

# AMOU Alternative Path Survey - Pilot Comments

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**10. Are you aware of other alternatives to this proposed introduction of a new Standard of Competency? - Comments**

To my knowledge there has been no proposals for other means to addressing the future potential shortage of Marine Pilots. I believe there are options within the existing regulatory framework that would address this issue.

I have canvassed the opinion of ship Masters on their opinion of non Master 1's as pilots and the overwhelming response ( more than 80% ) was unfavourable.

So some selling will need to be done to kindle Master & Pilot ( ab-initio ) relationship.

The successful outcome to this I believe would be to address the issue of seetime and in particular bridge time.

Without the confidence of the ship's Master I believe the pilot is up against it from the moment he steps onto the bridge.

Make it attractive to foreign ships trading regularly with Australia to provide berths for cadets so that find opportunities to gain seetime is not such an issue .

Look to the Navy for training opportunities for cadets.

Consider the resource that Naval officers represent.

Streamline the path for current certificate holders to progress to Master Unlimited without sacrificing seetime and the experience that provides.

Retain present system. The available "pool" of traditional blue water Master Mariners may be reducing but MC1 from the Offshore Industry are still far more suitable.

Not in Australia but I know in the US some states have been running alternatives parallel to MC1 for decades. State of NY has 3 years at school and 5-7 years of training in that particular port.

Alternatives to the proposed Standard occur in the UK and USA and elsewhere but all have common bases of lengthy apprenticeship, extensive experience, aptitude and intensive mentoring by pilot colleagues and rigorous external oversight (e.g. USCG or ad hoc authority). Apprenticeships are commonly not less than 9 to 12 years. Thames watermen-pilots operate within a long-term craft system. Australia has no comparable oversight mechanisms.

If there is to be an 'alternative path', the minimum experience should be 10 years - including a stint on tug boats, as well as seagoing experience of 5-6 years.

Lower grade marine certificates and suitably qualified naval personnel. These people by virtue of their career choice and experience, should have the aptitude and temperament suited to pilotage.

A young adult of 21 or 22 would be unlikely to have the knowledge and authority to face many of the challenges and pressures pilots are exposed to. Accordingly, the pilots role of working for the state would be undermined as the young adult may be coerced by one of the many competing interests.

The now defunct UK pilot apprenticeship scheme whereby trainees attained a second mate foreign-going certificate (24 months sea time) before embarking upon an extensive pilot apprenticeship scheme. It seemed to produce pilots of a good standard for the era in question.

I understand that there are other alternatives, however none of them are being "pushed" like this ab-initio program is. I can't help feeling that a select group of pilots/stakeholders are pushing this option for personal gain.

I believe that all pilots need to have input not just a couple of capital city private pilotage companies.

Assistance (usually monetary) to Current Master Threes to obtain seatime and college to do their Master 1's by the employers that will eventually employ them.

State ticket holders continuing their experience/training to be eligible to hold a masters certificate then persue pilotage as a profession.

Complete required training for Master Unlimited!

Employ more cadets on whats left of Australian ships. get private pilot services as well as govt p/service to sponsor cadets thru traditional seatime to enable them to get started.

Continue to maintain mandatory Class 1 as the pre qualification. If you want it badly enuf u will put in the effort and "do the time"

Skip the undignified rush to fast track kids and debase the apparent high regard in which Aussie pilots are held for their professionalism.

Stop comparing us to avaitors!

Continue with the system that has 30 yrs of proven success (1980 onwards) and is supported world wide.

1. Year 12 physics, english, top level maths and chemistry
3. Cadetship with a shipping company (inc. psychometric testing) with theory up to Masters Unlimited level (Inc Command Nav etc) and sea time for Second Mates
4. Work as 3rd Officer and progress to Chief Officer and/or Master
5. Apply for pilotage positions (or other relevant managerial positions) and conduct port specific training.

Use existing applicants. many suitable MC1 applicants looking for pilots jobs.

The alternative for recruitment of new pilots should come from the existing pool of Master unlimited candidates from both the deep sea fleet, the offshore oil and gas industry, and other persons who have worked for a substantial time in the maritime industry with a command certificate and experience, for example Master unlimited Tug Masters.

