

# The Mariners' Lifeline

NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN MARINERS' WELFARE SOCIETY (ABN 86 000 008 122)  
Founded 1863 as the Sydney Sailors' Home. Volume 23. No 1. June 2024.



## THE CHAIR'S REPORT

Hello and welcome to the June 2024 edition of 'The Mariners Lifeline' This is a bumper edition full of interesting articles, many of which

highlight the work done by AMWS in supporting and promoting the welfare of seafarers, past, present and future. I commend them to you.

However, there are two articles that I wish to focus on, that address issues of international concern.

The first is Martin Orchard's detailed and informative article on the current upsurge in Piracy and related events around the world. Piracy is a plague on the industry and an immediate danger to the safety and welfare of seafarers. While events in the Red Sea driven by global political tensions have commanded the headlines, Martin's article makes it clear piracy occurs in several locations around the world.

As the IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez said in condemning attacks on seafarers: "I will continue to reiterate my key messages on the situation: seafarers are innocent victims, and their safety is paramount; the principle of freedom of navigation should be upheld and allow safe trade of essential goods."

I am sure everyone agrees with the Secretary-General's statement.

The second article is on the Criminalisation of Seafarers and highlights recent work by the IMO and ITF to develop guidelines on the fair treatment of seafarers who have been detained on suspicion of committing crimes. Basically, any time there is an incident that involves a breach of local laws, the Master and potentially other crew members face the very real risk of prosecution and possible imprisonment. Typically, this may be for an oil spill, but an extreme example is the recent case of the Baltimore Bridge disaster where the FBI is undertaking a criminal investigation.

The objective of these Guidelines is to ensure that seafarers are treated fairly during any investigation



David Parmeter, Chair of the Australian Mariners Welfare Society

PIRACY AT SEA	PAGE 2
SEAFARERS' WELFARE	PAGE 5
GRAHAM LIGHTFOOT AM	PAGE 7
SYDNEY SEAFARERS' WELFARE COMMITTEE	PAGE 8
MALCOLM LONGSTAFF'S MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP	PAGE 10
STS YOUNG ENDEAVOUR	PAGE 11
AMWS JIM ISRAEL MEMORIAL 'YOUNG ENDEAVOUR' AWARD	PAGE 12
SEAFARER CRIMINALISATION	PAGE 13
MERCHANT NAVY WAR MEMORIAL	PAGE 14
AMWS' CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS SEAFARERS' WELFARE	PAGE 15

and detention by local jurisdictions. This is a long overdue development and welcomed by all.

Seafaring is a difficult and challenging vocation at the best of times. Everyone in the industry must work to ensure that the safety and welfare of seafarers is paramount.

I wish to thank all the contributors to this edition, especially the Editor Martin Orchard. On behalf of everyone involved with AMWS, I hope you enjoy this publication.

David Parmeter

*Chair*



## **PIRACY AT SEA**

*Martin Orchard – AMWS Councillor & Editor*

### **1. The Red Sea/Gulf of Aden**

The Red Sea crisis commenced on 19th October, 2023, when the Iran-backed Houthi movement in Yemen launched missiles and armed drones at Israel in reaction to the Israel-Hamas war.

The Houthis have since launched aerial attacks against dozens of merchant and naval vessels in the Red Sea, particularly in the area of Bab-el-Mandeb which is a chokepoint between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden through which all vessels using the Suez Canal (north and southbound) have to sail.

As a result of the Houthi attacks, hundreds of commercial vessels have been rerouted via the Cape of Good Hope resulting in increased steaming times and costs, disruption to supply chains and a negative impact to the Egyptian economy with a dramatic reduction in the number of vessels transiting the Suez Canal which more than 20,000 vessels transit every year, representing 12% of the global trade.

This action by the Houthis has increased international concerns surrounding the safety of the seafarers onboard these vessels, and the additional stress and fatigue resulting in the additional time that seafarers have to spend at sea. Bearing in mind the stress and difficulties that seafarers had to endure during the global Covid pandemic, and the current crisis confronting the maritime industry with regards to their efforts to attract and retain sea-going personnel, this Middle East conflict could not come at a worse time.

From 19th November, 2023, to 25th May, 2024, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) is reporting that there have been 58 incidents of attacks of hi-jackings and attempted attacks on shipping, and incidents involving types of merchant vessels were:

Seafaring is a difficult and challenging vocation at the best of times.



