



AUSTRALIAN MARITIME OFFICERS UNION

ABN 56 181 230 800

APRIL 2018 INDUSTRIAL MONTHLY MEETING REPORT

Date: 24th April 2018

Locations: **EASTERN AREA:**
AMOU, Suite 1, Level 5, 377 Sussex St, SYDNEY NSW 2000

SOUTHERN AREA:
Victoria Trades Hall Council, 4th Floor, 54 Victoria Street, CARLTON SOUTH VIC 3053

WESTERN AREA:
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the April President's and industrial reports from the staff for April 2018.

As you have seen over the last month there has been a visible change with the union's modern look and campaigning within the community through social media and the union's website. There has been some fantastic feedback from members about this. It's always great to receive constructive feedback. Our *Don't Abandon Australian Shipping* Campaign as you have seen has gone live into social media. All members should have received a member's pack in the mail. Information within the pack gave you the facts to discuss and educate others within the community why it's vital to have a productive, efficient and thriving Australian shipping industry. We have seen hundreds of letters to MPs sent through the links provided which is a fantastic start. We would like to see the momentum continue until the *Shipping Amendment Bill* is brought on for discussion in Canberra. This campaign is vital for the future of your industry, so thanks for being involved. If you have not so far, please take a couple of minutes to click on the union's new website www.amou.com.au click on join the campaign and follow the link to contact your MP.

Since becoming President I have actively been a part of the lobbying on behalf of the members and building relationships with key stake holders within the industry. This has seen us becoming active once again on committees, forums, surveys and studies about our industry. One of these has been the study that the Navy released identifying they don't have enough trained skilled and experienced seafarers to man their fleet renewal program. We have been active within a group and committee that is looking into ways Australian seafarers can become active and make the fleet operational in a fashion not too dissimilar to other auxiliary fleets around the world. We are already seeing the success of this through the active involvement of members employed on the likes of the Navy's aviation training vessel the *Sycamore* and other vessels in the past. This initiative may generate hundreds of jobs for Australian seafarers and help to rebuild and protect the skills of Australian Officers for generations to come.

Nautilus Federation Australia

There have been some questions and comments about where this is at and where it's going. Some of the older members would recall we have been down a similar course before and it is one thing that both the members of the Executive Council and myself are very aware of and don't want to see happen again. It may look to have stalled or is perceived as taking its time to become visible to the membership since being announced that both unions' councils held a joint meeting in Newcastle last year. This is not the case and there have been numerous meetings and discussions taking place behind the scenes for this to come to fruition through mutual leadership and management from both unions on behalf of their members. The Federation itself gives us greater opportunity to work more efficiently and closely together on issues that both us and the engineers face within today's industry. There is always going to be differences but from what I have seen in today's industry, on board ships we work together on these and create a solution for the success of the ship's daily operations and it's this cooperative relationship that needs to make the Federation a success for all members. As part of the Federation we are in the final stages of completing the renovations to our Fremantle office to house the WA based staff of both unions. We have also commenced investigating the viability and operational needs of relocating the National and Eastern Area office (currently being rented on Sussex Street in Sydney) to AIMPE's office in Surry Hills. Although in the early stages, the Council is hoping to see this move to be agreed by both councils and to take place in the not too distant future. This is a big step forward for both unions and will see us operate in a more efficient and economically viable way for the future of both unions.

Misconceptions

One of the things the current Executive Council and I are very aware of is that you can't please everyone and you're always going to have your critics. The Council is made up of 12 eligible members that are elected by the union's membership. We are your representatives that you elect to look after your best interests. There has been some unjustified criticism being made within the public domain and I would like to take the

opportunity to clear some of the misconceptions. The Executive Council is chaired by a President. This is not a dictatorship as stated in social media recently. It is a democratically elected position and those that have filled the position in the past are aware of the workload that comes with the position and the fact that you are called on to make difficult decisions in the best interest of the members and the organisation. The current Council is one of the strongest Councils the members could have representing them in some of the worst times this union has faced. They are aware of their legal standing and the fact that they are your elected representatives and often engage in robust debate to make decisions about, but not restricted to the union's operations, finances, employment of staff, and policy.

Funds from the Melbourne property sale

The majority of these funds are still being held although a portion of them have been used to keep the organisation operational. One of the things that was identified very early in this term by way of the *Lewin Report* was that the union's operational costs need to be addressed. Whether we like it or not running the union's financial operations is no different to running a business and if your costs are not in check with your income then funds need to come from somewhere to remain operational and changes to need to be made. The council has been actively making these changes and is still in the process of making further changes to the operational costs to make it fit for purpose within today's industry; not that of the past.

