

To Whom It May Concern

Re - Competencies for Trainee Marine Pilots

I am a 32 year old Mariner currently employed as a Tug Master and am working towards achieving my Master Unlimited Certification with the ultimate goal of obtaining a Marine Pilot's position in one of the ports of Australia. Since gaining employment as a Pilot Launch Coxswain it is all I have aspired to do and have been struggling through the system since. As a consequence I have an interest in the National Maritime Safety Committee's proposed 'alternate pathway' for Marine Pilots.

It is my understanding that the proposal will allow school leavers as well as current industry personnel into the program and will provide recognition of prior learning where appropriate. This will allow individuals aged 24-25 to be engaged as Trainee Pilots without any command experience and a level of maturity/ decision making ability far short of what I expect to be required of a Marine Pilot. They will have never experienced problems such as the loss of steering whilst coming alongside another vessel at sea, or being notified of the imminent shut down of all propulsion by your engineer whilst tethered to a ship by towline. These scenarios and many others occur through years in charge of commercial vessels and enable development of risk management and an ability to keep a calm head; what I imagine is a core skill of a marine pilot.

There are plenty of individuals currently employed in the Australian Marine Industry with years of vessel handling experience and the will, dedication and initiative to pursue Master Unlimited Certification and employment as a Marine Pilot. By allowing this 'academic' program you will be taking away from these people, such

as myself, the desire to keep plugging away at achieving the required sea service, paying for the tuition without any assistance and gaining the next qualification; in effect cheapening the profession. At present it is the pinnacle of my career path and I want to achieve it as it stands.

I also vehemently disagree with comments in the Foreword of the September Draft, "The need for an alternate pathway has been highlighted because of diminishing number of qualified mariners." As I mentioned above there is plenty of suitable personnel available in our industry and there are changes on the horizon in the way of AMSA's Tinny to Tanker project finally relaxing tonnage requirements. I believe this to be one of the best avenues in making sure there are enough Australian Mariners progressing through the system to fill the future predicted shortages. For too long the system has been focused on tonnage rather than assessing the experience of a candidate on an individual basis; some gain plenty of invaluable command experience whilst others are able to slip through the system on the correct tonnage without ever having had command of a commercial vessel.

It is my belief we will avoid any Marine Pilot supply issues if concentration and assistance is focused on those already in the industry with the right experience toiling away at achieving their Master Unlimited Certificate.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment and sincerely hope the above will be read and taken onboard by those involved in this proposed change.