For the moment foreign pilots with experience and qualifications ( Master Class 1 unlimited) should be employed to meet the current shortage. Shipping industry has to work out a constructive plan to recruit deck cadets employ them even on foreign vessels and have a flow of Master mariners who will be eligible to become Marine Pilots .

As an Australian I'm interested in any initiative that will improve services & standards for Australia. I do not believe this will.

A broad sound understanding of ship operations is required for pilots & should be applied with a mature approach. (Over 30 but probably better over 40)

Statistics provided in the RIS are all smoke and mirrors and could be developed in any direction.

A percentage (possibly about 30%) of young fast tracked pilots will move on at some stage of their training or career.

Over recent years AMSA has already made it much easier and quicker to obtain Master Unlimited Certs, effectively lowering earlier standards of training. This has already resulted in newly "qualified" watchkeepers requiring extensive "on the job" training. Recent increases in positions for training should be further increased and supported by Govt. until the Industry can support itself. Until then, if demand outstrips local supply, continue recruiting Master Unlimited Certs from overseas.

As I see it, the Standard does not remove the ability for pilotage providers to recruit pilots from the 'traditional' MCI pathway. It does allow those with seagoing experience, but do not hold a MCI certificate, with a pathway to marine pilotage. The Standards will provide candidates for consideration of pilotage providers. These providers should always select the best candidates from the pool available to ensure pilotage safety. The Standards would allow the candidate pool to be expanded.

Minimum class 2 or 3 COC provides sufficient sea experience in Singapore. Trainees start pilotage training at a relatively younger age and are easily trained to be extremely competent (provided they have average aptitude). However in Singapore 500 pilotage jobs are conducted in a day. Hands on training and experience is intensive.

Encourage greater training of Aust. cadets on existing Aust. v/l's (including the offshore industry). This can be done through taxes & levies on all current parties (both shipping and port) & this will provide the additional pool of people seeking a career as a Pilot. (While these people are progressing through the system gaining qualifications and experience we could recruit from overseas or offer flexibility in work conditions to existing Pilots to maintain numbers until new candidates are ready.

The current regime of recruiting pilots from experienced mariners provides experiential qualifications that cannot be obtained in a classroom.

River pilots in USA frequently do not have sea experience, but they do have many years experience in a Pilotage apprenticeship.

The opportunity for holders of lesser tickets (class 2, 3, 4 / Naval) to become marine pilots is an option that is far more desirable than the ab initio scheme. Here we would have mariners with industry experience and a greater maturity level to undertake the role of piloting. They would be far less likely to leave piloting at an early age, as they already have a good insight into the pros and cons of the industry. These mariners should be utilised rather than the flawed ab initio scheme.

I am aware that at least one tug master (master 4 or 5) is now working as a pilot of panamax ships. His training was a week on manned models and one of Ravi's courses. The new standard would require such a person to follow an industry accepted training and assessment process.

Regretfully modern Australian youth sees no further than the surf beaches...lifestyle is the issue!

**11. Do you believe that more time and research is needed to explain issues such as how the proposed training for 'ab initio' (non master mariner candidates) will address the issue of experience? - Comments**

While there are many interesting issues around the questions of experience and maturity, I don't feel that these should impeded the implementation of the Standards at this stage.

I believe that, a once genuine concern for the shrinking pool of potential pilots because youngsters are not attracted to seafaring, has been pounced upon by port managements in an attempt to flood the market and reduce the remuneration and demand.

Any research should be done by a totally independant body that does not have something to gain from the outcome.(e.g cheaper and faster training of younger people to become Pilots with the associated reduction in experience and safety.)

For a small capital city Port there is no funding available to cover the high cost of an 'ab initio' Pilot, for close to 4 years, during their training.

The NMITC Impact Statement seemed to be biased towards the ab initio option with numerous people involved in the process having vested interests in this option (ie training facilitators). One aspect of pilotage which was not discussed in detail is that of experience and the confidence that this integrally brings to a competant pilot.

I believe the ab initio scheme should be abandoned immediately, before it is given the opportunity to degrade the standards of pilotage in Australia. As above, we should first be looking to the pool of experienced mariners with lesser tickets then the MC 1 with a view to training them up as pilots. They already have industry experience, greater maturity and a desire to remain in the industry.

Let's get at least something in place to regulate non Master mariner certificate holders movement into our profession.

