death. It was just centimetres and seconds from where Shane had been standing. It could have killed him, instead it changed his life.

"The pair of us were working on a heavy lift," Shane recalls. "Steve was on the back of the trailer, I was on the ground. We'd just finished talking about the job and as I turned to go I heard the sound of steel crashing. I ran. When I looked around Steve had a three-tonne

beam on him."

That was nine years back. But for Shane it was like yesterday.

"It was terrible what happened down there. Steve's death hit home," Shane says, holding back emotion. "It really motivated me to do more. The company wasn't even fined. Worksafe weren't even prepared to prosecute. The company didn't have a shore crane and had subcontracted to get gantry jacks. We were rigging it, not operating it. But the contract team failed to have the hoses connected up properly."

The death of Steve, 41, father of two from the Melbourne suburb of Dingley

Village, sparked an Australia-wide stop-work meeting among waterside workers on the day. It was the third work death on the Melbourne waterfront in five months.

Shane started in the industry 23 years ago at P&O Bulk and General and has been a delegate and a health and safety rep since 2010.

"I've been talking about it and living with it all these years," he says. "But there's not much I can do as a delegate. I felt I needed to get involved in bigger forums so I dedicated more time to doing just that."

After being given a forced redundancy from Qube ("They didn't want an effective





delegate and safety rep around," he says), Shane spent 18 months 'on the grass' doing a bit of casual work. Then he scored a job at DP World, Melbourne container terminal and joined the committee.

As the union ballot drew near, Shane put his mind to getting elected.

"I got the blokes together to stand with me," he said. "We all knew each other, not so much socially, but we'd been at conferences and knew what we were doing and what we wanted to do. Then we got Bob Patchett (assistant branch secretary) on board.

"One commitment we did make to

the members is 'You'll be seeing us,'" Shane says. "We've got our right of entry permits and we're going to be getting out among the members."

That means the regions too – Portland, Westernport, the Gippsland dredges, he says.

"There might be only half a dozen members, and they usually get left out because of the distance," says Shane.

"We've got to push for seafarers' jobs too. We've got a state government submission in and the Star of the South Pacific (offshore wind) project couldn't have come soon enough.

"We've got plenty of challenges ahead. Qube, Patrick EBAs are to come and DP World protected action could be back on. Our work is continuous EBAs and looking after the membership."

Shane says the branch enjoys a good relationship with their amalgamation partners.

"We catch up often," he says. "They say if you ever need us, we are here for you. At the same time we both understand we have our own identities."

It is still 'MUA here to stay' and we've got a great team in the branch with Matt Purcell, (International Transport Workers' Federation), Vicki Champion and Jade Camp.

**D**avid Ball has 23 years in the industry, starting as a steward on the *Spirit of Tasmania* in 1996 before moving to the Melbourne wharves in 2000. He has been a delegate for 15 years, honorary Geelong port secretary for five years and done two terms as president of Geelong Trades Hall as well as serving as its acting secretary.

"I'd like to think I'm qualified for the job," he says. "I did my years at the coalface as you say. I have something to contribute."

Like a lot of seafarers, David left his ocean-going career for family, joining bulk and general.

"I had two young children with a third on the way," he says.

The Toll takeover took David to Geelong where he has lived for the past 19 years.

David stood for election on the same ticket as Shane, to win the branch over as a team.

"We've known each other 20 years through the MUA network," says David. "We thought we could do something good for the membership here in Victoria. We had something positive to contribute and it seemed like a good time."

Since his election to the branch, David and the team have started a local

campaign around monthly meetings.

"We want to reinvigorate those meetings by having guest speakers and making them a bit more of a social event with food and drink afterwards – like they used to be. We've got a new t-shirt printed. It's about grassroots organising."

The branch will be doing a lot of work around towage, fuel security, offshore wind power and terminal automation.

"The offshore wind project is in our backyard in Gippsland. It will mean a lot of jobs for Victorian MUA members for the next three decades and we're rapt it's all due to renewable energy."

**R**obert Lumsden, assistant branch secretary, Victoria, started on the wharves in 1998 in bulk and general, ending up at East Swanson Dock terminal. Before joining the wharves, he did 18 years as a meat worker, following in the footsteps of his grandfather – also a union delegate.

"We have a family history of unions," he said. "My Grandfather's brother was a Labor man, school teacher and mayor. He stood against Malcolm Fraser."

Rob describes Labor's loss in the federal elections as "a real kick in the guts".

"The challenge is going to be trying to maintain seafarers' jobs," he said. "Fuel security is big for us too. Shorten's shipping reform was a breath of fresh air. Seafarers were the ones that lost out most when Labor lost."

Bass Strait shipping has become the last bastion. Toll has introduced larger ships and is looking to expand. TT Line (*Spirit of Tasmania* passenger ferries) is one of the biggest employers of Australian seafarers left.

The offshore wind project will mean around 300-500 seafaring jobs and around 8,000 construction jobs, Rob says. There is even a plan to transition coal miners into these renewable energy jobs.

"The Danish pension fund is financing it," says Rob. "Hopefully if it's successful in Victoria, it won't be long before it's rolled out around the country."

On the waterfront, Rob sees automation as the big challenge.

"It can't do the job as well as humans. It's not based on productivity and it will take jobs," he says.

Rob, nicknamed Casper on the waterfront for his pale complexion, loves his new job.

"I enjoy looking after people who wouldn't normally have a voice," he says. "We want to see more of a focus on the membership." ■





# STEVE CUMBERLIDGE

## - In his father's footsteps

**S**teve Cumberlidge, newly elected Queensland branch secretary of the Maritime Division, Construction Forestry, Mining and Maritime Union, is the son of a former branch secretary of renown.

Claude Cumberlidge led the Melbourne branch of the Waterside Workers' Federation in the 1980s.

Steve acknowledges he is following in his father's footsteps. He recalls his admiration for his dad as a young boy:

"He was there when I started on the wharves in 1983. Wherever you went everyone wanted to sit at his table. Dad was a very respected man. He was a beacon for sure. But he was always there to watch us play footy when we were kids."

Steve remembers how his father was offered a spot in the national office. He said he wouldn't leave his family and suggested John Coombs. John went on to become national secretary. Claude Cumberlidge passed away early, from dementia.

"We believe it was from his early exposure to heavy metals on the wharves," says Steve. "He died a terrible death."

Soon after Steve lost his brother, Bobby in an industrial accident at Toll's Westernport wharf in March, 2007.

"Losing my brother was devastating," says Steve. "It's something you never get over."

Steve left the wharves after contesting an unfair dismissal at Qube, where he was a union delegate:

"We were coming up to the enterprise bargaining agreement. Management fabricated a story I was walking across a non-designated safety zone. It wasn't me. It was a young bloke with two young kids. I took the hit for him."

Steve said the case folded after the second day, with one of the managers in the stand calling out, "How much do you want not to come back?"

He asked for enough to pay off his mortgage - and a bit more:

"They paid me. After that I sued for the pain and suffering."

The settlement cost him 'right of entry' at Qube nationwide and made national headlines in the *Australian Financial Review* after his election ('MUA leader banned from stevedore sites').

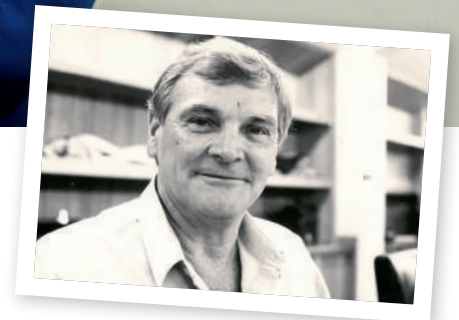


Steve did not return to the waterfront after leaving Qube. He became a seafarer working the dredges for Inpex on the LNG project off Darwin.

"I was on the backhoe dredger, then the *Simpson*, then one of the biggest of them all, the (giant cutter-suction dredge) *Athena*."

"I worked from contract to contract for the Dutch, the Belgians, the Norwegians. I had tickets with all of them. It's been a great experience."

Steve acknowledges he came a little bit



later in life to the job of union official:

"I didn't run on a ticket, I won on my own merits, I don't owe anybody."

It was close. Just a few votes. He credits his win to campaigning hard and getting around to all the job sites statewide:

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**"In the fishing industry we lost 14 people a year in Queensland. But we've lost no seafarers. Shipping is not an industry that should be deregulated."**

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"I did the May Day march in Gladstone with the crew up there. I basically got around to all the terminals and all the tugs. I sat and talked to members and when they asked me a question I gave a straight answer. No bullshit. I've always found if you tell them like it is, whether it's good news or bad news, it goes down better."

Steve boasts a good relationship with the Labor Party and other unions.

"I get along with anyone who wants to get along with me. I have a good relationship with the companies, too - except Qube.

"All the officials have been fantastic," he adds. "It's a big learning curve. DP World is by far the biggest challenge, especially with the industrial climate we're in. But we're making ground. Hutchison was going well, but they've taken a step back."