Staff

The union's staff is employed by the Council although in the past individuals have taken it upon themselves to make decisions. Let's make this very clear this is not the present case. All decisions have been made by the Council in the best interests of the membership. After receiving numerous complaints over a lengthy period these complaints needed to be investigated. Upon investigation it was apparent that the performance of some staff was questionable and was certainly not in the best interests of servicing the member's needs. The staff members in question were asked to justify this to the Council in accordance with their employment agreement and their employment was terminated legally and fairly as a result of their poor performance and lack of effort to answer questions surrounding their roles as union officials. Two of the administration staff based in Sydney recently decided of their own accord to leave the organisation. Yes, one of the administration staff had asked for a voluntary redundancy but the Executive made the decision the position was not redundant and therefore did not accept the offer. Again, this was done in accordance with the applicable employment agreement and in fact in one case finalised in excess of their entitlements under the agreement as they wanted a "*Golden Hand Shake, just like others in the past for recognition of long service to the union*" was the term they used when discussing their final payment with me.

The appointment of the Executive Officer was done in a completely open and transparent way. It had been for some time identified and then reiterated in the "*Lewin Report*" that the union requires someone to manage the daily operation of the union, not an honorary President that is employed full time within industry elsewhere. To attract the right person for the job with the correct skills and experience we needed to construct an employment package that was affordable and suitable to the right person. The Executive Officer's remuneration package includes a union vehicle and is in fact relatively more affordable than other equivalents in other organisations within the industry and certainly more affordable than the manner in which some have been remunerated in the past.

I hope this clears the air for all members following the misconceptions communicated by some. On a positive note I want to emphasise that every member is entitled to an opinion and these opinions have been well received this month with a large amount of positive feedback as well as some minor, albeit constructive criticism. I look forward to working with the membership and the Executive Council to make the changes required to take this organisation into the next phase of its development.

As always Stay Safe

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a horizontal line followed by a stylized, looped flourish.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Mark Davis
Executive Officer (Sydney)

North West Shelf Shipping Service Company (NWS)

NWS signalled late last year that it wished to wind down the Continuity of Operations Agreement (COA) until 2024 when either 1 vessel or no vessel at all would be retained in service. This was alleged to be due to the changing needs of its customers, the Japanese power companies. Rather than maintaining the scheduled service provided by the 7 NWS vessels the customers preferred the flexibility of a FOB arrangement. Four of these gas ships are Australian registered and fully Australian crewed (*Northwest Stormpetrel, Northwest Sandpiper, Northwest Snipe, Northwest Sanderling*). The other 3 are Bermudan registered and crewed with non-Australians. Whilst not convinced that any of this was cause to wind down the COA or acceptance that the COA could be construed as concluding before its agreed end date (2029), the three maritime unions engaged in negotiations. We put the proposal to the NWS that the last four vessels operating under the COA must be fully Australian crewed. They need not be those ships currently manned by locals, as crews could be transferred to the ships NWS wished to retain in the service. The Australian International Ships Register was also proposed as a registration option. NWS, in response has stated that it will “support the continued employment... of those Australian seafarers currently employed... until 2024, to the extent that those seafarers wish to remain so employed”. This is subject to certain conditions. As a matter of principle we do not accept this statement and do not believe that it is consistent with the COA. This proposal effectively creates a list of existing Australian crew members, the names upon which are progressively deleted through means of attrition, discipline, disenchantment or enticement to depart employment. Furthermore NWS is seeking the facility to slot non-Australians in to these jobs and with no cognisance of an employer's obligation to respect the local labour market. We have wholeheartedly rejected this response and sought clarification from the Venture as to how this proposed course of action is consistent with the essence of the COA to provide four fully Australian crewed ships. We have reiterated our desire to negotiate the renewal of the enterprise agreement with Trident as a matter of priority. The expiry date of the agreement is 31st July 2018. AIMPE has created a dispute as it believes the letter signals a breach of the COA and this dispute will be heard before the COA Arbitrator this Friday 27th April. AMOU will be participating in this process.