I consider that the proposed seetime is seriously short of that required to become an effective pilot. I do believe that people without a class 1 C of C are capable of being taught to handle vessels but a Pilot does an awful lot more than just drive ships!

Believe that the pool of persons required should come from people directly involved in the marine related activities eg launchmasters, tugmasters, small ship masters , ferrymen and the like.

MINIMUM requirement MUST remain Master's Cert of Comp. To reduce from this requirement leaves open the port services of the country to horrendus implications.

I believe the academic qualification i.e. degree course will be adequate however feel more sea time should be required.

At this stage it appears to be many unexplained issues with this proposal. The experience required to undertake the task of pilotage is vast and there is no way that 9 months seetime plus some port visits is satisfactory. There has also been no explanation as to how this will be funded.

Respect for age and experience has been a tradition of seafaring and for good reason. This is probably why we call the master the Old Man no matter what age he/she is. This proposal appears to see age as a liability and fails to appreciate the culture the pilot operates in where the co-operation of the bridge team often depends on their confidence and respect for the pilots experience.

Overall Experience is extremely important in allowing a Pilot to make decisions in emergency situations and also to understand the thinking process and actions of the Master and ship's crew. Maturity is also VERY important. The difference in attitude of both younger age Pilots and those who have never served as Master is easily apparent to an observer. To reduce both the experience level AND maturity seems ridiculous and will lead to an environment of inherently higher risk in Pilotage operation

The proposed seetime( 9 months) is not sufficient.

This candidates will hold a lower position on board for the 9 months and ship handling skills required for Pilots takes years to achieve.

The FPSO's do not have a difficulty getting Master Unlimited certificate candidates, for every pilot position applied there are a number of Masters unlimited who are rejected for some unknown reason a lot of it being the face does not fit. Training of new pilots with no seagoing experience will put an undue burden on existing pilots. I therefore feel that the draft is misleading regarding the number of Master Mariners/Naval personnel having certificates who are available to do Pilotage duties.

The report makes staggering and inconclusive commentary and is partisan in an attempt to implement its ideas. My experience over recent years is contradictory to many of the unsubstantiated statements presented. I am a pilot at an 'iron-ore' port and am remunerated well however my position is what I aspired to very early in my career. With the need to employ and train new entrants, indications show no shortage, medium turn, of relatively young Master Mariners and with a similar aspirations.

Marine pilotage services rely on shared perceptions of international standards, local experience and mutual professional trust. General marine experience over time provides the basis for all these. The proposed ab initio pathway does not facilitate maintenance or improvement of any of these features of marine pilotage but mitigates against them. Most significantly, personal on-the-job mentoring by pilots from a common basis of experience is to be set against learnings, standards, and ad hoc

I do not believe more time is needed as I do not believe this is the appropriate approach. I believe that the focus for addressing the so called shortages should have been on shipping and training candidates traditionally as competent Deck Officers who eventually become Masters. This could be done by supporting shipping companies in their training costs to offset any natural attrition caused by Officers going on to be Pilots. Then all facets of the Australian Marine Industry would benefit.

Vessels characteristics and behaviour in changing sea states, varying wind and tidal flows, can not be learned in a nine month period at sea nor can compensate for these as well as for electronic aid deficiencies, radar and gyro failure and working in reduced visibility scenarios be learned in the classroom.

Berthing duties forward and aft and on the bridge are learned slowly over many years of observation as a cadet and then in the roles as 3rd,2nd and 1st mate consolidating the pilot's role.

I fully endorse the comments by Capt Crawford. The draft is poorly written & demonstrates lack of understanding of the necessary long pathway that has given the industry the level of excellency that is enjoyed by every port operator. The writer appears envious of remuneration packages, when no cost of other professionals in the same region is demonstrated. The spectre is that more 'competition' in pilot numbers will drive down 'unsustainable' pilots wages. Is this the real motivation for the draft?

'Senior' age pilots should not be discriminated against - as long as they are physically & mentally fit. Experience tends to come in handy when things go "pear shaped" as has been proven in the airline industry as well.

The ex naval personnel, with appropriate qualifications and attitude, should be considered ahead of school leavers.

There is a way forward for 'ab initio' training and it will enable Australians to fill Australian pilot vacancies. It must be to the highest standard in order to preclude the necessity for a master class 1 certificate. The proposed scheme falls short of a reasonable standard. Experience is essential. Also, the shortage of Australian merchant navy officers is not sufficiently addressed and this scheme would likely inhibit progress in that direction. More thinking needed.

