

The Mariners' Lifeline

NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN MARINERS' WELFARE SOCIETY (ABN 86 000 008 122)
Founded 1863 as the Sydney Sailors' Home. Volume 20. No 1. June 2021.



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Hello everyone and welcome to this edition of The Mariners' Lifeline. The Australian Mariners' Welfare Society is an organisation with a long and distinguished history. We can trace our origins back to 1863 and the founding of the original Sydney Sailors Home. For any organisation to have survived and thrived over such a long period it must have some robust and vital qualities. To my mind there are three characteristics of AMWS which have made this possible.



*David Parmeter,
Chairman of the
Australian Mariners
Welfare Society*

The first is the spirit and commitment of the people involved. This is wonderfully illustrated through our recently retired Chair Alan Tait. No one could be more devoted to the cause of seafarer welfare or generous with his time than Alan. As reported in this edition, AMWS recently held a function to thank Alan for his service. It was well attended by AMWS members and a cross-section of industry stakeholders. One of our oldest members, Don Steel, was unable to join us on the day, but it was typical of the spirit of people like Don that he insisted on marking the occasion by making a generous donation to the Society. Thank you Don. The event was also an opportunity to mark the passing of our friend and long time

Council Member Malcolm Longstaff. Alan spoke at the service for Malcolm and his touching eulogy is reproduced in this edition.

The second feature of AMWS is the relevance and importance of what we do. Action in support of seafarer welfare is as important now as it has ever been. The devastating impact of the Covid pandemic on seafarers and their families requires urgent attention. In this regard I direct you to an excellent article from the Editor Martin Orchard which describes the range of activities carried out and promoted by AMWS. There are also interesting reports on the latest Scholarship and Sail Training programs the Society supports. The Council is committed to ensuring AMWS is involved with practical measures that make a tangible difference.

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Action in support of seafarer welfare is as important now as it has ever been.

The final characteristic that has enabled AMWS to be successful over such a long period of time is recognizing the need to change and grow. As I like to say, AMWS has withstood the test of time and changed with the times. Historically, the best example of this was the transition from the Sydney Sailors Home to Australian Mariners Welfare Society. Moreover, the Council continues to look for ways to ensure AMWS stays relevant and modern, with an emphasis on increasing and diversifying our membership to ensure a viable future. In this regard a number of proposals can be considered. Our increased presence on social media through the website and Facebook page, under the guidance of Deputy Chair Chris Green, is one such initiative. At the recent Annual General Meeting, the Members approved the creation of a new category of membership called Corporate Membership.

The idea behind this change is to encourage fraternal and like-minded organisations to join, and thereby broaden the membership base. I want to pass on my appreciation to Councillor Anthony Highfield for his work in preparing the necessary amendments to the Constitution.

There is a lot of interesting reading in this edition of The Mariners' Lifeline. In addition to the articles I have already referred to, I particularly recommend the profile of one of the newest Council Members, Captain Jeanine Drummond. There is also an article about Australia's new icebreaker, *RSV Nuyina*, and a report on the ongoing problem of piracy. As always, I am very grateful to Martin and all the contributors for their efforts.

David Parmeter
Chairman



THE LATE MALCOLM LONGSTAFF

Our dear friend, Malcolm, died last December. The following Eulogy was delivered by Captain Alan Tait, former AMWS Chairman, at Malcolm's funeral:

"My friend Malcolm Longstaff.

My name is Alan Tait. A seafarer by trade, I am now an ageing Ancient Mariner having been involved with ships and the sea my entire working life, along with their legacies in my retired years.

May I firstly express my personal condolences to Maggie and Alister and Sarah, and families.

Although Malcolm and I had a common interest, our paths didn't cross until we had retired and looked to pay back the fortunes that our industry did share, be it in a small way.

We first met in 2007 when the Council of the Australian Mariners' Welfare Society (AMWS) asked Malcolm to assist Jan Bowen to complete her work on our book "The Sydney Sailors' Home". As a result, we were fortunate that he ultimately joined the Council back in 2008, some 12 years ago.



Malcolm Longstaff

Whilst I thought I was a pretty good Manager that knew a bit about everything, it wasn't long before I realised Malcolm brought a unique style to our Council that was worth its weight and I, as its Chairman, was able to reap its benefit.