Svitzer Port Adelaide

(This is a stop press from Jarrod Moran our Southern Area Industrial Officer)

As some members will be aware, Svitzer in Port Adelaide, under the current Port Operating Procedures, have been scheduling hours of work up to 14 hours per shift. Our position is that scheduled hours as per the *Svitzer Australia Pty Limited National Towing Enterprise Agreement 2016* (2016 EA) should not be more than 12. The EA is in these terms:

41.2.4 Hours of work, regular duty requirements and off-duty periods

(i) Scheduled hours of work should not exceed 12 hours. That is:

A. under the Port Operating Procedures, the last towing job in a period of continuous duty must not be scheduled more than 11 hours and 45 minutes after that period has commenced; and

B. jobs commenced prior to the 12th hour shall be completed.

The parameters for scheduling the last job in the period must be set out in the Port Operating Procedures.

(ii) If an employee is required to be on continuous duty for 14 hours or more, the employee must be given a rest break of 10 hours at the cessation of that period of duty before the commencement of the next period of duty.

(iii) A period of continuous duty must not exceed 16 hours.

(iv) A nominated rest break of 6 hours or more breaks the continuity of a period of duty

(v) Employees will be entitled to a meal break on completion of 5 hours' duty. Meal breaks must be taken flexibly. For the avoidance of doubt meal breaks must not be taken in a manner or at a time that would interrupt port operations.

Svitzer and the AMOU (and AIMPE) could not agree on an interpretation on this issue and the Unions asked the Fair Work Commission to arbitrate the matter. Basically it was our position in arbitration that a reasonable person looking at clause 41.2.4 of the 2016 EA would determine that:

- a) A worker could be scheduled or rostered to work 12 hours each shift
- b) The last job in that 12 hour shift is subject to specific parameters and the details of allocating the last job are in agreed local port arrangements;
- c) The actual time at work can be more than 12 hours and if it's more than 14 hours then the worker can't come back to work less than 10 hours after they have finished for the day; and
- d) No more than 16 hours can be worked continuously.

The decision of the Commission was handed down on Friday 20 April 2018. The most relevant part of that decision is as follows:

- The provisions of subclause 41.2.1 are intended to provide a foundation for guidance in the formation of the POPs. Where the provisions of that clause are expressed to be mandatory, the foundation guidance is also mandatory and the POPs must be consistent, given the import of clause 5.3 of the 2016 EA;
- Subclause 41.2.4(i) is intended to establish a clear objective that scheduled hours are not to exceed 12 hours, but it is not an absolute maximum and subject to the import of subclauses A and B, which are expressed to be mandatory, the actual parameters, which will vary according to the circumstances of each Port, are to be set out in each POPs;
- Consistent with this approach, the requirements in subclauses 41.2.4(ii) and (iii), relating to rest breaks after 14 hours and an absolute maximum of 16 hours of continuous duty, are intended to be mandated as minimum requirements for any POPs. The other provisions of clause 41.2 that are expressed to be mandatory, that is, as a "must" or as an entitlement, also have the same intended result;
- The POPs may provide for the commencement of the last towage job (line up or other reference point set out in the POPs) at any time prior to the 11 hours and 45 minutes after the commencement of the continuous shift. However, whether the POPs should do so, is initially a matter for the parties to consider in the full context of the Port concerned including the impact of any proposed commencement time upon the scheduled hours of work and the operational and risk factors identified in this decision; all in the context of the objective of scheduled hours not exceeding 12 hours;
- Under subclause 41.2.4(i)B, jobs commenced within the 12 hours of any (continuous) shift are to be completed, even if this means working beyond the 12th hour;
- Where a proposed POPs is disputed (not agreed) the matter may ultimately be brought to the Commission for arbitration applying the guidance of clause 41.2 (and the 2016 EA more generally) as set out above in any decision-making exercise; and

The Commission has agreed with the position of the Unions i.e. that it is the object of the EA and POPs that scheduled hours should not exceed 12 (see dot point 4 above).

The Commission has recommended that with this position in mind the parties meet and seek to agree on new POPs that fit in this limitation on scheduled hours. If the parties do not agree the Commission has made it clear it has the ability to arbitrate the POPs.

This decision has equal application in all Svitzer ports.

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Glenn Andersen

Organiser (Fremantle)/Offshore Oil & Gas Delegate

Ship visits

My first visit to Darwin this month included ship visits to the *MMA Brewster* and *Pacific Hornbill*. My second visit added the *MMA Plover*, *Mermaid Vantage*, *Skandi Hercules*, *Mermaid Vantage*, *MMA Inscription*, *Pacific Grackle*, *OMS Endurance*, *Mermaid Leeuwin*, *Pacific Greylag* and *Far Swan*.