If we commit to a substandard program now and without proper consideration, then we will find ourselves in a terrible position which will be difficult to revoke once it is discovered that it is severely lacking.

If proper business research was undertaken of this proposal including against the risk assessment standard AS 4360, I believe that this system would not progress beyond it being unsafe option ruled out at desk top level.

I believe that STCW certificate of Master Unlimited should be the only requirement. By attaining a certificate of Master Unlimited the experience will be there.

Practical experience and a calm head when things are wrong are essential. This can only be gained by maturity and experience. A pilot in his mid 20's cannot have achieved this outlook, nor will he/she have the presence on the bridge that is forth coming to an experienced Pilot.

I do not see the need for further time and research.

Berths are available at sea time on ships for training. There is opportunity to continue to train personnel in the traditional manner.

The ready supply of quality applicants for pilot positions shows there is a pool available. What is required is to maintain that pool.

Government support for coastal shipping would assist in this regard.

There is no Classroom Training that can compete with the experience gained from Sea Service.

Some points raised in the draft are possibly worth further development so long as it is a national scheme with a national outcome. I understand that at the end of the scheme currently proposed that a candidate is available at the end of it to be picked up for further training as a pilot- thats the scary bit as each pilot service would have its own scheme and some may not be as rigorous as others. Who's deciding the payscales for these trainees and how do they progress once employed as trainees? Thanx!

A survey of the requirement for this proposal is needed, is there actually a shortage of possible trainee marine pilots or is there an issue of ageism or even racism!

There is more to being a pilot than just parking a ship. The master has to feel at ease when a pilot comes onboard. How can someone with little or no sea time understand what a master is going through when arriving at a port for the first time.

We will be training cadets to be pilots. How can the sea time count when they will be signed on in a supernumery capacity???

More time should be given to further investigate the training curriculum and ascertain if there is actually a shortage of Master Class 1 unlimited personnel to fill future Pilotage positions. If a training curriculum comes to fruition I believe candidates should do 18 months sea time and gain at 2nd mate unlimited certificate with an overall course length of five to six years.

No where in the draft does it mention who (i.e. shipowners/shipmanagers) are going to supply the training platforms for ab initio sea time and how it will be funded. Sect 5.4.2.4 assumptions are made here about "no need for new staff recruitment". It is a well known fact that both Challenger and AMC have extreme difficulty in recruiting and retaining experienced lecturers. This is a problem in itself as these people will be integral to the training program.

Not many 'unemcumbered' pilots on the advisory group!!!!!!

We recently advertised for Pilots and had 50 applications. approx 8-12 would have been very suitable employees.

Bottom feeding ports need to offer competitive packages to entice the appropriate people from sea and other ports.

I would like to focus on supporting the current system rather than adopting a new one.

This is accepted world wide and has been in practice in Australia since the early 1980's. It has proven to produce a high calibre of Marine Pilot with world wide recognition.

It also supports the Australian Shipping Industry.

This system ensures adequate pre-requisite education, psychometric testing, Advanced Diploma of Nautical Science, training in the workforce, and experience from the workforce.

Ab initio pathway to a pilotage career has been successful in countries with significant cultural differences like Indonesia where kids are taken out on ships from very early age. It is not the same here where that year on year grounding will not be replaced by 9 months at sea.

When it comes to producing a pilot with sufficient credibility, and to be able to match or even exceed the current standards of existing marine pilots, I do not believe the proposed program of 9 months seetime and 3 years academic studies will produce a pilot which is required to operate in the modern litigious world, where pilots are having gaol terms imposed upon them after criminal prosecution after marine accidents.

More time is definitely needed in my opinion the current pathway of having a Master Class 1 unlimited is the proper way of making good pilot the standard sea experience deck cadet to master is essential. The alternate pathway may have more damages to the shipping industry due to lack of experience. Australian shipping should be expanded and more deck cadets should be trained so that adequate number of Masters (class 1 unlimited ) will be produced in the future.

I believe this basic model proposed will not work in and to Australia's best interest.

Anyone who thinks that one can learn how to Pilot a ship safely under the proposed framework most definitely does not understand what is involved. This is a job where experience matters.

A sows ear will always be a sows ear no matter how much time you spend explaining it.