And I did!

Our organisation had had a name change in 2002 from the Sydney Sailors' Home (SSH) to the Australian Mariners' Welfare Society (AMWS), and with our History Book we needed airplay to what is a select audience. Malcolm provided that catalyst and quickly struck the right tempo as editor of our Newsletter.

Seafarers are not renowned for their spelling and grammar. Readers' remarks about the standards of my reports being so clear, precise and to the point, was readily accepted by me without explaining the full sequence of events that lead to their issue. A secret pact with my friend.

He was able to identify and have us recognise important milestones which provided perpetuity, such as the plaque that now takes pride of place outside the SSH building at the Rocks, aptly named "Home away from Home". Malcolm was like a dog with a bone, making sure we got to the right people and they understood the importance of recognising the contribution seafarers made to our history. It was so good!

His advice and recommendations were measured and pertinent. Always quietly spoken, his work ethics were beyond reproach. He brought his many years of organisational skills to the table and my colleagues did recognise them.

Maggie will tell you of our numerous trips to Hornsby where a number of retired seafarers lived in the organisation's comfortable one-bedroom home units. He was always available to lend a helping hand. This included rolling up his sleeves to go through records that badly needed culling. As you can imagine, it was done with a shortage of willing volunteers, led by myself.

It reminded me of the story when I asked my boss how long one keeps this very large ring of keys, entrusted to the Chief Officer of the ship, when I have no idea what they opened. His very sound advice being "You keep them till just after you leave the ship".

The analogy is there, be it slim.

I was fascinated by his stories covering the travel industry. The one that comes to mind is the London to Sydney Centenary of Federation Air Race in a twin-engine Cessna.

His working life brought him together with many and varied people, be they on

Malcolm
Longstaff
was a
true
gentleman.

the land, on the sea, in the air, or in a court of law through his involvement with Law & Theatre.

Might I say what a lovely lady is his Princess. She has remained strong throughout his ailing health. Always there, he has been blessed to have her by his side for some 56 years. When I say 'by his side', his work did require periods of being away from home and this was accepted by her, as sharing his life. I am sure. I say this because in our short but numerous sojourns to Hornsby, she let him out the door with a wave and a 'see you soon'.

Of course, I will miss our regular cups of coffee joined by our good friend Graham Lightfoot, where we would reminisce on what good jobs we did when running the ships.

I got to see him a couple of times whilst he was at Southern Cross Care. You know he was even organising his own funeral during those visits. This included asking me to speak! Lucid to the end, I was in awe of his calm strength. A sign of a brave man.

At this very moment, I am sure he would say 'peace and goodwill' to everyone, and express his strong support of the Queen's message to be ready to give each other a hug, when permitted to do so in these unprecedented times, of course.

Malcolm Longstaff was a true gentleman.

I wished I had known him a lot sooner."



AMWS SCHOLARSHIPS CAN EXTEND TO MORE THAN ONE SEMESTER

Llew Russell AM, AMWS Councillor & Chairman of the Scholarship Committee

It is not widely known that the scholarships provided to students of maritime courses offered by training institutions recognised by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority can be offered for more than one semester .

One of the successful recipients of a scholarship for the first semester of 2021 at the Australian Maritime College was also the successful applicant for the second semester last year. Matt is an outstanding student and was very appreciative of the \$3000 scholarship. He wrote:

"I would like to thank the Australian Mariners' welfare Society and all associated members for your generosity. It is greatly appreciated and assists tremendously. The Societies contributions have enabled me the opportunity to better my education and open up further pathways for my career within the Australian maritime industry.



Joshua

I am now nearing the end of the Deck Watchkeepers component of the Bachelor of Applied Science (nautical Science) and am hoping to be able to return to undertake the chief Mates/Masters Semester's in the very near future. I am certainly on my way to being fully qualified and hope that I can bequest the societies generosity. Once again, thank-you very much".

Another impressive student who fulfilled the criteria of being the child of an ex-seafarer and of low to moderate financial means was Joshua who was also grateful for the \$3000 scholarship.