On the coastal shipping front, Steve took part in negotiations with the Queensland Government on intrastate shipping.

"We're still in negotiations on how to get us back on the coast," he says. "We've got a new proposal for a shipping line to run from Brisbane to Townsville. We're talking with a private line. It would fly the Australian flag and employ Australian seafarers. Some stuff costs a fortune to freight by road - like \$20,000 per item."

The branch is also working on new prospects with Transdev city ferry. Confined to the Brisbane river until now, the company is going global.

"They are getting bigger," says Steve. "We think they'll pick up more work."

The union has also approached Adani.

"If they go ahead we want one of their ships as a training ship, 50% trainees, 50% indigenous Australians," he says.

Steve sat in on meetings over the new national ship laws that now come under the jurisdiction of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority. The union believes it is a dumbing down of qualifications for seafarers.

"In the fishing industry we lost 14 people a year in Queensland," he notes. "But we've lost no seafarers. Shipping is not an industry that should be deregulated. In my opinion, the national law is just another way of getting qualified people off the ships and making it more unsafe.

"We're doing an EBA in Cairns with a couple of the diving companies too. Dave Lions is doing a very good job. He'll look after a lot of stuff in the Top End."

Meanwhile one of Steve's first priorities is having a plaque put up in the union rooms in Melbourne honouring his father.

"It was Dad who organised the new union rooms down in Melbourne," he recalls. "His name should be on them." ■

# Deckhand at 16

**N**athan Donato, newly elected Sydney assistant branch secretary grew up among the maritime community in Sydney. His dad was a wharfie.

"I started on the Sydney Ferries as a deck boy before my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday," Nathan says.

That was 1989. He went on to be a linesman, then in 2016 got a job at Hutchison as a waterside worker. He has been a delegate 20 years and on the branch committee the past two years. Now he is having a shot as a Sydney branch union official.

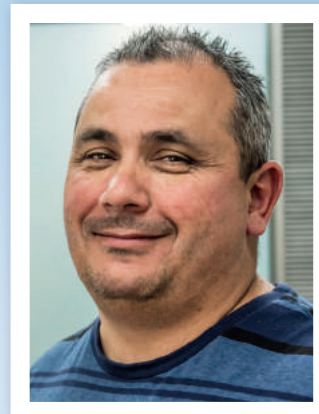
"The union got me my first start and has assisted me with all my jobs," he says. "I wanted to give back to the union for helping me and my family so much. That's why I stood.

"Automation is the biggest challenge in the stevedoring industry," he says. "Automation and outsourcing. I'm on the negotiating committee at Hutchison for the enterprise agreement. It's much the same with the other stevedores. They want to outsource the reefer monitor's job, first aid and do away with the shift leader."

Doing away with the job of remote control for the automatic stacking cranes during the landing and lifting of boxes on and off the back of the trucks is also under dispute.

Negotiations had dragged on for 16 months when the Maritime Worker went to press. Wages and rosters, income protection and the right of return are also at issue.

As assistant branch secretary Nathan will have industrial responsibility for Sydney Ferries ("my old stomping



ground"), Qube Stevedoring, Port Jackson, Serco defence support services, Roads and Maritime Services, maritime contractor Waterway Constructions, Wiseman's Ferry and other wire drawn ferries.

In Sydney the union recently won its long dispute with the NRMA-owned Fast Ferry service.

"It was a win for all unions," says Nathan. "They tried to sue us under the corporations' law and lost. We're not a corporation, we're an organisation."

In the political arena, Nathan describes the Ensuring Integrity Bill as a massive concern. Also, the use of foreign labour under the current visa policy.

Climate change is also big, says Nathan. He views union support for the student strikes as positive.

"Climate change is an issue we have to face, especially our friends in the mining industry," he says. "We have to make the move from coal to renewable energy while transitioning workers to a cleaner industry. It's important the unions stay united for the challenges ahead." ■

**After Months of Collective Action**  
MUA Members at NRMA Fast Ferry have just secured:

- 34% Payrise
- From 98% Casual to 100% of Existing Crew Made Permanent

**SYDNEY HARBOUR** **UNION HARBOUR**







# Last hours aboard THE NOONGAH

Able Seafarer **Bill Cockley** was one of five survivors when the *MV Noongah* went down on 25 August 1969, off the NSW coast. Alongside 3rd engineer **Russell Henderson** and crew mate **John (Jay) Lingard** he tells of their struggle to survive.

**B**illy Cockley was on the poop deck of the ANL *Noongah* when the call went out at 4.47am to abandon ship. He'd gone back for his cigarettes and a duffle coat.

The bulky was listing badly.

"I had hardly completed tying my life jacket when the ship gave a shudder and then, almost instantaneously, disappeared," he told the *Seamen's Journal* in September 1969.

"I went down with the ship – for what distance I do not know; it seemed an eternity."

Crew mate Jay Lingard was yelling "She's gone!"

He started to run.

"But the ship went so quickly I'd only got a couple of yards then the sea hit me," he recalled.

3rd engineer Russell Henderson was partially thrown from the ladder to the boat deck.

"The ship gave one roll to starboard, hesitated and then went down by the head," he said. "I was swirled around below, then broke the surface. I thought 'You beauty'. Then I went down again."

Surfacing, Bill heard his shipmate, greaser Ken McIntyre, calling to swim over to his life raft. It turned out to be the cover.

Moments later Jay surfaced. He drifted with a plank to Bill and Ken and they grabbed on.

"When a ship sinks, it only goes so far then it stops until all the air comes out," Bill told *MWJ*. "Then it just drops to the bottom. While the air was coming out, it pushed us to the surface."

The four men were tossed in the dark, heavy seas, when they heard someone calling for help.

"Ken (who wasn't wearing a life jacket) swam off and brought back the chief cook, Thomas Ford," said Bill. "A little later, we heard another man calling out and, once again, Ken went out to assist. This time he did not return."

Nearby, 3rd engineer Russell Henderson had also made it to the surface.

"We were in darkness, but could see lights from the men's life jackets and hear them calling and cooeing to each other," he said. "I swam toward the nearest group and joined Jay Lingard, Bill Cockley and Tom Ford."

Later, the chief cook, Tom, drifted off and away from the plank. Russell swam out and brought him back. Not long after he drifted off again, taking with him the lifeboat cover.

"We didn't see him again," said Bill.

When dawn broke, the men found themselves alone, well out to sea. Huge waves flung menacing debris at them. They got hold of a lid and placed it under the plank for buoyancy.

By 10 that morning, the three men sighted a search plane far off. No one was looking that far from shore. Hours went by. They were thirsty.

A rain squall came over. "Now we're going to get wet," Jay quipped. Bill laughed.

"The rain was like hailstones hitting us in the face," said Jay. "I kept looking at Russell and Bill, and among the thoughts that kept going through my mind were – how lucky a man can be to have two mates with him. Two men with more guts than he can explain... men he will call 'friend' for the rest of his life."

By late afternoon they sighted a bulk carrier. They waved and called out. But it passed without anyone seeing them.

Finally, before dusk, after more than 12 hours stranded at sea, they sighted the Adelaide Steam bulk carrier *Meringa*.

