

Memorandum

025/2020

To: All Members
From: Tim Higgs – President
Subject: COVID-19 measures - update
Date: 14th April 2020

Dear Members,

Since the Tasmanian Government closely followed by Western Australia, South Australia and Northern Territory closed its borders, we have faced unprecedented times in the facilitation of crew changes for members joining or disembarking vessels. To say this has been a frustrating exercise for members and their families would be an understatement. It has also been a challenge to the AMOU in terms of the workload involved in trying to assist in getting members to and from their vessels.

There is one case that springs to mind. At the time of drafting this memo a member is facing his 40th day of isolation/quarantine apart from a night in a Tullamarine hotel and a domestic flight to Hobart. Unfortunately, the Tasmanian Government deemed him a high risk because his maritime occupation wasn't directly associated with Tasmanian freight, so he wasn't exempt and no account could be taken of the 27 days isolation he had spent on board his vessel as Master working out of Barry Beach. The ship owner and client had implemented quarantining of crew during shore-based cargo operations and the only form of contact with the ship since early March has been via email or telephone. This evidence was provided to the Tasmanian Government and it still wasn't good enough. If a foreign master had landed in Hobart from say Norway to join a Tassal or Huon Aquaculture vessel they would have been granted an exemption under the Australian Border Force (ABF) maritime crew exemptions. It's examples like this that for some weeks now have highlighted the need for a national approach to a harmonized consistent system for maritime crew to be exempt from border closures and isolations so as to able to join and disembark vessels freely to maintain the safe operation of the industry Australia-wide.

The AMOU was one of a few key industry players working through the Maritime Response Group (MRG) with the Department of Infrastructure and Transport and the Western Australian Ports' Minister's office to push the need for this to the Prime Minister's Office. It was finally discussed and agreed to at National Cabinet last Thursday. We are yet to see each State and Territory legislate this agreement for it to come

into force. Unfortunately, until this takes place all current directions and orders in the individual States and territories will remain in force.

Extract from the National Cabinet statement last Thursday:

Class exemption for non-cruise maritime crew.

“9 April 2020

On 9 April, the National Cabinet agreed that the Australian Government and all states and territories would implement a consistent and immediate exemption for non-cruise maritime to provide for the transiting to and from their places of work, within and across jurisdictions with agreed documentation.

National Cabinet noted that states and territories may adopt additional protocols in consultation with industry that creates protection for crews on board vessels, and will put in place appropriate penalties for companies and individuals that are found to be in breach of the requirements of the exemption.

The exemption will be reviewed on 1 June 2020.”

The union is aware that some States and Territories have started working with National Cabinet on the implementation of the protocols and we will endeavour to keep you updated.

For any further COVID-19 information contact your local area official and copy in Mark Davis and I and we will ensure that accurate information is provided as soon as practicable.

As always stay safe & healthy and do not agree to anything outside of your EA without union advice and support.

Yours, in solidarity

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a horizontal line followed by a stylized, scribbled shape that resembles a star or a complex letter.

Tim Higgs
President