He wrote: *"I would like to thank the Australian Mariners' Welfare Society for this scholarship. It is such an honour to be a recipient and I am very happy and appreciative to be selected. The financial assistance you have provided will help*

me tremendously with my studies in becoming a marine engineer as I can focus more on my learning. Thank-you again for your generosity and support. I will work very hard and put this scholarship to good use."

These two students were recommended by the AMC scholarship selection team out of a strong field of applicants and the AMWS takes great pleasure in congratulating them on their success.



ALAN TAIT'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE AUSTRALIAN MARINERS' WELFARE SOCIETY RECOGNISED

The following article was written by Ian Ackerman, Editor of the Daily Commercial News (DCN), and we thank Ian for allowing his article to appear in this issue of The Mariners' Lifeline:

On 18 May, the Australian Mariners' Welfare Society gathered to celebrate retired chairman Captain Alan Tait's outstanding service to the charity and to the cause of seafarer welfare. The function was held at the City Tattersalls Club in Sydney.

Mr Tait joined the society in 1984. He became a Councillor in 1992 and took over as Chair in 2005. He filled that role for 15 years before stepping down 12 months ago.

In a speech at the function, current Chair of AMWS David Parmeter said Mr Tait has been tireless in his support of seafarer welfare and generously gave his time to the cause.

"The reason we are here today is to acknowledge and thank



Alan for his outstanding leadership of AMWS,” Mr Parmeter said.

“I am delighted to say Alan has remained a council member and is as active and engaged with seafarer welfare as ever. And I certainly appreciate his ongoing support and guidance.”

Last year Mr Tait was made a life member of AMWS. At the ceremony this week Mr Parmeter presented him with a framed certificate of life membership.

In presenting the certificate, Mr Parmeter said: *“Alan I ask that you accept this as a small token of the respect, admiration and affection of everyone who knows you”*.



PROFILE: CAPTAIN JEANINE DRUMMOND, AMWS COUNCILLOR

It is an honour to have joined the Council of the Australian Mariners' Welfare last year, particularly during such unprecedented times for seafarer welfare as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As many of you reading this would understand, seafarer welfare is an issue close to our hearts, and when the welfare of many of our global seafarers can be neglected, it takes a pandemic for us to rise together across many diverging interests to raise the profile of seafarer welfare. It is testimony to our shipping and ports industries for their ability to maintain maritime transportation supply chains with only minimal adverse impacts. However, this could not have occurred without the sacrifice of many seafarers who exceeded normal contract lengths due to ongoing repatriation and crew change challenges.

With so many international borders closed, seafarers have been isolated onboard vessels with only marine pilots, or occasional shore side stevedores/shore officers to interact with at a distance, whilst using Personal Protection Equipment. They have not been able to readily seek medical, dental or pharmaceutical needs, or be able to visit shopping centres to collect personal products, or access good internet to call home and download videos to watch on the next voyage. Those working in what was a fast-growing passenger/cruise vessel industry had their work grounded to a halt, with many forced to seek alternative employment ashore in non-maritime roles, to pay the bills which is not an easy feat in many countries during a pandemic.

It is with some embarrassment that I concede, until my recent appointment to the AMWS Council, I was not fully aware of the important work AMWS does in way of providing financial support to the Seafarer Missions around Australia, and offering individual scholarships to well-deserving people to support their interest

I make a request of our maritime men and women reading this article to engage further in the work of championing the change our world needs.

in maritime and future possibilities.

It is with this in mind, that I hope all maritime stakeholders can continue to work together, to highlight issues for seafarers' welfare and their importance as key workers, and this will only occur if we continue on our paths of creating awareness across our non-maritime community friends, colleagues and the general public. So I encourage you to all take up a conversation with a non-mariner friend and raise with them the importance of seafarers, shipping and ports to our Australian way of life.

All this seems a long way from 1995, when as a slightly, (let's be honest!), completely naive 18-year old deck officer cadet I joined my first ship, the Australian National Line's (ANL) containership, *Australian Venture*. I joined in Botany Bay to

embark on a three month voyage, circumnavigating the world between Australia and Europe. I remember the excitement and nerves as if it were yesterday, as I looked forward to the travel and adventure this career at sea was sure to deliver.