- container vessels – 33%
- tankers – 32%
- bulk carriers – 28%
- ro-ro – 5%
- passenger – 2%

The UKMTO is a Royal Navy capability with the principal purpose of providing an information channel between the military and the commercial shipping industry, delivering timely maritime security information.

In response to the Houthi attacks, the United States is leading the international task force Operation Prosperity Guardian which is focusing on the security in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

In addition, the European Union has formed Operation Aspides, (the Greek word for 'shields'), which, unlike the U.S.-led operation is a 'purely defensive' mission to increase maritime surveillance in the region, provide escorts to merchant vessels and defend against strikes.

This disruption to the Suez Canal transited by vessels employed in the major trade lanes between all the trading areas East of Suez and Europe has come at a time when the number of vessels serving major trade lanes using the Panama Canal have been limited by the Canal Authority as the result of drought being

experienced in Panama, causing reductions to the level of water in Lake Gatun, the Canal's rain-fed reservoir, which also serves the people of Panama.

The rainy season in Panama is between May and December, and it is anticipated that the water level in the Canal will rise by two metres during forthcoming months, and it is anticipated that disruptions in the Canal will gradually ease.

The devastating effects on global supply chains caused by the Covid pandemic highlighted the frailty of our trade lanes. This realisation was further confirmed in March 2021 when a container ship was stuck in the Suez Canal for six days causing a huge disruption to global trade between Asia and Europe.

With the current conflict in the Middle East, we are again witnessing vital supply chains coming under pressure resulting in higher transport costs and higher prices for goods.

At the time of writing this article, there seems to be no end in sight to this conflict.

With the current conflict in the Middle East, we are again witnessing vital supply chains coming under pressure resulting in higher transport costs and higher prices for goods.

## **2. Report from the International Maritime Bureau (IMB)**

The IMB is the specialised department of the International Chamber of Commerce with global responsibility for the fighting of crimes related to maritime trades and transportation.

Between January – December 2023, the IMB reported 120 incidents, globally, of piracy and robbery against vessels, compared to 115 in 2022.

Included in the 120 incidents in 2023 was the first successful hijacking of a vessel since 2017 off the coast of Somalia, which remains an area of concern for continuing acts of piracy.

Another area of concern is the Gulf of Guinea where 22 incidents were reported in 2023, compared to 19 in 2022, 35 in 2021 and 81 in 2020. However, despite the reduced trend of incidents in the last two years, in 2023 this area still accounted for three of the four globally reported hijackings, all of the 14 globally reported crew kidnappings and 75% of the reported crew hostages.

So these waters remain dangerous for seafarers.

Another area where seafarers are being assaulted and threatened is South America. During 2023, 14 incidents were reported by vessels at the Calleo anchorage in Peru where 7 crew were taken hostage, and guns and knives were reported in 9 incidents. Other ports affected by piracy and armed robbery in South America were Macapa anchorage in Brazil, and the Cartagena and Puerto Bolivar anchorages in Colombia.

## **3. Report from the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery (ReCAAP)**

In Asian waters, ReCAAP, of which Australia is a signatory, reported a total of 100 incidents of armed robbery in 2023, but nil incidents of piracy. This represents a 19% increase in the total number of incidents compared to 2022. The main

area of concern remains the Strait of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS) where 63 incidents were reported, compared to 55 in 2022.

During the period January – March 2024, 26 incidents of armed robbery were reported during this period, compared to 27 incidents during the corresponding period in 2023.

The number of incidents in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS) decreased by 45% during January – March 2024 compared to the corresponding period in 2023, and the Manila Anchorage in the Philippines also reported a decrease of incidents. However, the waters around Bangladesh, India and Indonesia witnessed an increase of incidents during January – March 2024 compared to the same period in 2023.

The AMWS remains concerned at these levels of assault being perpetrated against innocent seafarers going about their duties to maintain the movement of global trade for the benefit of the world community.



## **SEAFARERS' WELFARE**

*Martin Orchard – AMWS Councillor & Editor*

### **Mission to Seafarers' Happiness Index:**

The Seafarers' Happiness Index (SHI) is a quarterly survey conducted by the Mission to Seafarers' (MtS), London, to gauge the sentiment of seafarers at sea. The survey asks seafarers of different ranks around the world, and serving on various types of vessels, ten key questions. Their anonymous answers provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities facing seafarers.