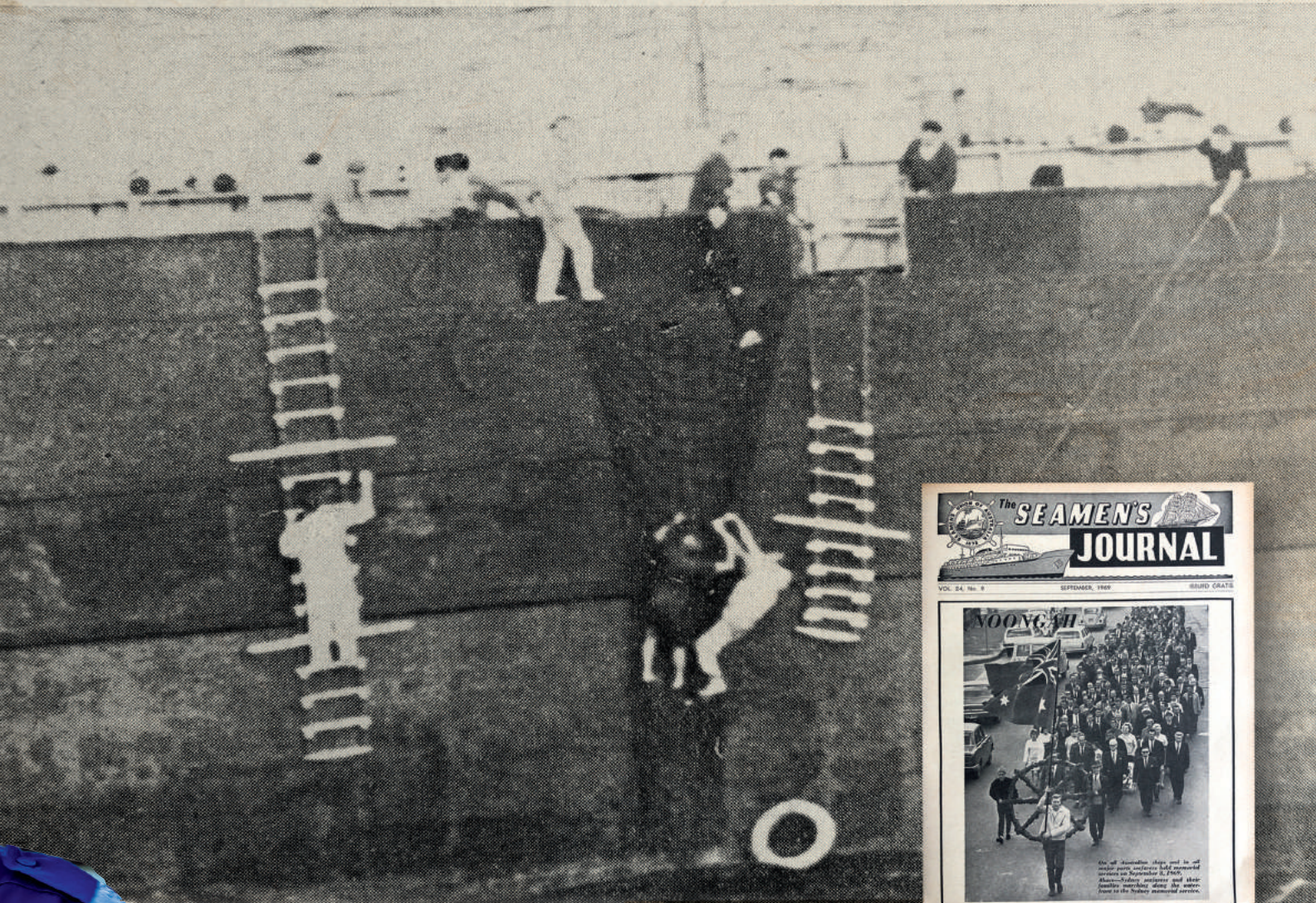
"We started yelling and waving our arms," said Bill. "A couple of the crew waved back."

Crew threw life buoys on lines to the three survivors and they were pulled onto the ship's side where they climbed up the gangway net.





*Crew of Meringa assist survivors Russell Henderson, William Cockley and John (Jay) Lingard aboard.*



***'I went down with the ship - for what distance I do not know; it seemed an eternity'***



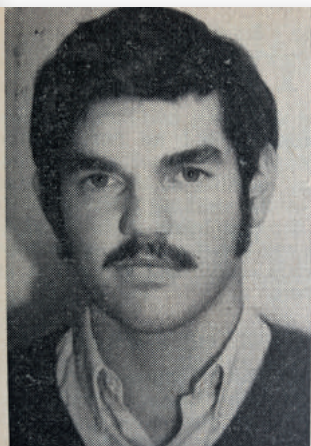
*Russell Henderson and William Cockley*







John (Jay) Lingard, E.R.D.

The late Thomas Ford,  
Chief Cook, Noongah*Seamen's Journal, September, 1969*The late Stephen Roy Pedemont,  
Radio Officer, Noongah, who  
was 19 years of age and on his  
first voyage to sea.

On board, the crew gave them plenty of brandy, hot soup and blankets.

Two other *Noongah* crew in life rafts had already been rescued by the search team.

Ken McIntyre was later given a medal posthumously for giving his life to save others.

Fifty years on, Bill Cockley, the sole living survivor, lives down the South Coast of NSW. Looking back, he sees the sinking all in slow motion.

"I still think about it," he said.

"A lot. The night before things started to look bad. I went to have a shower around 5 or 6pm and the water was not running away."

By the time Bill started the midnight watch the ship was listing.

"I knew it was very bad," he said.

"I talked to the mate on watch around 2am. 'This ship is going,' I said."

The 2nd mate shone a light.

The deck was awash. The ship was taking water.

The crew worked on the bilge pumps and when the engine went dead, struggled to get it started. The captain was alerted and radioed for help. He got Bill to go down and get all the day crew on deck.

"Getting the fellows out of their bunks proved a bit difficult," Bill recalls. "They could not believe anything was seriously wrong – until

they got up, then they really noticed the list."

The men struggled to get the lifeboats out but, by this time, the ship was almost on its side and they were stuck.

Bill was not meant to be on the *Noongah* that night. He was rostered on the *Iron Kimberley*. But he had asked for a transfer rather than "pull a bodgy compo claim to get home" in time for his wedding.

"One of the main things that kept me going was I had to survive because the woman I was going to marry had our baby girl. She was only 8-10 months old," Bill says.

Three months later, Bill was back at sea. He later bought a fishing boat and took time off in Adelaide to be with his wife and daughter to try to save the marriage. That's when he joined Marine Rescue.

Back on the South Coast and many marriages later, Bill, 78, still goes out with the Shellharbour Marine Rescue one weekend each month.

"I couldn't put a figure on how many times I've been out and how many people we've brought in," he says. "I spent 28 years at sea and 28 years doing marine rescue. That's 56 years on water."

The man who was rescued, now devotes his time to rescuing others. ■

# Noongah memorial

Fifty years on, families and mariners gather to honour the 21 seafarers lost when the Australian coastal trader *MV Noongah* went down in heavy seas

It was in pre-dawn cyclonic seas, 50 years ago this August, when the ocean claimed the *MV Noongah*, some 12 nautical miles off Smoky Cape Lighthouse, near South West Rocks, NSW, on 25 August, 1969.

The ship's captain had radioed at 3.55am for help after losing control in the heavy swell and 110 kph gale-force winds. At 4.47am he signalled again. The crew were abandoning ship.

The 26 Australian seafarers on board had just 14 minutes to escape before the *Noongah* and its load of steel went down.

Survivors recall how they were sucked under with the ship. Three managed to hold onto a plank. Around them they heard the plaintive cries of their shipmates. Twenty-one men perished. Five survivors drifted 40 miles south off the coast of Port Macquarie before they were finally rescued late the following day. Only one body was ever recovered.

"It was a terrible night and a dreadful, small ship," MUA National Secretary Paddy Crumlin told the gathering of merchant mariners and family at the Smoky Cape Lighthouse ceremony on 25 August. "There were lots of seafarers on board and they showed great heroism."





After the *Noongah* sank “upwards of a dozen red lights were seen, and men heard calling out”, the Marine Court of Inquiry later recorded. It found no specific cause for the tragedy.

Geoff Williams took part in the rescue mission. He provided the union with an account of the four-day RAAF C130 search for the survivors.

“Why were more men not rescued on that day?” Williams queried. “The C130 carried a rescue kit for dropping to men in the water. (But) the aircraft was flown 500 feet above the sea at 150-160 knots (about 80m per second).”

“Searching out to the sides of the aircraft, you only have a few seconds for something to catch your eye, focus on it, and assess whether it is a person in a life jacket, flotsam, wreckage or marine life,” he explained.

National Secretary Paddy Crumlin described the loss as the worst peacetime maritime tragedy in Australian coastal waters.

“The Japanese torpedoed the *Centaur* hospital ship off Coolangatta with great loss of life in World War II,” he recalled. “But this was peace time. Among the *Noongah* crew was a 16-year-old deck boy on his first trip to sea. These people were just going about their daily jobs.

“My union, the Seamen’s Union of Australia and the Australian Maritime Officers’ Union, made donations. Donations came from all over the country. Seafarers levied themselves.

“We assisted the widows and we assisted their children in their education; in nurturing their lives. So they were able to move on.

“That’s part of our Australian community, part of our working community, that we don’t forget our Australian values,” he said.

South West Rocks residents Tiana Hudson and Corrinne Boon, along

with Newcastle Branch Secretary Glen Williams, hosted the memorial service. Around 90 family members and friends of the seafarers on board bravely shared their stories.

Crumlin paid tribute to the Dunghutti people and the saltwater people of this nation. He made special mention of how they searched the beaches and headlands around the rugged coastline for several days in the hope of finding survivors.

Noongah is an Aboriginal word for the kurrajong tree, he noted.

Andrew Mercado was the master of ceremonies, and speakers included local councillor Dean Saul, family member Marion Wilde and Tas Bull Foundation chair Robert Coombs.

The Navy Cadets, who played a huge role in the search and rescue, rang the bell 21 times in memory of the 21 seafarers who lost their lives.

“For most of these families it was the first time meeting each other and the first time they had come to Smoky Cape. It was an emotional day and represented a sense of closure,” Paddy Crumlin wrote for the monthly stop work meeting.

He pledged that the union would continue to work with the families and local community to ensure a permanent memorial was established at Smoky Cape.