The total from August 2017 must be close to sixty, by now.

King Bay Tugs

I attended the first meeting for the renewal of KBMS EA. This was a get-together to map out a procedure for official negotiations to begin. All three maritime unions were in attendance. Management is now making clumsy attempts to identify union density and implant confusion within our King Bay workforce. It won't work.

Fremantle Ports

A very inferior EA document was put out to ballot late last month. Prior to the ballot, the AMOU succeeded in negotiating some minor changes to the final document. The ballot was voted down. Those workers were offended by the 'take-it or leave-it' attitude of management. So, they voted to 'leave it.'

Darwin Ports

After having the AMOU negotiator role handed on to me, I have completed my second round of meetings for this month. Contrary to the previous April meeting real progress was achieved. The renewal of this enterprise agreement is the first since the Port of Darwin was controversially leased to Chinese interests, for a period of ninety-nine years. The outcome of these negotiations will set the tone for industrial relations as port employees continue to transition from public to private employment. The other side made a concerted effort to remove lower to middle management positions from the scope of the EA. After initially being tempted by the thought of what riches an individual contract may bring, when the cold hard facts were finally squeezed out of management, those affected chose the security of an EA. Very few, if any of that group will join the AMOU, but will be happy to share in the benefits of being protected by a union EA.

Bunbury and Esperance Pilots

Despite Southern Ports preference for an EA to cover the three ports; Bunbury, Esperance and Albany, the AMOU is negotiating separate agreements, a position EA favoured by our members. A first meeting with management is close.

GO Marine

Unfortunately things are not getting any better for GO Marine, redundancies have occurred and more are being planned. It now appears the company has let loose a previously unseen redundancy policy. I will continue to address members concerns and monitor the situation.

GO Koi - Emerging news is that a decision on the matter of an additional officer to the bridge team (2/O) could be five months away which is the projected start-up time for offtakes to begin. In the meantime it appears GO Marine is planning to bolster the present Master, C/O bridge team with a deck cadet. This is encouraging from the training point of view but not an acceptable alternative to the 2/O and fails to provide a solution to the manning issue.

Member of Parliament visits

Over the coming two weeks I will be meeting with both the WA Transport Minister and the WA Industrial Relations Minister. Access to ports will be high on the agenda with the Transport Minister as will a restoration of the now defunct WA State Shipping Line. It will be interesting to hear the progress of the audit into 457 visa holders and WA pilotage exemptions. You may remember how late last year, as a result of an AMOU complaint, four 457-visa holders had their pilotage exemptions withdrawn by the WA Transport Minister. The Industrial Relations Minister may help us out with Port access but it's the disgusting treatment dished out to a range of workers employed by WA State Government-owned entities that is my main beef. The results of those meetings will feature in the May report. A Labour government is supposedly a worker friendly government. Lets see how they shape up. Local AMOU Members will also be attending.

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Jarrold Moran

Industrial Officer (Melbourne)

Serco

Sydney

Hours of work issues continue at Garden Island (NSW) where Serco has unilaterally determined that normal start and finish times as well as the lunch period should be altered. The Serco agreement is up for renewal in the second half of this year and we think these matters should be part of the negotiations.

WA

WA members have concerns about the amount of overtime they are expected to undertake without additional payments. Serco acknowledges that overtime should be compensated in some way but the offers so far have been rejected by the members. We are still considering our options.

Svitzer

Adelaide

The Adelaide POPs have been subject more than 25 meetings between management and members. We have been in Fair Work a number of times to try and resolve our issues. We participated in Fair Work Australia proceedings on 5 April seeking a determination on the matter of whether Svitzer can schedule hours of work in excess of 12 hours each shift. We expect a decision from the Commission shortly on this. Once determined the POPs discussions should be quickly resolved.

Western Port

In October 2014 discussions commenced to renegotiate the Western Port POP's as shipping numbers in the Port have reduced. Svitzer estimated that there would be approximately 50 ship visits to the Port which equates to 100 days of towage. It was indicated that there was unlikely to be any weekend towage.