Nothing could have prepared me for the stark reality that this world was miles from anything I knew as familiar. The walls and bins had funny names like 'bulkheads' and 'rosy's'; there was the Kiwi coast; there were traditions and hierarchy to be learnt all before I would learn anything technical. There was only my shipmates to share this incredible journey with, as there was no internet, social media, emails or even mobile phones, just good old-fashion letter writing.

Today, a decade or two more mature, and fully conversant with the language of the sea, I am delighted to say that the adventure never ends. I did not set out to be a captain, or a harbour master. I went to sea looking for adventure and travel, and what I got was so much more rewarding. I kept moving my goal posts as I grew in resilience and confidence, moving from 3rd Officer to Master, with my first command at the young age of 29 with Teekay Shipping, on the 35,000T coastal products tanker, *MT Barrington*.

I later moved to the offshore industry, working as Master on a newbuild Floating Production Storage and Offtake (FPSO) project before 'swallowing the anchor' permanently into a role as Tug Master in Gladstone, Queensland, and then as marine consultant learning the ways of port operations, regulation, towage licenses, and port development. Combined with the shoreside commercial, operations and Workplace Health & Safety experience gained at Teekay working secondment opportunities in Vancouver, Singapore and Sydney offices. This port experience provided solid foundations to move into Marine Advisor role at Caltex in Sydney, before joining the Port Authority of New South Wales in Harbour Master roles in Sydney and Newcastle.

Last year I chose to move away from the 24/7 busy operational roles that I have enjoyed so much, to create opportunities to grow my professional development in



Jeanine Drummond

new challenging ways. To that end, I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to set up my own maritime advisory/solutions-focused business 'Integral Maritime' based in Newcastle, and commenced working as non-executive director on the boards of Australian Maritime Safety Authority, Australian Maritime College and Australian Mariners' Welfare Society. I also took this opportunity to complete further education, studying the AICD Company Directors' Course, as well as the courses to maintain my Master's Certificate of Competency, and am in the process of completing a University Certificate in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

In my advocacy work for further diversity and inclusion in maritime, I make a request of our maritime men and women reading this article to engage further in the work of championing the change our world needs: learn more about what it takes; embrace diversity, equality and inclusion in your workplace; be a voice to those who may find it difficult to speak up; invite those not in a majority to participate in discussions, projects or who just want to be heard and, importantly, educate our non-maritime community about the importance of the maritime industry and seafarers' welfare.



AUSTRALIA'S INNOVATIVE NEW ICEBREAKER CREATES JOBS FOR AUSTRALIAN MARINERS

Written by David Astbury, ASRV Icebreaker Project Director, Serco Asia Pacific

The Southern Ocean is a formidable force. Home to some of the most extreme weather in the world, freezing temperatures and mammoth icebergs, it's a challenge to design and build a ship that can withstand such conditions. So, when an icebreaker also needs to be a state-of-the-art scientific research platform that will serve Australia's Antarctic needs for the next three decades, innovation and a highly capable crew is a must.

Australia's new icebreaker, *RSV Nuyina*, is a \$1.91 billion investment by the Australian Government and will be the centrepiece of Australia's Antarctic Strategy. Serco Australia, who managed the design and build of the vessel for the owners Australian Antarctic Division, will also operate and maintain the icebreaker when it arrives in its home port of Hobart.

With more than 50 years' experience delivering services to the Ministry of Defence in the United Kingdom, and 22 years providing maritime services to the Royal Australian Navy, Serco drew on its expertise in complex project management and vessel operation to ensure the icebreaker was fit-for-purpose.

RSV Nuyina (pronounced noy-yee-nah) will provide a world-class scientific platform for Antarctic researchers, carrying cutting-edge equipment to study the depths of the Southern Ocean, sea ice and the upper atmosphere.

Scientific laboratories, icebreaker and resupply ship in one, *RSV Nuyina* will be



David Astbury



powerful enough to break 1.65 metres of ice at a continuous speed of three knots, quiet enough to allow researchers to use acoustic instruments, and large enough to resupply Australia's four Antarctic and sub-Antarctic stations at once.

At 160.3 metres long and 26,000 tonnes, *RSV Nuyina* will be more than one-and-a-half times longer than Australia's previous icebreaker, *RSV Aurora Australis*, and around three-times heavier. It will have a 1200 tonne cargo capacity, enabling it to carry 96

20-foot shipping containers inside its holds.