“We believe the seafarers and the families affected by this tragedy deserve the respect of a prominent memorial,” he said. “The union will be seeking assistance from the State Government, the Tas Bull Foundation and other organisations to ensure this happens.”

The *Noongah* highlights the heroism of the people who carried steel for BHP between Newcastle and Townsville, he added.

“People here know of the importance of the merchant marine to the economy. Regions thrived on the small coastal ships. My father was on a small ship that used to run up the rivers to pick sugar up. Now that’s all gone,” he lamented.

“This is how we built these communities on the basis of the merchant navy. It’s a terrible indictment.

“The *Noongah* was one of the ANL fleet owned by the Australian people. It helped populate and serve these communities. Now ANL is privatised and only Flag of Convenience vessels registered in tax havens like Liberia work the coastal steel trade. No Australian seafarers.

“There’s a lot to recognise about how we keep the economy going and the importance of the merchant navy,” he said. “We will always remember their great sacrifices and the great tragedies.” ■



War and Peace: Merchant Navy Memorial, Canberra  
The Federal Government on one hand recognises those merchant seafarers who died in the service of their country and on the other actively works to kill off the current generation of seafarers. The MUA/ITF were a major sponsor of the new memorial







## George Gotsis: Communist and freedom fighter

**W**hen MUA Sydney Branch Secretary Paul McAleer visited George Gotsis in hospital shortly before his death in April he told Paul, “The Godfather of May Day is finished”.

“I looked at George and told him he will never be finished because his legacy will live on in all of us who fight for working-class justice,” Paul told mourners at George’s funeral service in Sydney. “The last time I saw him, in the week of his passing, when we were saying goodbye to him, he raised his big fist one last time in defiance of death and the ruling class he hated.”

George passed away shortly before his 89th birthday. Other speakers at the service were MUA National Secretary Paddy Crumlin, MUA Veterans’ National Secretary Jim Donovan and George’s family members Dimitri, Anne and Traki Gotsis.

Jim Donovan said George first learned to fight as a teenager in Nazi-occupied Greece during World War II.

“As the Fascists were retreating they were committing atrocities against the

Greek people and George with his family and the resistance movement were ensuring their retreat was as painful as could be,” Jim said.

“George learned at a very early age how to fight and stand up for himself, and when he migrated to Australia he brought his fighting spirit with him.”

Paul remembered the first time he met George, who was president of the Sydney May Day Committee for 50 years.

“He came down to the waterfront in 2000 talking about May Day, its importance, its relevance, its focus. He would roar that May Day is the history of class struggle, with his big fists smashing down on the buckling table,” Paul said.

He said George “hammered into us” the fact that May Day represents “the fight for peace, for internationalism, for socialism”.

“George was a big man, a big beautiful man with big ideas, big principles and a big heart. He fought relentlessly for the working class. From an early age in the Kalamata mountains and village of Dorio in Greece, George had his mind and muscles forged in revolutionary working-class politics.

“His family was so important to George. One of the very few times I witnessed George tear up was when he lost his brother, or when he talked fondly and with so much love and humility about the sacrifice of his elder brother and executed father, about his big family, the death sentences his mother received, about his sisters in his village where I stayed four years ago.

“All working-class people are George’s family. He led a collective life, and even though he was a towering individual, he was a man of his class.

“We were all a part of him, and he a part of us. A man whose big hands shaped in battle, in the mines, in foundries and handling cargo were so full of warmth.”

Paul said George embodied the finest traditions of our working-class movement and was a living monument to them.

“He was a communist, a Marxist-Leninist, his belief that only in socialism could a worker guarantee our collective needs being fulfilled, saturated his entire life. It permeated his being, it characterised his decisions and his actions.





***“... a big beautiful man with big ideas, big principles and a big heart. He fought relentlessly for the working class...”***

“He was so resolute in this conviction, that he exhausted so much of his life trying to achieve it. Not for himself, but in his generous and giving way to all of us, to all the international working class whom he admired, loved and fought for, and he died without any more to give.”

“George defended his class and his village as a 14-year-old, battling the Nazis, and he would fight against everything they represented for the rest of his full life.

“He was a working-class intellectual whose communication sometimes suffered in English, but never in his actions. He was widely read in socialist literature and current geopolitical events, which he loved analysing through his Marxist-Leninist lens, offering guidance to everyone in his company.”

Paul said George was a member, delegate, activist and leader of the MUA Sydney Branch who was known for his generosity, humour, advice and actions. “Him not being here has already left a hole that we are struggling to fill,” he said.

Jim Donovan, a former secretary of the MUA Sydney branch, said George joined the branch when he moved from Port Kembla to Sydney in 1964. “He became involved in the industrial and political issues confronting the union from day one,” Jim said.

“Not long after joining he became a delegate and, let me say, even with his speech difficulties he was very effective and respected by the members. Soon after he arrived in Sydney we had a big influx of Greek people joining the

Branch. I think you can work out why!”

Jim said George was president of the Greek Atlas Club for 40 years, “a task he cherished as it kept him touch with his beloved Greece”. Because of his work in the campaign to defeat the Greek Junta, “he was placed on the wanted list of the Fascists, but that never stopped him – in fact it spurred him on to do more”.

“When the Junta was defeated, George devoted much of his time to rebuilding the Greek Communist Party and the Atlas Club was instrumental in raising large sums of money for that cause. He also raised funds for the Greek Engineers Union (PALM). He was a great supporter of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and again raised funds for them under the banner Friends of WFTU.”

Paddy Crumlin said George was a stalwart of the Waterside Workers Federation and later MUA who played an important part in struggles against the Vietnam war, apartheid, the Greek Junta and other major campaigns.

Paddy said George was widely known as the Godfather of May Day, which he



helped to keep alive for the past four decades, and for leading black bans on Greek shipping to protest the persecution of unionists and other progressives by the Greek junta in the 1970s.

He said George was a leading organiser of Greek immigrant workers in Port Kembla and mentored many young activists.

George made three unsuccessful applications for Australian citizenship between 1966 and 1969, under Liberal-led conservative governments. With the election of the Whitlam Labor government in 1972, George confidently reapplied but the department rejected his application without it reaching the minister. Union pressure resulted in the application being reconsidered and George finally becoming a citizen of Australia.



## Ron 'Dago' Lovett: Militancy with humour

At the end of a shift on a hot summer's day, Sydney wharfie Ron Lovett dived into the water at Walsh Bay. Swimming past a group of fishermen at the end of the wharf, Ron looked up and asked if this was Auckland, New Zealand. When an angler answered "No", Ron said, "I must have taken the wrong turn," and kept on swimming.

Antics like this made Ron, who passed away in August, well known for his sense of humour. He was just as well known for his militancy.

Ron Lovett, nicknamed "Dago", joined the Sydney Branch in the mid-1950s. It was a time of enormous change for the better and Ron loved being there.

There were various types of waterfront gangs including the militant, Bull and humorous ones. The Bulls were boss-conscious and the militant

and humorous gangs played a more important role of improving conditions which were getting better by the day.

Ron was in a gang called McHale's Navy, named after the 1960s TV comedy series starring Ernest Borgnine and Tim Conway. Ron's gang was always causing havoc and their antics drove the Pannos (foremen) up the wall. Typically, the more the Pannos tried to drive a gang to work harder, the slower it went. The bull gangs were the exception and the Pannos left them to their own devices.

One day, the Panno told Ron's gang to go below and strip off. That meant taking the hand hatches off to go below and discharge or load the cargo. When the Panno went below he found all of the gang were stark naked.

Another time, they were loading thousands of small cargoes going to the Islands, which meant a long walk back to the bulkhead. Ron told the Panno to "Go and have a cup of tea and we'll look after the loading." So off he went and the gang put up a false brow some 15 metres from the bulkhead. On returning, the Panno was amazed how much work they had done. He leant on the stow and, lo and behold, it fell backwards into an open space.

Working at Darling Harbour, the worst Panno of all time, Joe Slattery, asked Ron to buy him fish and chips up at Millers Point and gave him a pound note or a 'quid' (\$2 today). Fish and chips cost the equivalent of 20 cents in that era and it would feed you all day. So off Ron goes and returns with the biggest wrapping of fish and chips you could imagine. "What's this?" asked Joe. "It's a quid's worth of fish and chips – what you asked for," Ron replied.

Like the militant gangs, Ron's McHale's Navy did everything by the book and played an important role in securing vast improvements in wages and conditions.

Ron was also an outstanding Rugby League player. He played first grade with Newtown and Souths and, for his size, was a terror on the field with no quarter asked or given. Bob McCarthy, another great Souths player, spoke at Ron's memorial and relayed many stories of Ron's playing activities on and off the field.

The farewell was held at Marrickville Golf Club where Ron was a member for 30 years and played with friends he played football with, including Barry Bennett and Steve Lawrence.

We would like to thank long-time friends Cheryl and Bruce Anderson for organising the tribute for Ron and his family. They, like many others, could not let him leave without saying "Goodbye, it was great to know you."