On this basis a new POP's was agreed which provided increased flexibility to the Rosters. It was agreed that the rosters would provide for 28 days of duty followed by 28 days of leave. Crews agreed to reduce the amount of predictable leave from 26 weeks to 12 weeks per year. Crews agreed that they would perform towage duties during their non-predictable leave periods. It was agreed that the weekends would be regarded as duty free days if and when the crews were notified by 1300 hours on the Friday that there was to be no towage. On these occasions crews would return to duty on Monday. If the crews were not notified that there was no towage on the weekend then the duty days would continue as per the 28 day roster.

Svitzer has now sought to reinterpret the POP's document and undermine the integrity of the 28 day duty roster by treating the weekend as single days. It was always understood that in exchange for the increased flexibility of performing towage during periods of rostered leave that the weekends were either free of duty for two days or continued as part of the 28 day duty roster. Svitzer is now retrospectively treating the weekends as single days, which is contrary to the POP's document. Crew members are seeking payment for the duty days worked in excess of the 182 duty days per year for 2016. Svitzer is seeking to reduce the number of duty days worked in the calendar year by applying a new interpretation retrospectively. We have not been able to agree an outcome with Svitzer and have asked the FWC to arbitrate the matter. We

will make a joint submission with the AIMPE to FWC and our Outline of Submissions was lodged on Friday 20 April. A hearing has been listed for Thursday 24 May in Melbourne.

Melbourne

Discussion commenced with management on 15 March regarding a review of the Melbourne POPs. Due to the availability of a number of Svitzer managers the next meeting will take place on Friday 11 May.

Flinders Ports

3 Flinders Ports agreements need renegotiation in the first half of 2017: Flinders Ports, Pilots and the Supervisors at the container terminal (FACT). We have had 4 meetings with management for all three groups of members. Fatigue and rostering issues seem to be common issues across all workplaces. If these matters can be fixed, a number of other issues will be resolved. Unfortunately not much progress has occurred on resolving our issues across these three work groups. Flinders Ports has an attitude that any proposals that result in extra workers or additional cost must only be justified with corresponding concessions to conditions of members. We think this is a hard argument to sustain when fatigue is a health and safety matter and it is well acknowledged that cost is not a consideration when seeking to reduce health and safety risk.

Port Lincoln Tugs

We have had a number of meetings regarding the replacement of the PLT EA. PLT have made a wages offer of 3% over 4 years which is being considered by members but would appear to be on the low side. There are some other administration type amendments needed to be changed in the draft. A one year roll over of the current agreement might be an option while PLT finalises their discussions with Flinders Ports about their on-going contract.

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Chris Neiberding

Industrial Officer (Sydney)

Chris is on annual leave

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Meghann Papa

Industrial Officer (Sydney)

Meghann is on annual leave

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Jan Thompson

Industrial Officer (Melbourne)

Gippsland Ports

Gippsland Ports EA is no closer to being resolved. It is rumoured that it will need to be approved by Cabinet because of all the machinations between the Board, and the Departments. Now the non-union bargaining representatives are agitating that the dredge is overpaid compared to their pay.

Tasports

Tasports Agreement has been voted up and is awaiting approval. We have finally resolved the drafting of the MOU for VTS Officers being relocated from Bell Bay to Launceston.

Portland Tugs

We were scheduled to meet on 20th April however due to airline delays we will need to reschedule meeting.

Boskalis

Deputy President Bull terminated the Boskalis Agreement. Although sympathetic to our claims ultimately the legislation is flawed and pressure is mounting on the politicians led by Senator Wilkie to change this and the other unfortunate scenario that a small number of employees can vote up an EA as occurred at Jan De Nul.

Jan De Nul

Despite Jan De Nul halving the conditions of employment in the December 2016 Agreement, this month they have made an application for a Labour Agreement. Labour Agreements are not negotiated by the union and nor do they take into consideration the rates of pay applicable to an industry. Instead according to the Government, they “*enable approved businesses to sponsor skilled overseas workers when there is a demonstrated need that cannot be met in the Australian labour market and standard temporary or permanent visa programs are not available*”. This is just another example of our politicians kow-towing to big business at the expense of the Australian workers.

Svitzer Anatomia

With the removal of *Anatomia* on 31st May 2018, we have agreed that the *Anatomia* redundancy will be opened up to the tugs in Sydney, Newcastle and Port Kembla enabling a Tug Master to take a redundancy equivalent to what would have been paid to a Master/Mate on the *Anatomia* in order for the *Anatomia* Master/Mate to take a tug position rather than being dumped on the beach.

Teekay Tankers, Bulk, Sycamore and Ocean Shield

We will be meeting on 26th and 27th April to recommence negotiations.