### **The ten key areas covered by the survey are:**

- General Happiness
- Connectivity
- Shore leave
- Wages
- Food
- Health
- Training
- Interaction
- Workload
- Welfare

The latest SHI indicates an uptick in all these areas experienced by seafarers during the 1st quarter of 2024, compared to the downturn in Overall Happiness recorded in each quarter of 2023. The MtS comment that they saw the declines

during 2023 as less of a trend and more of a constant. So there is relief at the upward trend indicated during the 1st quarter of 2024, but this result has to be viewed as guarded optimism, and is to be seen as an opportunity to pause and reflect on some of the positives.

**From the seafarers' answers to the SHI, the MtS has identified the following ten positive aspects that can make a difference to life at sea:**

- Financial security
- Job satisfaction & Teamwork
- Company support
- Staying connected with family
- Improved well-being
- Shore leave
- Good food & drink
- Training & development
- Positive work environment
- The right mix

**At the same time, whilst there are positives, they can be overlaid by negatives, and the MtS have identified ten negative aspects that have been reported by seafarers:**

- Work-life balance
- Workload & stress
- Living conditions
- Management issues
- Financial pressures
- Social & cultural challenges
- Health & safety concerns
- Limited shore leave
- Connectivity challenges
- Dependence on company policies

The focus and challenge for all stakeholders is to improve the negatives, and to transform the positives into a wider norm.

### **The International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Networks (ISWAN):**

ISWAN is an international maritime charity which works to improve the lives of seafarers and their families with services, resources and advocacy.

ISWAN's annual Seminar was held in Helsinki, Finland, in November 2023. The theme of the Seminar was how the maritime industry was going to successfully recruit and retain skilled seafarers in a digital age who will be needed to operate the decarbonised and automated vessels of the future.

The Seminar developed an action plan that was needed in order to develop

effective solutions to the current recruitment and retention crisis. The Seminar highlighted the importance of listening directly to seafarers.

The plan calls for action in three key areas:

- Fair Work – in order to make the industry sustainable in the longer term, the maritime sector must be willing to invest more in seafarers' working conditions and well-being.
- Inclusive Culture – in order to build more diverse, equitable and inclusive cultures at sea, the maritime industry has to commit to going further than minimum regulatory standards so that the barriers that prevent it from benefiting from a more diverse range of talents and backgrounds can be addressed.
- Changing technologies – Impact on well-being – in order for seafarers to face the challenges presented by technological transformation to their well-being and to make technology work for them, the industry must focus on the effects of onboard connectivity, automation and their progress towards decarbonisation.

As well as listening more closely to what seafarers have to say about their experiences at sea, the theme and action point of the ISWAN Seminar was to urge the industry to convert their insights into practical actions.

The AMWS congratulates and supports the MtS and ISWAN, and other maritime-related organisations, in their current efforts to improve seafarers' well-being and, in so doing, present life at sea as an attractive career to future seafarers.



## GRAHAM LIGHTFOOT AM

In 1991, I received an invitation from the legendary and newly elected chairman, Jim Israel, to join the board of the Sydney Sailors Home (SSH), later renamed in 2002 the Australian Mariners Welfare Society (AMWS). Thus began a very happy thirty-three-year association with the Society and the privilege of working under four quite outstanding chairpersons: Jim Israel, John Hunter, Alan Tait and David Parmeter.

The work of the SSH board in my early days was primarily associated with the day to day running of the newly erected seafarer retirement home, 'Mariners' Court', at Woolloomooloo in Sydney. Due to changing conditions in the Australian seafaring world, the building was later sold. With the name change to AMWS, a new chapter began in its charitable activities.

At all times the focus of our work has been the welfare of seafarers of all nationalities, gender and creeds visiting our shores and beyond. Around 2006 AMWS began developing plans for financial grants to providers of marine welfare including the highly dedicated Mission to Seafarers (MtS) and the Stella Maris.



Graham Lightfoot AM  
with David Parmeter,  
AMWS Chair

Over those years it has been my pleasure to work as the chair of the Grants Committee, and oversee the payment of many hundreds of grants as our policies expanded.

Our initial grant program was aimed at specific projects for such items as mission building renovations, club equipment, electronics, refrigeration, air conditioning, computers and ranging down to smaller items such as coffee machines. Over the years, AMWS was pleased to add policies to cover welfare providers for their quarterly internet charges, new buses, bus tyre replacements, vehicle registration/CTP, and solar and battery installations. As I hand over the Grants Chair to another AMWS Councillor, close to \$3m has been released for

these purposes, including financial assistance to the national offices of MTS and Stella Maris.