Rest in peace Ron, you will never be forgotten.

**Jim Donovan**  
National Secretary  
MUA Veterans



## George 'Canteen' Markham: Effective delegate

Hundreds of people attended the funeral service of George Markham, a.k.a. 'Canteen George', who passed away in August. They included George's loving family and many past and present members of the WWF/MUA.

Among the speakers at the service held at Woy Woy, NSW were friends Col Casey, Johnny Lewis and myself. Col and Johnny's funny stories of George growing up in Erskineville and Newtown brought much laughter from the mourners.

It appeared George had a crook liver in his early life and refrained from drinking because it might kill him. One day, after many years off the grog, George was walking past a hotel when he suddenly turned and headed for the pub door. Col asked, "Where are you going?" George replied, "I'm going in to die." He lasted many more decades.

George joined the Sydney waterfront in the late 1960s and worked at SEAL bin, Conaust and Patrick's. At Conaust he was in the gang called F Troop, a team of misfits, and was a very effective



delegate and later a Committee member.

He was a very effective man on the job, supported the union through good and tough times, and always took a positive position.

George got his nickname from being the gang's runner to the canteen at smoko and lunch time. He got to know all the mostly female canteen staff and they all called him "Canteen George".

In his spare time during the Patrick's lockout, George was on the People's Peaceful Picket Line and brought many supporters along with him, which gave locked-out members much heart.

At the memorial, Col and Johnny spoke about George's football playing days and the valuable time he gave to the Newtown Jets Rugby League as a committee member.

On retiring to the NSW Central Coast, George was elected a director of the Ettalong Bowling Club where he served with its long-time president Robert Henderson, a retired member of the Firemen and Deckhands' Union and MUA.

In all, George gave more than he took. He left a family that loved him as he loved them. He will be remembered as a good bloke and comrade of the highest quality.

Rest in peace George.

**Jim Donovan**  
National Secretary  
MUA Veterans

## Jim Macken: Activist and judge

Paying tribute to Jim Macken, who died on 19 September at the age of 91, National Secretary Paddy Crumlin said that, as a young man, Macken was an active trade unionist caught up in the Cold War politics of the time.

Crumlin said that as state secretary of the Seamen's Union, he got to know Macken when he was a judge of the NSW Industrial Relations Commission in the 1980s.

Despite that background, he became a strong supporter of the MUA and publicly backed the union during the 1998 Patrick dispute.

"Jim's judicial leadership and insight in that role was critical to the development of the aggregate wage for NSW port workers, which is still the benchmark wage and salary package for port workers around the country," Paddy said.

Macken retired from the bench in 1989. Nine years later, during the Patrick dispute, he made "public and passionate statements about the unfairness and illegality of the actions of the federal government and Patrick corporation," Paddy said.

"Jim approached me after the dispute was resolved, saying he believed the MUA was an icon for social justice and workers' rights in this country and internationally.

"He was an advocate for the formation of an association called Friends of the MUA that would continue to highlight social injustice and labour exploitation and promote active support for trade unionism.

"Jim's idea remains central to the ongoing development of community unionism, including a proposition going to our quadrennial conference of members next March."

Paddy said Macken worked closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people – particularly the Ngarinyin people of the Kimberley – to retain community art and culture. "Jim remained interested in MUA initiatives through the work of Thomas Mayor, along with other matters relating to trade union rights, until his death."

In 1951, Macken went to New Guinea as a cost clerk for Steamships Trading Company but the company learnt of his aspirations to start a union in the country and sent him back to Australia, according to his journalist daughter, Deirdre Macken.

Writing in *The Australian*, Deirdre said that by 1954, her father studied law and gained admission to the bar in 1963. In 1975, he joined the NSW Industrial Commission and lectured in employment law at Sydney University's law school.

"He was always a writer and, in 1977, his book *The Law of Employment* was published and would become a key resource in industrial law for decades. It is still published as *Macken's Law of Employment*," Deirdre wrote.

"He presided over many controversial cases – Caltex oil strikes, energy strikes – and conducted two commissions of inquiry, one into retail shopping hours and the other in the railway maintenance industry."

In 2003, he was awarded membership of the Order of Australia. In 2011, he was made a life member of the ALP.

"His last public act was in 2016, when he offered to swap places with a refugee on Manus Island or Nauru. It was a serious offer," Deirdre wrote.



## Vale: Byron (Barry) Arthur

11 April 1941 to 4 October 2019

I first met Barry while I was an apprentice boilermaker in 1990. He was a leading hand at Fleet Forge, an engineering company opposite Duke and Orr's Dry Dock in South Melbourne. He was very experienced in getting the good out of everyone, even a smart-arsed 17-year-old apprentice who thought he knew everything.

Barry moved up to foreman, still with the common touch with everyone who worked with him. He moved on to work for Liner Services in the late 1970s.

We lost contact with each other as I went to sea in 1979. I caught up with him occasionally, when time permitted. Barry ended up at Webb Dock East at Patrick Stevedoring in the maintenance garage. I met him again in 1998 during the infamous Patrick's Dispute. He was a staunch unionist as anybody who knew him will tell you.

He had a bad accident in September 2000, while working on a crane. He injured his shoulder and was assigned to light duties until his retirement in 2001. He was a member of several committees regarding union matters and redundancies.

Barry is survived by Pam, his wife of 55 years, his two children, Antony and Lynda, and four grandchildren. A loyal unionist and family man, Barry will be sadly missed by everyone who knew him, but not forgotten.

**Neil F Jensen**  
MUA Member 5016481



BEMVINDO  
BA DELEGADO 2º KONGRESU NASIONAL UMTTL  
DILI, 22 - 23 FEVEREIRO 2011

# SOLIDARITY MEDAL

Australian union role in  
Timorese independence  
recognised with a gong.



**T**homas Mayor stood proudly alongside Australian Council of Trade Unions President Michele O'Neil, when President Francisco Guterres presented Australian unions with the Medal of the Order of Timor-Leste in Dili on 31 August.

It was the 20th independence anniversary celebrations and Mayor, NT President of the Maritime Union Division of the Construction Forestry Maritime, Mining and Energy Union was in town on union business.

"It was a great honour," he said. "It

was a massive acknowledgement of the Australian union movement."

## BLACK BANS

Maritime workers were the first to act when Indonesia invaded Timor in 1975. Darwin unions played a key role. They were led by the late Brian Manning, who ran the underground Radio Maubere from mosquito and crocodile infested bush hideouts outside Darwin.

Manning later attended the Fretilin Congress in independent Timor-Leste in 2011, where Fretilin members applauded his activism in support of independence.

Australian waterfront bans on Indonesian ships and cargo began before the Indonesian invasion became official in December 1975.

Fires, armadas off the coast and the murder of six Australian journalists including the Balibo 5 in October preceded the full-scale occupation of Timor by dictator General Soeharto's US-installed junta.

Soeharto slaughtered between 1.5 and 3 million Indonesians after coming to power in 1965.

Ten years later, his troops, many trained in Australia and the US, invaded



the former Portuguese colony – with Australian government sanction. They killed an estimated 200,000 Timorese.

In 1975, waterside workers imposed the first bans on Indonesian ships in Darwin, Adelaide and Sydney. Tug crews delayed the sailing of an Indonesian ship from Melbourne.

So effective were the maritime bans that Jakarta asked Canberra to intervene.

Instead the ACTU executive on 28 November 1975 resolved to favour “a ban on Indonesian registered vessels and also a ban on war materials.”

ACTU officers soon called on the international trade union movement to do likewise.

Tug and bunker crews held the *Gunung Kerintji* in Port Adelaide on 27 October for three days. It eventually sailed, without the tugs.

On 11 November, tug delegate Les Richardson, Whyalla, held a load of steel on board the Panamanian flag vessel *Sun Crocus* for nine days. The Taiwanese flagged *Transpacific Trader* and the *Garca Dua* were next in the line of union fire.

The 1991 massacre at Santa Cruz Cemetery in Dili sparked renewed action against Indonesian shipping, with waterside workers at CTAL, Sydney among the first to take action.

With the bloodshed following the Timorese vote for independence on 30 August 1999, union action mounted.

National Secretary and International Transport Workers’ Federation executive member John Coombs called for worldwide union bans at the ITF conference in Fiji.

Newcastle MUA members pulled

Indonesian cargo from the *Cape Jervis* that evening.

“We are not prepared to stand idly by and have the East Timorese people murdered for no reason than they are seeking what every Australian man and woman currently enjoys,” MUA deputy secretary Paddy Crumlin announced.

Maritime bans alone affected an estimated \$80 million in Indonesian cargo.

In Sydney, waterside workers refused to allow the vessel *Bunga Teratai III* to sail until the skipper withdrew 16 Indonesia-bound containers.

In Brisbane, MUA tug operators refused to bring the Indonesian flagged bulk grain vessel *Bogasari Lima* into port.

