July 2026

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Welcome to the July 2026 Edition of the AMWS Seafarers' Welfare Bulletin - Chairman, Mr David Parmeter

In this edition, you will find articles about the 2026 Day of the Seafarer, an important international event that acknowledges the critical role played by seafarers in the global economy. One of the reasons why we report on these developments is because AMWS has adopted a set of goals that state, in part: *For AMWS to be recognised as a leading supporter of seafarer welfare in Australia. We will do this by speaking up on issues that adversely impact seafarers.....*

David's comments for July can be viewed here >>

2026 International Day of the Seafarer Issues Still Escalating

Global calls for support for seafarers issued for The **International Day of the Seafarer 2026** are becoming increasingly urgent as seafarers continue to bear the human cost of escalating global conflict. The IMO has confirmed 17 seafarer deaths around the Strait of Hormuz, with thousands more affected or awaiting safe passage. The crisis has also spread to the Red Sea and the IMO has renewed its calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all seafarers who continue to be held captive following piracy attacks in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region.

Merchant vessels in the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea have also been struck in the last week amid the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, prompting a full suspension of shipping in the Sea of Azov.
See IMO Statement: Attacks in the Red Sea

The International Transport Workers' Federation has called for an immediate end to attacks on civilian shipping, warning that seafarers are being killed and injured in conflicts not of their making.
ITF statement: Stop killing transport workers: ITF sounds alarm over attacks on shipping and transport workers

For the AMWS, the situation is a timely reminder that the welfare of seafarers is inseparable from world events. While ships continue to keep global trade moving, it is the men and women on board who often bear the personal cost of conflict, isolation and uncertainty. We support calls that seafarers must never become collateral victims of geopolitical conflict and must have continued access to food, water, fuel, crew changes and communications for those affected by regional instability.

MtS Sydney Rev Simon gives out donuts on the International Day of the Seafarer

Across Australia, the International Day of the Seafarer was marked by widespread recognition of the vital contribution made by seafarers and highlighted the on-going need for local practical support for their welfare.

AMSA, Mission to Seafarers, WISTA Queensland, Southern Ports and many other organisations acknowledged the professionalism and resilience of those serving at sea through messages of thanks, community events and practical welfare initiatives. In Sydney, about 230 industry leaders and supporters, including AMWS, gathered at the Mission to Seafarers Sydney Annual Seafarers Welfare Event at NSW Parliament House, where the NSW Seafarers Welfare Fund announced $500,000 in grants for seven NSW maritime charities.
See also AMSA Day of the Seafarer statement.

Seafarer welfare events around Australia, including the ASWC's 2026–2030 national welfare strategy, called for mental health, connectivity, food and conflict-zone risk to be on-going welfare priorities. See DCN Opinion MtS Regional Director Sue Dight.

BIMCO and ICS Report Warns of Potential Officer Shortage

The latest Seafarer Workforce Report 2026, published by BIMCO and the International Chamber of Shipping, has warned of a growing shortage of qualified officers in the global

current shortage of 39,100 STCW-certified officers and forecasts that an additional 113,735 officers will be needed by 2030.

Since the 2021 report, demand for STCW certified seafarers has increased by 35%. The report estimates that 2.57 million seafarers currently serve the fleet, operating 85,148 merchant ships around the globe. The report also estimates that 2026 will see a shortage of 39,100 STCW certified officers and a surplus of 56,890 ratings. To meet the future demand, it is estimated that an additional 22,747 officers and 8,475 ratings will need to join the workforce each year until 2030, representing an average annual increase of 2.0% and 0.5% respectively.

The Seafarer Workforce Report is published every five years and was last issued in 2021. The report provides a comprehensive overview of the supply and demand balance for STCW certified seafarers. “Seafarers are the backbone of global trade, and this report reinforces just how important they are to keeping the world economy moving, especially in an increasingly fragmented world. As shipping continues to evolve, attracting more people to careers in maritime is essential.” Says ICS Secretary General, Thomas A. Kazakos.

We at AMWS hope that the industry realises that if it wants to attract and retain skilled seafarers, it needs to ensure decent working conditions, good training, safe ships, proper shore support, clear career pathways and respect for seafarers’ wellbeing. Retaining skilled seafarers is not only a matter of recruitment.