INCO

We meet Andrew Dally and Kelly Lawrence from INCO on 18th April and were **invited** to attend the *Reliance* on 19th to inspect the vessel to discuss with Members what modifications would need to be undertaken to allow the operation to be 24/7. The modifications required are extensive; once again a bad selection of vessel for the operation/berths available. It also seems the small tanker, the *Integrity*, is under review because of its lack of suitability for the job.

Searoad Shipping

Finally out to vote for the variation.

Modec

We meet with Modec on 11th April to discuss a retention bonus for the *MV11*, the parties have agreed that an additional amount up to \$20,000 tax free is available for those employees who stay to the end and meet 5 criteria. There may also be the possibility of ongoing work with the company overseas.

ASP Ship Management

We are still waiting for the draft that was promised prior to Xmas!

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Dan Pearson

Industrial Officer (Fremantle)

Overview

It has been a hectic time in the Fremantle branch over the past few months. We have temporarily packed up and moved from our office whilst renovations are under way and are currently enjoying the hospitality of the AIMPE officials in their office located in Palmyra. We expect to be back in the High Street office in the beginning of May.

Whilst the industry has stabilised over the past few months, the consensus of the operator group is that the remainder of 2018 will not deliver much in the way of new opportunities for employment. The announcement from Chevron this week in relation to the expansion of the Gorgon project is welcome news. With the shore-side facilities all but complete, the announcement of \$5.6 Billion investment would lead one to suggest this will all be spent in development of sub-sea infrastructure. This expansion project is suggested to commence in 2019.

Additionally, reports around the industry suggest the tendering process for *Ichthys* phase 2 will commence in the near future. Announcement this week that INPEX had secured exploration block WA-533-P located west of Broome would indicate a further commitment to some exploration in the future. Again, projections for the commencement of these works are for 2019.

We still await news on the developments by Statoil (soon to be renamed Equinor) in the Great Australian Bight. When the lease swap occurred between BP and Statoil, an announcement was made indicating exploration operations would need to commence before October 2019 due to permit requirements.

However, recent reports in the press suggested that BP had, as part of the process for approval of the permits, allegedly made comments that a spill in the Bight would be "socially acceptable" and the coastal communities would economically benefit from an oil spill due to the number of jobs this would create during the clean-up. Regardless of the context in which these comments were allegedly made, this media brings into question the benefits of these projects vs the risk to the environment. The Australian manager of Norway-based Statoil, Jacques-Etienne Michel, said the company was working on its environmental plan and "will only undertake drilling activity if we can do it safely. By the time we drill we will have spent more than two years planning this project to satisfy ourselves that we can operate safely and in accordance with Australia's strict environmental and regulatory requirements," he said.

Statoil had collaborated with CSIRO to study the local environment and its exploration project was designed to protect the interests of fishing, aquaculture and tourism operators, he said. Satisfying the regulatory requirements is one thing, convincing the public is another.

Meanwhile across the ditch, the New Zealand Prime Minister announced there would be no new offshore oil and gas exploration permits issued. Green Party co-leader James Shaw said it was a step in the right direction, but said he would have liked to have seen a faster transition away from fossil fuels. "Today we have drawn a line in the sand and set our country on the path to a clean energy, low carbon future. This represents an enormous opportunity for the creation of new jobs and new technologies that our dependence on fossil fuels has held back for too long," he said.

About 4500 people are employed directly in the New Zealand oil and gas exploration industry, the bulk of which are based in Taranaki, which has had an oil industry for more than a century. Prime Minister Ardern said none of the jobs in the industry would be immediately affected by the decision, but the landscape would change down the track. Whilst the existing permits will continue to operate and any development from discoveries within the permits will be allowed, the uncertainty created by this move may have an

impact upon the ability to attract investment into this sector. Several Australian operators had previously highlighted the potential for growth in this region but now this could be jeopardised. The question will be what impact this decision will have upon the Australian offshore labour market going into the future.