In addition, two other Bogasari vessels were held on the west coast, affecting 80,000 tonnes of wheat shipments.

Brisbane members pulled 30 containers of Indonesian exports from the *Contship London* at the request of the exporter. Indonesian cargo was also pulled from the *Cape Jervis*.

In Townsville, MUA members delayed unloading 60,450 tonnes of nickel ore from the *MV Arthur Stove*.

In Darwin, maritime workers banned a shipment of 2,500 livestock bound for Jakarta on the *Anomis*.

The bans were only lifted on 19 September 1999 when Indonesia capitulated and Australian troops led international peacekeeping forces into Dili.

The Australian merchant marine was part of the mission, with 13 Australian seafarers on two support vessels contracted by the Australian Navy – the *Lady Valisia* and *Lady Elaine*.

Interfet commander Major General Peter Cosgrove wrote to the MUA to thank its members.

“Many civilian ships have carried valuable people, equipment and supplies to the deployed forces, without which our logistic build-up would have been severely hampered,” Cosgrove said.

## RECONSTRUCTION & UNION BUILDING

Mick Doleman, then MUA deputy national secretary, joined the Australian union delegation for May Day in Dili in 2000.

“Xanana was president in waiting as the UN was still running the show,” Doleman recalls. “It was shortly after Indonesia left with their collaborators. Fires were still burning, people were still being killed in the streets.”

Mick Doleman made between 10-15 visits to Timor Leste and helped establish a Timorese council of unions along the lines of the ACTU.

The ITF and Australian unions helped workers establish transport unions in Timor Leste, including the Timorese Maritime Union SMETL.

MUA seafarer Mick Killick lived in Timor Leste, working on building the unions and training Timorese organisers.

Australian unions helped to source global funding via Apheda and helped train Timorese organisers in Australia.

The Indonesian Seafarers’ Union hosted Timorese training in Jakarta for seafaring qualifications. Through the ITF, the MUA put pressure on international oil and gas majors like Woodside and Conoco Philips to train Timorese to work in offshore and in towage. ■







# COUNCIL MATTERS





Workers' capital, anti-union attacks, port automation and climate strikes topped the agenda at the National Council meeting in October.







**U**nions are under renewed attack, but they have new sophisticated ways of fighting back and continuing the battle against global injustice.

At the October Council meeting, MUA Division National Secretary Paddy Crumlin, National Secretary Michael O'Connor and ACTU President Michele O'Neil spoke on the challenges facing the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union and the labour movement in general since the unexpected re-election of a Coalition government.

The focus was not on retreat but how to advance the struggle for workers' rights and global justice.

Paddy Crumlin gave a detailed report on the Australian union contingent to the Global Unions 2019 Committee on Workers' Capital Conference held in Paris in September.

He spoke on the importance of using the power of workers' capital to add value to the lives and aspirations of workers and communities.

renewable energy such as offshore wind farms and hydrogen exports.

On the waterfront, council adopted an in-principle strategy and union policy opposing fully automated terminals. Council said any future automation should promote a reduction in hours, not jobs. This would become a national policy across all waterfront agreements. Council also called for the International Transport Workers' Federation, dockers section to adopt the policy globally.

Council also voted for improvements in parental leave and domestic violence leave to go into all enterprise agreements.

The Offshore Alliance and a campaign to support deep-sea divers injured by malpractice in the industry, alongside a push for improved international diving standards, were also high on the union agenda.

Special guests attending the three-day meeting at the union's Sussex Street, Sydney headquarters

## Unions are under renewed attack, but they have new sophisticated ways of fighting back and continuing the battle against global injustice.

Key to the Australian campaign, in the first instance, is to employ workers' capital to ensure BHP puts Australian crewed ships back on the Port Hedland to Port Kembla iron-ore trade.

Unions would also be advancing a dialogue with IFM Investors – owned by Australian not-for-profit superannuation funds – to advance the IFM-ITUC Labour Rights memorandum of understanding of 2019, Crumlin reported.

Australia's Modern Slavery Act 2018 addresses exploitation risks in company operations and supply chains. The MUA has used BHP's own UK Modern Slavery Statement as part of its capital strategies campaign against the company replacing Australian seafarers with exploited crew on flag of convenience vessels.

Workers' capital would also be used to back investment in wind and hydrogen power, providing new jobs for workers, including seafarers under enterprise agreements.

Youth climate strikes will continue to have the full support of the union, including industrial action to transition unionised workers into jobs created in

included Joe Fleetwood and Carl Findlay of the Maritime Union of New Zealand, Daniel Matthew, general secretary, Transport Workers Union, Papua New Guinea and Surya and Usmansyah, Jakarta International Container Terminal Workers' Union, Indonesia.

Reports were also presented on membership, union finances, super, stevedoring enterprise agreements, the campaign for Australian shipping, towage, safety of domestic commercial vessels, defence services jobs, cruise ships, women, youth, veterans and local industrial campaigns.

Safety, communications and the Uluru Statement from the Heart were also highlighted during the week, with Council hosting the Sydney book launch of *Finding the Heart of the Nation*.

Lynn Dalgarno, son of acclaimed social realist artist Roy Dalgarno, gave a special presentation to council on a Dalgarno Artwork Collaboration with the union proposed for 2020.

Council resolutions will be voted on at annual general meetings of rank-and-file members in all ports during the last week of November. ■



# The Maritime Union of Australia National Office

## A Division of Construction Forestry Maritime Mining & Energy Union

Paddy Crumlin - National Secretary | Will Tracey - Deputy National Secretary  
Ian Bray and Warren Smith - Assistant National Secretaries



### NATIONAL COUNCIL OCTOBER 2019 – RESOLUTIONS FROM COUNCIL

#### National Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer

- i) Neil Swanson to be the Division's new National Returning Officer
- ii) Garry Keane to fill the Deputy Returning Officer role

#### Dalgarno Artwork

- i) National Council supports the gallery initiative and work with Lynn Dalgarno

#### Finance Report

- i) That the financial report be adopted as a fair and transparent financial record
- ii) Renew ESV Auditors tenure for the next 12 months.

#### Perk Box

- i) Endorse the report

#### Membership Report

- i) Endorse report
- ii) Endorse 1A membership rules proposal – deliberations taken to the point where 1A is associate membership of \$100 a year
- iii) Alliance membership away from MUA membership
- iv) Acknowledge the effort of staff in the membership gradings
- v) VSEs – deal at the branch level – average earnings are the minimum basis of dues calculations.

#### Stevedoring Industry

- i) Endorse Waterfront Report and the work of the Waterfront Commission
- ii) Endorse the key principles on automation from the Waterfront Commissions (MUA Automation Position Paper) as national union policy

- iii) That this position is taken to ITF global dockers section as a recommendation for adoption globally
- iv) National Council endorses the industrial strategy arising from the MUA automation position paper and supports the rollout of the national automation position across all waterfront terminal agreements.
- v) Endorse the MUA's ongoing work in the ITF Dockers section and on the ITF Automation Working Group.

#### Shipping and Industry Report

- i) That John Blackburn be invited as a keynote speaker at the 2020 Quadrennial Conference
- ii) Continue to pursue opportunities to develop a union analysis and participation in the development of a renewable hydrogen industry in Australia
- iii) Target BP in shipping campaign on governance and ESG as part of cabotage and workers' capital strategy.

#### Sydney Branch Report

- i) Note the Report
- ii) Consider discussions at Branch levels with their counterparts in the Construction and General Division
- iii) Supports the formation of the May 1 Movement and supports the taking of action to realise its demands.
- iv) National Council supports the Climate Strikes, their demands and the continued support including industrial action to win a Just Transition and a sustainable environment
- v) National Council supports the campaign to stop the Yarra Bay Passenger Terminal from going ahead and supports resourcing the MUA Sydney Branch campaign to ensure its success
- vi) Demand the release of Jock from Bulgaria. The Branch call upon the ACTU, ALP, Australian Government to support Jock.
- vii) Take the restructuring of the Union

to the MUA Executive to develop this concept further and consider the future of our Union to provide for the membership.

#### Towage Report

- i) Acknowledge the work put in by the campaign team, in particular, Aarin Moon and Paul Brett
- ii) Endorse the National Towage Strategy and Campaign
- iii) Follow up on previous National Council determination to affiliate a portion of towage members to the ITF Inland Waterways and Navigation Section
- iv) Endorse Assistant National Secretary Ian Bray to work with Branches to build a detailed map.