Nuyina's 300 per cent larger cargo capacity and 70 per cent larger fuel-carrying capacity will mean resupply operations to Australia's four research stations can be undertaken faster and more efficiently in a single voyage.

The vessel will have an increased range of 30,000 nautical miles and will be funded to operate at sea for 200 days each year. With significantly greater icebreaking capability, it will be able to undertake winter voyages into Antarctic waters; a feat which has previously been impossible.

32 Serco crew and 117 expeditioners will travel comfortably onboard for expeditions lasting up to 90 days. To make the long sea journeys more enjoyable, the ship includes a 96-seat theatre, a library, and an observation bridge/deck, just below the navigation bridge. This area will be used to undertake observations of sea ice, wildlife and weather, and will double as a recreational and meeting space. As well as crew and expeditioner cabins, there are also a conference room, dining room and lounge.

In addition to providing opportunities for local businesses to deliver support services such as repair and maintenance, docking, security, cleaning, providoring and stevedoring, *RSV Nuyina* has also created jobs for Australian mariners.

Nuyina's crew includes two Masters, Chief Mate, Second and Third Officers, Engineers, Electro Technological Officer, Integrated Rating, Stewards, and Cooks. More than 90% of *Nuyina's* crew are Australian and many are familiar with the Antarctic seas having previously crewed the *Aurora Australis*.

Chief Mate Robert Darvall began his working life as a fisherman. Darvall had also spent some time working on land but decided after several years a career at

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sea was for him.

“After about six of seven years shipping food, machinery and building supplies between Cairns and the Torres Strait, I had enough sea time to go to the Australian Maritime College in Tasmania,” Darvall said.

“I then started work in the blue water industry, but always had the desire to go to the Antarctic.”

It wasn't long before Darvall secured a job on *Aurora Australis*, and over a 16-year period had worked as Third, Second, and First Mate before becoming Master.

“I have always wanted to take scientists to Antarctica, and I am driven by the beauty of this part of the world, so I feel privileged to be able to continue this



Robert Darvall, Chief Mate, alongside RSV Nuyina at the Vlissingen Shipyard in The Netherlands.

work now with Serco.”

“As Chief Mate, I will act as the Master’s representative. I will be responsible for the stability, cargo, fresh water, ballast, watches as required and maintenance. I will be working with air crews and managing the daily work program, I will be the liaison with the ship’s owner, the Australian Antarctic Division, and will also step into the role of Master if required.”

With almost half of *Nuyina’s* crew having previously worked

on *Aurora Australis*, Darvall is thrilled to experience future voyages with some of his long-term colleagues.

It makes such a difference on these longer voyages when you are working with a close-knit team, and I have known some of my fellow ship mates for more than 16 years.

Since commencing his role with Serco, Darvall has enjoyed 14 weeks in the Netherlands familiarising himself with *Nuyina* throughout the vessel’s special sea trials.

“Other key crew members and I spent a great deal of time running through protocols and familiarising ourselves with Nuyina and her equipment. This is quite an involved process but has provided an excellent opportunity for us to really get to know the ship we will be spending so much time on.”

Almost half of *Nuyina’s* crew also call Tasmania home while not at sea, including Darvall.

“I am proud to call Hobart home. Over the past 15 years I have gradually moved closer and closer to the wharf and I will now be able to see Nuyina from my

kitchen window.”

With so much excitement building for the arrival of the vessel in Hobart later in the year, Darvall and the crew are most looking forward to taking her to sea.

“It is an amazing ship, the best built ship I have ever been on. It has so much equipment, so many capabilities, so many possibilities, and is very exciting to know that soon we will be able to take Nuyina to sea.”

For more information, visit www.serco.com/icebreaker

The AMWS thank Serco Asia Pacific for their contribution in writing this article.



AMWS' SAIL TRAINING SCHOLARSHIPS

With the easing of the Covid restrictions in NSW earlier this year, the AMWS Sailing Scholarships recommenced in Sydney after a year's break.

Natasha and Braedon were the recipients of the two AMWS Jim Israel Sail Training Scholarship who set sail on the *STS Young Endeavour* in March 2021.