SolstadFarstad

After many false starts, the Consultative Committee met with management in early March to discuss a large range of topics. Several outstanding matters have now been resolved and some stability for the workforce has been achieved. Currently the longer-term projections for vessels working in Australia should remain stable at around 10 ships; however this is subject to contractual requirements and the schedule of dockings for the vessels. A project utilising 3 Deep Sea Supply vessels is going well but this is of short term nature and will be complete by mid-May. SolstadFarstad is currently looking for efficiencies in their business to cut the bottom line. What this will translate into aboard the vessels is yet to be seen but, given the only variables in operating costs relate to crewing matters, there may be some need for involvement of the Consultative Committee in the future. As stated in my February report, the future inclusion of the Farstad brand in this merger may be coming to an end. The departure of Andy Farstad from the merged Board of directors came with an announcement of his desire to have the Farstad name removed from the business and rumour has it that may be the case in coming weeks.

Atlas Professionals

The transition from Programmed Marine to Atlas Professionals in relation to the company name is complete, though we are led to believe that several back-office processes are still under conversion. The prospects for the newly amalgamated business are looking rather bleak at the moment and beyond work currently being undertaken by the *Polarcus Naila*, *Posh Arcadia*, the *DPS1* and the *OMS Endurance*, no new contracts have been awarded to this company for 2018. In light that the contracts for all but the *DPS1* are due to conclude by December this year, the company has embarked upon a process of redundancy which has resulted in several officers electing to take a voluntary redundancy departing the company and additionally one further officer who was made involuntarily redundant. We are currently before the Fair Work Commission in relation to the redundancy process as it would appear inevitable that there will be more retrenchments. At this stage we are set to reappear before the Commission in early May to work through a number of issues in an attempt to mitigate the impact upon the Australian workforce.

Mermaid Marine

An issue in relation to the conditions of employment of a few cadets employed upon the *MMA Plover* and *Brewster* appears to be finally resolved, with the company informing those individuals that their college expenses will be paid. However, when the revised offers of employment were reissued the documentation did not reflect this. We are currently trying to resolve this for those employees. MMA recently was awarded a multi-vessel contract for ConocoPhillips in support of the Bayu-Undan shutdown and support drilling projects. The contract was for the provision of two PSV's and 3 AHTS in support of this campaign and the expected duration of 10 months giving some surety for our members throughout the remainder of 2018.

GO

The matter of the manning for the *GO Koi* remains on foot. We have now appeared before the arbitrator twice in relation to this matter and the predictions we made about the significant pressures upon the Master's without the provision of a second officer are becoming evidenced. The issues we have raised have come before the commencement of the contracted operations for offtake support and expectations are when these operations commence, we can only see further issues about the ability of the officers to work within the provisions of the STCW conventions. The matter serves as a timely reminder for our officers, particularly when commercial pressures are put upon our members to 'keep the boat on-hire', that you are not doing the company a favour but leaving yourself exposed. If an incident occurs, those favours won't be remembered.

Svitzer

The Fremantle/Kwinana Port Operating Procedures issue continues to evolve. After numerous conferences in the Fair Work Commission, we are effectively back at square one with the company to inform the

employees in these ports the proposed changes to their rosters. The concern our members have had since the prospective changes were tabled to the delegates was the impact of fatigue these new rosters would impose upon the employees. This remains our number one concern, but without Svitzer having a policy on fatigue management it has been highlighted that the development of this policy would be appropriate before any discussion about the proposed rosters could continue. Given the time it will take the company to develop this policy in consultation with the Health and Safety representatives, I expect that this matter has a long way to go before we will see its conclusion.

In another matter, one of our Masters was suspended after his crewman was photographed climbing atop the bulwarks to put a bight on some ship-side recessed bits. Through the process of the investigation it was found this practice was common within the port with one tug having had stairs installed to facilitate access to this area. This practice is not aligned with company policies but given the evidence that it was commonly done in this manner, our Master was returned to his normal roster. In this instance the right result however, it highlights the need to be aware of the policy requirements and if the practice does not reflect the policy, then the issue needs to be addressed through the appropriate process.

Trident

The program of visits to these vessels continues but is painfully slow. By now I had hoped to be on the second round of ship visits but continual changes to shipping schedules coupled with the difficulties in logistics surrounding these visits have resulted in the delays in getting aboard. With the religious break and school holiday periods soon to be over, I hope to be on board very shortly. The AMOU and AIMPE attended the *NW Sandpiper* during her docking in Singapore. We had both a combined and individual meeting of the members and the visit was productive. With the impending departure of these vessels due to commence in 2019 and no clear line of sight in relation to which vessels will be going in the first round, it would be of no surprise our members are concerned about what the future holds. However, it appears that both officer groups are aligned, and we will continue to push for the principles of the COA, which underpins the operation of these vessels, to be adhered to.