Our grant programs, of course, extends well beyond those already mentioned, and it has been a pleasure to see the Malcolm Longstaff Scholarship program to the Marine College in Tasmania, and the Jim Israel award to the tall ship 'Young Endeavour Youth Program' expand and flourish. With the latter, it was always a joy to see our successful young male and female applicants leave and return from their adventurous eleven-day voyage. The positive personal changes to our candidates over those eleven days away were, at times, amazing and heart-warming.

I have been on several not-for-profit boards over the years, and none have given me more satisfaction than my time on the AMWS Council. Adding in the years I also spent on the hardworking Finance/Investment Committee, I attended probably more than 150 meetings. I can honestly say in all that time I have not experienced anything from Councillors other than the clear objective of keeping focussed on the task of seeking out positive outcomes, and the avoidance of combative situations.

My lasting impression of the Organisation I have now left is that, to its great credit, it always started from a position of HOW CAN WE HELP?

*L. Graham Lightfoot*



## **SYDNEY SEAFARERS' WELFARE COMMITTEE**

*Shane Hobday, Immediate Past Chairman*

**B**y way of background the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC) Regulation 4.4 (3) states that "each Member shall encourage the establishment of welfare boards which shall regularly review welfare facilities and services to ensure that they are appropriate in the light of changes in the needs of seafarers resulting





Shane Hobday,  
Immediate Past  
Chairman

from technical, operational and other developments in the shipping industry”.

Australia is a signatory to the MLC and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), is the federal government agency responsible for implementing the Convention. AMSA has been very active over many years in encouraging the establishment and supporting the ongoing operation of Seafarer Welfare Committees in all commercial ports.

The Sydney Seafarer Welfare Committee has been meeting on a regular basis for more than 15 years to consider the welfare needs of seafarers calling in Sydney Harbour and Port Botany. Currently the membership of the Committee includes representatives from the following organisations:

**Seafarer Welfare:**

- Mission to Seafarers
- Stella Maris
- Seafarers’ Christian Friend Society
- Australian Mariners Welfare Society
- Jehovah’s Witness Sydney Harbour Ministry
- International Transport Federation and the Tas Bull Seafarers Foundation (Seafarer Connect)

**Federal Government Agencies:**

- AMSA and Australian Border Force.

**State Government Agency:**

- Port Authority of NSW

**Port Operators:**

- NSW Ports, Patricks, Hutchison and DP World

**Other Organisations:**

- Shipping Australia and Hunterlink,

The Committee meets on a quarterly basis and continued to meet (virtually) throughout the Covid period, with strong attendance levels.

It is arguable that the regular focus on seafarer welfare and the relationships developed through the meetings of the Committee have assisted in the development and implementation of a number of welfare initiatives such as:

- a) the seafarer vaccination program;
- b) shopping delivered to the ship’s gangway during Covid;
- c) free Maritime Security Identification Cards for Chaplains and;
- d) free wifi on ships in port (initiative of Tas Bull Foundation)

In addition, the Committee continues to examine opportunities to improve and adapt welfare services, recognising the changing needs as well as remove barriers to the efficient delivery of those services.

After seven years as Chair of the Committee, it is pleasing to be able to hand the baton to an enthusiastic senior operations manager in the Port Authority of NSW. This change will hopefully strengthen the Committee's relationship with the stevedores. Coincidentally, it is also consistent with the Australian Seafarers' Welfare Council recently released draft Port Welfare Committee Terms of Reference.



*The seafarer vaccination program*

In preparing and implementing the proposed Terms of Reference, the caution is to avoid being too prescriptive and bureaucratic as these Committees only survive on the goodwill of the members, and that goodwill is limited in the cut and thrust

of day to day port operations.

The Seafarer Welfare Committee is a critical part of highlighting the needs of seafarers visiting the port to the wider port community, developing practical strategies to address those needs and supporting the work of the welfare organisations.

*Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are solely those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of Sydney Seafarer Welfare Committee or any other organisation which the writer is involved.*



## **MALCOLM LONGSTAFF'S MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP CAN BE LIFE-CHANGING**

*Llew Russell AM – AMWS Councillor & Chair of the Scholarship Committee*

The AMWS Scholarship Committee was very pleased to receive five scholarship applications for semester one from the University of Tasmania's Scholarships Section for Students studying at the Australian Maritime College in Launceston. All applications met the criteria in the AMWS Constitution of being children of seafarers or ex-seafarers. However, only two included in their applications the criteria of being of low or moderate financial means.