Natasha wrote about her reflections on a 10-day voyage on the *Young Endeavour*:

‘The experience was a life changing adventure. Before the voyage, I was excited but unsure what to expect. During the 10 days, I was faced with many new challenges including:

- Climbing the mast
- Cooking meals for around 20 people
- Driving the ship in the middle of the ocean
- Working as a team to get through watches throughout the night

The time away gave me the opportunity to reflect on how strong of a person I am and how resilient and persistent I can be when overcoming challenges. I am looking forward to taking what I have learnt from the experience and using it in all aspects of my life. I would like to say thank you to AMWS for this opportunity, it was truly the best!’

The following is an edited version of Braedon's reaction of his experience:

‘I would like to thank AMWS for giving me this opportunity. I gained skills in sailing – I know the difference between sides which are Port (left) and Starboard (right).

Keely was the Chef on the boat. She made wonderful food such as ribs, nachos, burgers, seafood.

I was in Blue Watch (True Blue). We won tug-of-war, ROPIES (Twice). Our first watch was the Last Dog Watch which was 0400 – 0800 hrs. We had to do this



AMWS Councillors Alan Tait and Graham Lightfoot farewelling Natasha and Braedon.

three times throughout the voyage. The Watches were very cold and wet, but fun. You get to sail and bring sails back in and you get to steer the helm. Also on the voyage, you make really great friends from different age-groups and places, such as Western Australia and South Australia. The crew was amazing and made all of us (17) feel welcome on the boat.

I would recommend this to other young 'Youthies' and, again, thank you very much for this great opportunity.'

AMWS thank the Young Endeavour Youth Scheme, the Salvation Army Youth Link and Anglicare for their support and assistance with the Jim Israel Scholarship programme.

In addition, the recipient of the AMWS and the Sydney Cove Rotary Club's Trevor Howarth Memorial Sail Training Scholarship was Dillion who set sail on the *STS Young Endeavour* in April 2021.

At the time of going to print, Dillion's reflections on his experience were not available, but will appear soon on the AMWS website.

AMWS thank Stepping Stone House for their support and assistance with the Trevor Howarth Memorial Sail Training Scholarship.

AMWS congratulate Natasha, Braedon and Dillion on being awarded their *STS Young Endeavour* Completion Certificate.



AMWS Councillor Alan Tait and Bill Little of the Sydney Cove Rotary Club farewell Dillion



AMWS' CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS SEAFARERS' WELFARE

Martin Orchard – AMWS Councillor & Editor.

Earlier this year, the AMWS became a signatory to The Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change. There are now over 800 signatories to this Declaration world-wide.

The Declaration arose from a global maritime forum, and seeks governments' agreement to recognise seafarers as Key Workers, and to give them priority access to Covid-19 vaccines.

The devastating situation with Covid-19 in India has resulted in some major ports, including Singapore, prohibiting crew changes for seafarers who have recently called at Indian and other ports in the sub-continental countries.

A growing number of seafarers are testing positive to the virus, and some seafarers are reported to be reluctant to join vessels fearing for their family's health and welfare. These developments may lead to a resurgence of the crew-change crisis which has been witnessed around the world during the past 12-18 months.

In response to these disturbing developments, the Seafarers' International Relief Fund has been established by leading seafarer welfare charities and shipping industry representatives to support seafarers and their families in India, and other

countries, who are affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Fund has set a target of US\$1M.

At their recent Council meeting, the AMWS Council agreed to make an initial contribution of \$20,000 to the Seafarers' International Relief Fund

In addition, on 25th March, 2021, a joint statement on the prioritisation of Covid-19 vaccination for seafarers and aircrew was issued and signed by:

- Secretary General, International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)
- Secretary General, International Maritime Organisation (IMO)
- Director General, International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
- Director General, World Health Organisation (WHO)
- Director General, International Labour Organisation (ILO)

This statement urged all United Nations States to prioritise seafarers and aircrew in their national Covid-19 vaccination programmes, to protect them as soon as possible and to facilitate their safe movement across borders.

Additional details can be viewed on the IMO website.