### FROM NC REPORTS:

#### WORKERS' CAPITAL & SUPERANNUATION

##### Recommendations 1.1

That National Council:

- i) Note and endorse the Workers' Capital and Superannuation report;
- ii) Note that the MUA has opportunity to identify target companies for application of a capital strategy aspect to complement union industrial and organising campaigns and authorises the National Secretary to confer with officials to identify such companies and where appropriate seek CWC coordination support to internationalise capital strategy campaigns in conjunction with the ITF and allied unions across the globe (see past, current and future opportunities outlined in Table 1 of the report);
- iii) Note that the capital strategy aspect to the BHP campaign remains alive and needs to be complemented by a stepping up of the ITF/MUA industrial campaign for a return of the Port Hedland to Port Kembla iron ore trade to Australian crewed ships;
- iv) Authorises the MUA to continue to



# The Maritime Union of Australia National Office

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participate in the national debate around investing workers' capital in a just transition and in development of national industrial policy to help shape the future low carbon economy, particularly in the industries and associated supply chains that employ MUA members, in ways that deliver good outcomes for workers and communities and in particular which creates secure, well paid union jobs;

- i) Note the key outcomes from the Global Unions 2019 CWC Conference that will form the basis of the CWC Work Plan 2019-2020 and authorise the National Secretary to commit union resources to actively participate in implementation of the CWC Work Plan, both directly and through the ITF; and
- ii) Agree that the union actively participate in development and implementation of an Australian Workers' Capital Work Plan coordinated by the ACTU and its Workers' Capital Executive Committee and wider Workers' Capital Committee that complements and helps drive implementation of the CWC Work Plan in Australia and the region.

### FINANCE REPORT

#### Recommendation 1.3

That National Council:

- i) Endorses the 2018/2019 Financial Statements as tabled and that the National Secretary and Deputy National Secretary sign the 2018/2019 Financial Statements;
- ii) That the MUA appoints ESV Accounting and Business Advisors as the auditors for the 2019/2020 financial year.

### OFFSHORE WIND, RENEWABLE ENERGY AND CLIMATE

#### Recommendation:

- i) Note the report  
Continue to develop proposals to further the development of the offshore wind industry in Australia, including research on the potential for offshore wind in Australia. Continue

to work to build understanding of and support for a just transition and good union jobs in new low-emissions industries across the environmental, climate, and union movement.

- ii) Support the proposal from School Strike for Climate around a national series of debrief meetings and town halls on the topic of jobs and climate justice, and participate in building local meetings.
- iii) Support research on the problems with current neoliberal renewable energy policy and the improvements needed to renewable energy policy in Australia.
- iv) Continue to pursue opportunities to develop a union analysis and participation in the development of a renewable hydrogen industry in Australia.
- v) Support the MUA submission on nuclear energy and power and continue to approve nuclear options as per union policy
- vi) Continue to maintain our opposition to nuclear power.

### SEACARE

#### Recommendation 2.7

That National Council:

- i. That the report is noted
- ii. Pursue measures to extend Seacare coverage by finding employers who are not paying into the levy, and ending the patchwork of exemptions from the scheme.

### QUADRENNIAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

- i. That the QNC Terms & Conditions are agreed.
- ii. That the report is noted.

### MUA/ITF Organising & Communication Centre

#### Recommendation 2.10

That National Council:

- i. That the Business management plan is agreed
- ii. That the report is noted.

### Safety and Training Officer

#### Recommendation 3.8

That National Council:

- i) Endorse the Report
- ii) Adopt the slogan and banner – "STAND UP, SPEAK OUT, COME HOME"
- iii) Support National Ship Inspection campaigning and continued efforts to develop a best practice across all ports
- iv) Support the creation of a National Safety Unit
- v) Support the Development of a National Education Unit
- vi) Support the ongoing development of the National Mental Health Strategy.

### Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN)

That National Council:

- i) Endorse the Report
- ii) Support the ongoing development on "peace is union business" organising groups
- iii) Support the inclusion of "peace and justice are union business" in union training curriculum
- iv) Support the ongoing affiliation and involvement in IPAN
- v) Support the concept of Peace is Union Business.

### Towage

#### Recommendations 4.1

That National Council:

- i) Note this report
- ii) Acknowledge the work put in by the campaign team, in particular, Aarin Moon and Paul Brett
- iii) Endorse the National Towage Strategy and Campaign
- iv) Follow up on previous National Council determination to affiliate a portion of towage members to the ITF Inland Waterways and Navigation Section
- v) Continue to support divers that are members that have been affected by this workplace malpractice



# The Maritime Union of Australia National Office

## A Division of Construction Forestry Maritime Mining & Energy Union

**Paddy Crumlin** - National Secretary | **Will Tracey** - Deputy National Secretary  
**Ian Bray** and **Warren Smith** - Assistant National Secretaries



- vi) Continue to expose the employers and clients responsible for letting this occur
- vii) Continue to work with the divers' legal team to get justice for affected divers
- viii) Endorse Working Rail, Maritime and Transport Union (UK) and Energi-All (Norway) to achieve improved diving standards internationally
- ix) That John Blackburn be invited as a keynote speaker at the 2020 Quadrennial Conference
- x) Continue to pursue opportunities to develop a union analysis and participation in the development of a renewable hydrogen industry in Australia.

### Recommendation 4.2

That National Council:

- i) Note the report
- ii) Endorse Assistant National Secretary Ian Bray to work with Branches to build a detailed map of all Port Authorities nationally.

### Recommendation 4.3

That National Council:

- i) Note the report
- ii) Support:
  - a. the continued involvement in the consultation process of Marine Order 505
  - b. Continued involvement in the AIS's review if the IR/CIR qualification
  - c. Involvement in the AIS's Marine Towage Project Technical Advisory Committee to develop a towage deckhand qualification.

## Women

### Recommendations 4.5

That National Council:

- i) Note the report
- ii) Will ensure improvements to parental leave and the inclusion of domestic violence leave goes into all EBAs as per national conference resolutions;
- iii) Support the work of the Women's committee and encourage further development of women's programs within each branch;

- iv) Branches support Nov 19 and Nov 25 days of action.

## Tasmanian Branch

### Recommendations 10.1

That National Council:

- i) The report be noted.
- ii) Discussions be held in relation to Structures of Committees and titles of the CFMMEU National Rules to see alignment where required.

### Recommendation 10.2

That National Council:

- i) Hold open and transparent discussions during National Council into where if any of the Protect money has been accounted for in our Annual Financial Reports, who or which branch or office is currently collecting monies, how branch members are identified and how going forward any income derived from Protect income protection will be spent.

### Recommendation 10.3

That National Council:

- i) That an independent consultant be engaged to undertake a comprehensive review of all tasks, processes, resourcing requirements, income and expenditure, rules and structures; that this review is then disclosed and discussed in full with National Council to access any restructuring and forward planning of the MUA.

## South Australian Branch

### Recommendation 11.2

National Council directs national Executive to facilitate an External review of operations in the new union to identify operational efficiencies and savings

Further National Council to be presented with a breakdown of expenditure in the MUA budget including flights, accommodation, expenses with a view to reducing these costs.

### Recommendation 11.4

That National Council:

- i) Provides resources for a National Organising plan for Sealink; and
- ii) Accelerate review of the Maritime

Tourism & Chartered Vessel Award 2010

### Recommendation 11.5

That National Council:

- i) Set aside appropriate resources for a new integrated membership system; and
- ii) National Council resources a communication content manager for all web, e-news and social media platforms.

### Recommendation 11.6

- i) Inco Vessel ICS Silver Lining be included in the campaign to bring under Australian Manning.

### Recommendation 11.7

- i) Protect Commissions arrangements to be discussed openly and transparently and distribute contributions on equitable basis to branches.

### Recommendation 11.8

- i) A national office restructure in the context of budget constraints be considered to accommodate National Office manager/Chief of Staff, Increase in National Legal resources or shared branch legal resources and urgent Communications officer responsible for all elements of MUA Comms.

### Recommendation 11.9

- i) National Office to pursue consolidation of these large and broad cost items throughout the merged union.

### Recommendation 11.10

- i) National Council direct National Executive to include succession planning and Future of the Union on the agenda at the next National Executive

## Western Australian Branch

- i) Agree that National Office full fund all WA Branch Organisers. ■



# Finding the Heart of the Nation

The journey of the Uluru Statement towards *Voice, Treaty and Truth*, by Thomas Mayor.



**T**he blood red rock lies exposed above the ribs of desert like a beating heart. Uluru is the heart of the nation and a traditional meeting place for First Nations people.

In May 2017, Uluru was the venue for some 250 delegates from Australia's 700,000 Indigenous Australians from more than 500 nations.

Thomas Mayor, a Torres Strait Islander born on Larrakia land, writer and waterside worker stood among them.

The image he chose for his book *Finding the Heart of the Nation* is as much a human heart laid bare as it is a rock in the desert.

Implicit in the book's title is that Australia is a nation that has lost its heart. It is a nation without a heart. Heartless.

Thomas found his heart as a kid playing footy. His team was losing badly when "something snapped in my mind sparking a fire that has burned ever since."

His high-school teachers suggested he should become a writer. Instead he went on to be 16 years a Darwin dock worker and 11 years a full-time union official. He is now national Indigenous officer for the CFMMEU.

