



AUSTRALIAN MARITIME OFFICERS UNION

ABN 56 181 230 800

Freight Victoria

Victorian Coastal shipping Review

Submission of the

Australian Maritime Officers Union

July 2019

1. The Australian Maritime Officers Union (AMOU) welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to Freight Victoria's Victorian Coastal Shipping Review.
2. The AMOU is registered under the Fair Work Act 2009 represents the professional and workplace interests of Ship's Masters (Captains) and Deck (navigating) Officers in the maritime 'blue water', offshore oil and gas, ferry, dredging and tourism sectors, Marine Pilots, tug Masters, bunker (refuelling) tankers, Stevedoring Supervisors, Port Services officers, vessel traffic services (VTS)/harbour control and professional/ administration/ supervisory/technical staff of port corporations and maritime authorities.

Why does Victoria and Australia need a vibrant, healthy and growing local shipping industry?

3. The maritime industry is obviously an old industry with particular customs, traditions and language developed over centuries. While operations in modern ports are at the cutting edge of any comparable operations and the modern vessels that operate on the Australian coastline are some of the most technologically sophisticated ships globally, the customs and traditions of the maritime industry remain.
4. Seafaring is a special vocation with a lifestyle that can be quite different to life on land. For example, those employed in interstate and international operations may spend a great deal of time at sea usually followed by equal time of leave onshore.
5. The combination of customs and traditions with employment conditions not commonly found in other occupations has fostered a particular sense of altruism and benevolence between seafarers.

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6. Those that go to sea are enamoured with their industry. They view a vibrant and robust industry as vital to Victoria's and Australia's national interest and want to make sure that into the future young Australians with a similar love of the sea have opportunities to work in the maritime Australian industry.
7. As identified by the Federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, '*... Australia is heavily dependent on shipping, with 99 per cent of international trade volumes transported by ship and Australian ports managing 10 per cent of the world's sea trade.*'
8. It takes more than ten years of training and sea service to become a qualified Master (see Appendix 1). Additionally, seafarers must be able to pass a physical assessment and have good eyesight. Medicals are required every five years.
9. The intimate knowledge of the industry seafarers gain through the years of extensive training they undertake makes them sought after candidates for many on-shore jobs within the wider maritime infrastructure. Indeed, many positions require maritime qualifications as a precondition for employment e.g. Harbour Masters, Coastal and Harbour Pilots, marine surveyors and port and flag state control inspectors.
10. The role of Coastal Pilot is essential to the operation of Australia's shipping industry. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) describes the role of a coastal pilot as:

'... to advise on the safe navigation of a vessel, and to be a steward of the marine environment. This means that the coastal marine pilot must:

 - *identify and manage risks to avoid a grounding or collision to protect the ship and marine environment;*
 - *provide detailed passage planning, local knowledge, leadership to the bridge team, and liaison with shore authorities and VTS;*
 - *provide independent judgement and advice to the ship's master, who remains in command of the vessel;*
 - *monitor their own personal health and safety, including managing fatigue: and*
 - *provide mentoring and training to new coastal pilots.'*

AMSA makes it plain that a pilot must have local knowledge and mentor and train new pilots.

Under AMSA criteria, trainee pilots must have certain Certificates of Competency, a Certificate of Medical Fitness, have undertaken a trainee pilot induction approved training course and have at least 36 months of qualifying sea service as master, navigating officer in charge of a watch or pilot on vessels of at least 500 gross tonnes.

11. We anticipate that each year 16 new pilots are required in Australian ports on account of natural attrition.
12. Further teaching staff at maritime educational facilities are generally seafarers themselves with relevant maritime qualifications.
13. We are constantly contacted by members, and non-members, who recently gained their qualifications who cannot secure any work. They often add that the majority of those they studied with are in similar positions.

14. Our older members fear for their industry. They see the short-term opportunism of multinational companies exploiting our natural resources. Whilst this facilitates the 99% of Australia's trade volumes through shipping it misses the opportunity to provide seagoing careers for young Australians; preferring instead the pursuit of lower costs and greater shareholder returns.
15. Our younger members who have pursued careers in this special vocation fear they will never be afforded the opportunities given to previous generations of seafarers to make a 40 to 50-year career of it.
16. Our union fears that without employer-led facilitation of cadet berths and seagoing career opportunities there will inevitably be a scarcity of Australians able to fill the many onshore maritime infrastructure jobs in Victoria such as harbour masters, pilots, Vessel Traffic Services Officer and Australian Maritime Safety Authority Inspectors.

The Way Forward

17. As the world's largest island nation Australia will always be dependent the maritime industry for the transport of goods.
18. Lloyd's Register has anticipated by 2030 off Australia's coast that there may be:
 - more than 40,000 offshore wind turbines (up from 45 in 2010); and,
 - more than 22,000 wave energy devices worldwide with a cluster numbering many thousands in Australia's waters (up from 22 in 2010).¹
19. These devices will require construction and on-going maintenance inevitably requiring highly skilled and accessible mariners.
20. Thousands of high-quality, highly skilled, well-paying jobs are potentially available to Victorians in our local maritime industry. We submit that we need to have the national conversation on the matters such as:
 - A vision for Australia's maritime industry and a role for Australians;
 - An Australian strategic fleet and national security;
 - Places for Australian seafarers to gain sea-time; and,
 - Support for the Australian Governments vision for the 50-year naval build.
21. We fully support this initiative of the Victorian Government as one way to participate in this national conversation. We submit that the *Coastal Trading Green Paper – A Maritime Transition* should be the starting point for this national conversation (attached). The AMOU was fully involved in the development of this paper and endorses the changes to our coastal trading regime suggested therein.
22. It has been the position of the AMOU since 2013 that the relevant Federal Minister establish a panel of industry experts, maritime business interests and maritime unions to consider the vision for Australia's maritime industry and make recommendations to the Minister on the further actions required to revitalise Australia's shipping industry. It is our position that an independent Chair be appointed by the Minister to convene the panel and that appropriate resources are made available to the Chair to allow this task to be undertaken in a timely manner.
23. We recommend that if the Federal Minister is unwilling to establish such a panel that the Victorian Government should set up it's own version of this. We recommend that this Victorian Panel make recommendations to the Victorian Government on those matters specific to encourage the revitalisation of the Victorian shipping industry.

¹ <http://www.lr.org/en/projects/global-marine-trends-2030.aspx>

24. The AMOU was a willing and active participant in the Maritime Workforce Development Forum and the *Recommendations of the Forum in its Australian Maritime Workforce Development Strategy, May 2013* were fully supported by the AMOU. The re-establishment of the Maritime Workforce Development Forum with as close as possible to its original membership is in our view a long overdue matter.
25. In the absence of the Federal Minister re-establishing the Maritime Workforce Development Forum we recommend that the Victorian Government establish its own Forum and within the bailiwick of the Victorian Government take action on the recommendations of the former National Forum.