During these uncertain times, The Australian Mariners' Welfare Society's principle activities continue to be:

- Provision of subsidised home unit accommodation for ex-seafarers of modest means.
- Annual grants to the Mission to Seafarers and the Apostleship of the Sea (Stella Maris) in recognition of their offering a home away from home for visiting mariners at 39 centres in ports around Australia.
- Project grants to assist with the upkeep of the above centres, including IT and transport.
- Offering maritime scholarships and tall ship training experience.
- Representation on the Australian Seafarers' Welfare Council whose role is to ensure the provision of appropriate welfare services for all seafarers visiting Australian ports.
- Membership of the Sydney Port Welfare Committee.

In the twelve months of 2020, the AMWS expenses for grants, donations, scholarships and sponsorships totalled over A\$146,000.

During the first quarter of 2021, the AMWS has:

- Provided grants to the Mission to Seafarers (MtS) and Apostleship of the Sea (Stella Maris).
- Provided grants to MtS' and Stella Maris' Stations around the Australian coast to enable them to upgrade their facilities, and assist them in the maintenance of their buses. The Stations were located at the following ports:

The AMWS Council remains mindful of the continuing plight of seafarers in these unique times, both in Australia and around the world.

Esperance/Mackay/Port Giles/Townsville/Port Adelaide/ Bell Bay/Thevenard/ Albany/Geraldton/Melbourne/Port Pirie/Hobart/Eden.

- Provided Maritime Scholarships to two students studying at the Australian Maritime College (AMC) in Launceston to assist in their studies during Semester 1 in 2021. An article by Llew Russell AM on this subject appears in this edition of the Newsletter.

The AMWS Council remains mindful of the continuing plight of seafarers in these unique times, both in Australia and around the world, and will continue to assist financially and provide their collegiate support to appropriate actions and situations as they arise.



PIRACY AT SEA

Martin Orchard – AMWS Councillor & Editor.

ReCAAP is the regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against ships in Asia, and is based in Singapore. Australia is one of the Contracting Parties to the ReCAAP Agreement.

In their 2020 Annual Report, ReCAAP reports 97 incidents occurred in Asian waters, comprising 95 actual and 2 attempted incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships.

Compared to 2019, these figures represent a 17% increase in the total number of incidents, and a 32% increase in the actual number of incidents reported in 2020.

One of the particular concerns to ReCAAP in 2020 was the continued increase of incidents on board ships while underway in the Singapore Strait which numbered 34 incidents compared to 31 incidents in 2019.

In the period January to March 2021, ReCAAP report 17 incidents of armed robbery in Asian waters. No incident of piracy was reported. This represents a 39% decrease compared to the same period in 2019. Seven of these incidents occurred in the Singapore Strait, compared to nine in the same period in 2020. The other 10 incidents occurred in Bangladesh, India, the Philippines and Sulu-Celebes Seas.

The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) is a specialised department of the International Chamber of Commerce responsible for the fighting of crimes related to maritime trades and transportation.

The IMB reports that in 2020 they received 195 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships worldwide, compared to 162 in 2019. The incidents included three hijacked vessels, 11 vessels fired upon, 20 attempted attacks and 161 vessels boarded. Globally, 135 crew were kidnapped from their vessels in 2020, with the Gulf of Guinea accounting to 95% of the kidnappings.

The IMB remarks that incidents in the Gulf of Guinea are particularly dangerous

The IMB reports that in 2020 they received 195 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships worldwide.

as over 80% of attackers are armed with guns.

During the first quarter of 2021, IMB report 38 piracy incidents worldwide, compared to 47 during the same period in 2020, but despite the drop in the number, violence against crews is on the rise compared to previous years. In the period January to March 2021, 40 crew members were kidnapped and one crew member was killed, and all these incidents occurred in the Gulf of Guinea.

IMB Director, Michael Howlett, has warned '*Pirates operating within the Gulf of Guinea are well-equipped to attack further away from shorelines and are unafraid to take violent action against innocent crews*'.

Both ReCAAP and the IMB warn seafarers to be cautious and vigilant when travelling in these areas.

The AMWS remain alarmed by these incidents of piracy and attacks on seafarers who are going about their job of transporting goods around the world upon which the global economy is dependent.



AMWS' WEBSITE

Stay in touch with the AMWS' many ongoing activities by visiting the website: www.marinerswelfare.com or Facebook: www.facebook.com/marinerswelfareaus or 'Australian Mariners Welfare Society'.