Thomas first found his voice on the wharves. As he gained the skills of negotiation and organising in the union movement, he applied those skills to advancing the rights of Indigenous peoples.

"The promise of constitutional change had been kicked down the road like a tin can, growing even more battered," he writes. "In that time, we have seen parliamentary committees

and expert panels come and go and heard simple-minded opinions from ignorant politicians. They all had a kick. For more than 10 years the can was never picked up, just kicked along a little further.

"The tough task of picking up the damaged hopes for a more substantive form of constitutional recognition fell to the Indigenous members of the referendum council," he writes.

Gurindji woman Josie Crawshaw asked Thomas to join the leaders of the Darwin Constitutional Dialogue in 2015. He was later nominated to be on the Darwin region delegation to the Uluru First Nations' Constitution Convention.

On the flight from Darwin, Thomas recalls he did not pray to a god or meditate on an outcome. He read the Australian Constitution from cover to cover.

The Constitution is the rule book for Australia, but it fails to recognise the First Nations' people, he notes. "No recognition or reference to their historical and contemporary place in this country is made."

At the convention, Thomas tells of walkouts and disappointments, then after a storm blows over, the mounting excitement of consensus and outcome.

Thomas became a signatory to the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

It sets "an outstanding precedent for national self-determination and the first national consensus," he writes.

But the government of the day quickly dismissed the proclamation.

With no money to campaign, the Maritime Union funded Thomas to travel the country.

On canvas, words framed with

artwork, the Uluru Statement from the Heart has become a sacred document – one that Thomas was entrusted to take from the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in Darwin on his journey.

"At the Garma Festival I had held the canvas for the very first time," he recalls. "I felt its power. I realised that the wonderful Uluru Statement canvas was our most powerful tool. I thought if other Australians could see it too, it would inspire the vital momentum for change."

The canvas could change the nation and give it heart, he writes.

In his book, Thomas takes us around a very different Australia, a continent made up of sovereign nation states dating back some 40,000 years.

Through his eyes we view a land with different peoples, languages, laws and cultures made up of artists, lawmakers, seafarers, fishermen and farmers. First Nations' people were not just hunters and gatherers as European history books claim. The sophistication of their civilisations is documented in *Dark Emu* by Indigenous author Bruce Pascoe.

First Nations' people lived in relative harmony until the arrival of European settlers, the frontier wars, massacres, poisonings and pack rapes. They now make up a mere 3 per cent of the population.

"The Uluru Statement decrees the scale of our crisis," writes Thomas. "The intergenerational trauma and systemic powerlessness."

With haunting prose, the Uluru Statement highlights how the first sovereign nation of the Australian continent was never ceded nor



‘Thomas Mayor’s book is full of spirit. The spirit of struggle. The spirit of survival. The spirit to make change for a better Australia.’

PROFESSOR MARCIA LANGTON

# FINDING THE HEART OF THE NATION

**The journey of the Uluru Statement  
towards Voice, Treaty and Truth**

**THOMAS MAYOR**

***“First Nations’ stories are integral to our national history – they are the heartbeat of the country.”***

and leaders past and present, including union elders. We learn of heroes, warriors, legal minds, artists, academics and activists. Twenty key figures tell their stories.

“First Nations’ stories are integral to our national history – they are the heartbeat of the country,” writes Thomas. “We should enshrine them, not silence them... (they) are as significant as Homer’s Iliad and the Odyssey – as powerful in their telling, humanity and spirit as any of the greatest dramas by Euripides and Shakespeare, and older than any of them put together.”

Their voice, he says, must be enshrined in the constitution, so it cannot be replaced or repealed subject to political whim (like ATSIC and previous representative bodies).

“Laws and policies are being made by governments specifically about us, without us, and too often to our detriment,” Thomas writes. “A voice is the first reform because it will start to address this political disempowerment, setting us on the path for the future reform of Treaty and Truth.

“It gives hope to a nation born from many nations that we may find our collective heart,” Thomas writes. “Uluru is our heart and the heart of the nation.”

Thomas calls on all Australians to support the Uluru Statement.

“Federal parliament in Canberra with politicians who sit in that big house of power on a hill that was stolen from the Ngannawal people, must be moved to support a First Nations’ Voice referendum,” he writes.

***Finding the Heart of the Nation is on sale at major book stores and union rooms for \$40. ■***

extinguished and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

“We believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia’s nationhood,” it reads.

“We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.”

It calls for the establishment of a First Nations’ voice enshrined in the Constitution, a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement making between governments and First Nations.

Makarrata is the tradition of coming together after struggle.

“In 1967 we were counted – in 2017

we seek to be heard,” the statement reads.

Thomas begins his journey in Wave Hill, where 200 Gurindji stockmen went on strike in 1966 – with the support of maritime unions.

Wave Hill became the first land rights movement.

The journey winds from the Kimberley and the Pilbara’s Yule River, back to Australia’s Black capital of Redfern, Eora, Barrangaroo, south to the Palawa lands of modern-day Tasmania, through Wotjobaluk, Victoria and Wangkangurru, South Australia and north to the Torres Strait. There he commemorates the 1936 maritime strike when 400 pearling workers organised in secret, under water, and won.

Thomas acknowledges the elders



# Voice, Truth and Treaty



Around 100 people joined national councillors for the Sydney launch of *Finding the Heart of the Nation*, by wharfie, writer, Aboriginal Australian and union officer **Thomas Mayor**.





“This is Aboriginal country. Always was, always is, always will be,” Kevin Tory proclaimed to the cheers of a hundred people gathered at the union rooms.

Uncle Kevin, Aboriginal elder, former Tranby College board member and activist, was there to give the welcome to country on behalf of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation.

It was the union’s national council and the Sydney launch of *Finding the Heart of the Nation*, by wharfie, writer, Darwin branch president and Indigenous officer for the CFMMEU, Thomas Mayor.

Thomas paid his respects to councillors and union elders past and present. He recognised the union tradition of using collective strength not just to fight for workers’ wages and conditions but also to help others – including the struggle of his own people.

“When I began to organise rallies and support for our people in regions where services were being shut down and they were trying to move our mob off country, I started to realise that our movement was missing something,” he said. “We were failing to punish those bastards for those terrible decisions that were affecting our people. So when I had the opportunity to be involved in something about the big picture, like constitutional reform, I jumped at the chance.”

Friend, colleague and Indigenous lawyer Teela Reid described the three-year campaign for voice, truth and treaty as an epic journey. Thomas’s book was now part of that journey.

“These stories have been gifted to you,” she said. “They are very cherished stories – stories of truth that are hard to share with people who live in this country in denial of the truth.”

Michael O’Connor, national secretary CFMMEU, said he was proud of Thomas, the book and the union’s contribution.

“You read it and it makes you feel you are there,” he said. “We’re so proud of our involvement in the struggle. Our job is to show solidarity.”

In an impassioned speech, Paddy Crumlin, Divisional National Secretary MUA/CFMMEU, described the power words can convey.

“There is no power without truth and no truth without empathy and Thomas has a superb way of writing the truth and making it accessible to others,” he said.

“The great thing is, Thomas has been able to tie empathy with the truth of people’s lives. Thomas is their voice,” he said. “Thomas is the storyteller. He connects one person to another, and there is no higher respect than that which goes to a truth teller and a storyteller.” ■







# 250,000 MARCH FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

Unionists joined school students in calling for action on the related issues of climate change and workers' rights.

**P**ort Botany wharfie Benny Robertson, daughter Sienna, and nieces Halle and Isla were just four of an estimated 250,000 Australians and seven million people globally who participated in climate strikes in September.

"The girls wanted to go and so I pulled them out of school and that's where we went," said Benny. "We had a few guys from work speaking on stage. I was supporting my friends and my kids."

Most were children striking from school. But unionists, family and friends stood alongside students in all 120 demonstrations around the country. Most MUA branches organised

contingents of workers waving MUA placards calling for the government to stop blocking offshore wind.

Jamie Newlyn, MUA SA branch secretary and Unions SA president, spoke to 20,000 strikers and their supporters in Adelaide. Danny Cain, MUA WA assistant branch secretary, gave a fiery speech to a gathering of 10,000 in Perth, and Tommy-John Herbert, MUA member and ex seafarer, inspired a crowd of 80,000 in Sydney. It was all about combating climate change and the right to strike – now an issue with school children hounded by conservative politicians and shock jocks.

In Sydney, strike4climate kids joined

the chorus, chanting: "Climate justice, workers' rights; One struggle, one fight."

Climate strike leaders met with the MUA and also pledged their support for the union's current industrial action against DP World.

"School strikers for climate action stand in solidarity with all of the DP World workers currently taking strike action at waterfronts across Australia," strike4climate comrades posted on social media. "It is the same unjust rules hurting workers that are also driving the climate crisis. Our struggles are one and the same."

Climate strikes were again endorsed by National Council in October (see p44).