Download the free Executive Summary here >>

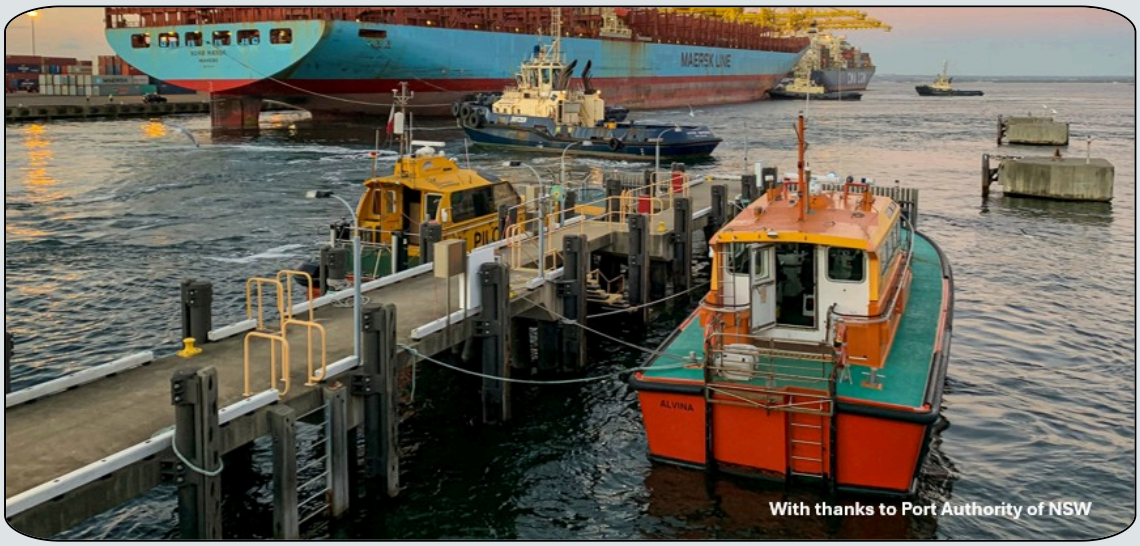
Initiative Working to Prevent Sexual Misconduct at Sea

The Global Maritime Forum’s All Aboard Alliance initiative, Unspoken, has begun publishing a selection of anonymised personal stories from seafarers about sexual misconduct at sea

to help develop a global industry framework. The stories, submitted confidentially via its secure website, aim to showcase the scale of the issue and challenge the silence that often surrounds it. They will provide input to help improve prevention and response systems for unwanted sexual behaviour onboard vessels, ultimately making life at sea safer for everyone.

The initiative is based partly on a 2025 Safer Waves / University of Winchester report which found that that 80% of surveyed UK seafarers had experienced or witnessed a sexual offence at sea within the previous five years.

We at the AMWS applaud this initiative because seafarer welfare includes not only physical safety and access to shore-based support, but also dignity, respect and the right for all seafarers to work free from harassment, abuse and fear. Learn more at The Seafarers Charity website.



AMSA MLC 2025 Report: welfare risks for seafarers in Australian waters

In 2025, AMSA found 1,185 MLC-related deficiencies during port state control inspections and 12 vessels were detained for serious breaches of MLC requirements.

They are to be commended on their collaboration with the Fair Work Ombudsman on seafarer wage compliance which recovered $783,001 in wages. It was also encouraging to see that of the 169 MLC complaints received by AMSW in 2025, 102 complaints were

lodged directly by seafarers. Even with a small fall in complaints, AMSA's Report shows ongoing concerns around hours of work and rest, wage compliance, vessel conditions and serious breaches of maritime labour requirements.

For AMWS, and others who are united in improving seafarer welfare, the report is a timely reminder of the importance of strong welfare networks, accessible reporting pathways and practical support for seafarers visiting Australian ports.

Read more – Summary and link to the full report

Know anyone who may benefit from this curated summary of key global and local seafarers welfare news? Please forward our Bulletin.

The AMWS Vision

"To ensure all seafarers and their dependents, irrespective of nationality, gender, or beliefs, are treated with dignity, respect, and compassion".

Interested in this AMWS vision and want to know more?

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