They were awarded scholarships of \$3000 each for this semester. Both Tobias and Max are studying for a Bachelor of Applied Science (Nautical Science) with the objective of becoming a Master Mariner. Two other applicants studying marine engineering subjects are being encouraged to consider applying for scholarships for semester two, and to include reference to their financial status in their applications.

As the Philanthropy Manager (Northern Projects) at the University wrote "The need for scholarships and bursaries to enable talented and hard-working students to reach their potential remains high, and with your (the AMWS') continued

**"This scholarship has given me a renewed sense of confidence and determination to excel in my chosen field of study."**

support, the sky is the limit”.

As Tobias included in a letter he wrote to the AMWS:

“It truly means the world to me and I am incredibly honored to have been chosen as a recipient. Receiving this scholarship has provided me with a great sense of relief and security, knowing that I have the financial support to pursue my studies at the AMC.

“Thanks to this generous scholarship, I can now focus wholeheartedly on my education and make the most of the opportunities that lie ahead. Not only does this scholarship alleviate the financial burden, but it also serves as a tremendous motivation for me to continue striving for excellence in my academic pursuits. It reinforces my belief that hard work, dedication and perseverance are recognised and rewarded. This scholarship has given me a renewed sense of confidence and determination to excel in my chosen field of study.”

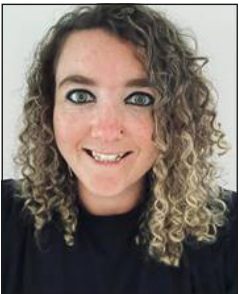
I am sure that the long serving AMWS Councillor, the late Malcolm Longstaff, would have indeed been proud of this recipient.



## STS YOUNG ENDEAVOUR

### A Voyage of a Lifetime

*Peta Binns, Marketing & Communications Support Officer,  
Young Endeavour Youth Scheme*



*Peta Binns*

A voyage in Sail Training Ship *Young Endeavour* (STS YE) is fun, but it’s not a relaxing holiday; Youthies step into a new world at sea and are required to be an active member of a crew and contribute to the voyage. Youthies are told to be prepared to face fears, push themselves, and rise to new challenges.

Twenty-four Youthies join an 11-day voyage, from all parts of Australia and all walks of life. Together they learn the skills to sail a tall ship – including taking the helm, handling lines, keeping watch, navigating, and climbing the 30-metre mast.

The youth crew learn all this knowledge and new skills under the guidance of trained Royal Australian Navy crew who were specially selected for the job.

By the end of voyages, Youthies take on the ultimate challenge, and take command of the ship for 24 hours. The Staffies have a well-earned day off in the mess but remain nearby in case they are needed.

Since 1988, more than 14,000 young Australians aged between 16-23 years have sailed in STS YE, taking part in a unique youth development experience that helps participants develop self-awareness and confidence, and gives them an opportunity to grow their teamwork and leadership skills through sail training and self-development activities.



*STS Young Endeavour*



STS *YE* was constructed in 1986-87 in Lowestoft, England, and embarked on her maiden voyage to Australia on 3 August 1987. STS *YE* was formally gifted to the Australian people in Sydney Harbour on 25 January 1988. Since then, STS *YE* has circumnavigated Australia four times and twice sailed around the world.

The 35-year-old brigantine, STS *YE*, will continue to sail Youthies around our shores until the youth development program is transferred to a new, larger, state-of-the-art vessel, that is currently under construction.

The new ship, designed by Dykstra Naval Architects, will be a barquentine rig, with square sails rigged on the foremast and fore-and-aft sails rigged on the fore, main and mizzen masts (yes, three masts!).

Like our current STS *YE*, the new ship is expected to be steel hulled, have timber deck covering, and be rigged with aluminium masts and spars. The new ship will accommodate up to 42 youth crew on each voyage and will also be able to undertake more voyages per year... meaning more young Australians will be able to access this unique development program!

To all Youthies joining us soon: good luck, enjoy the journey and keep safe. It's an adventure like no other.



## THE AMWS JIM ISRAEL MEMORIAL 'YOUNG ENDEAVOUR' AWARD

*Graham Lightfoot AM, AMWS Councillor*



*Jaydon (left) wishing Hayden 'bon voyage'.*

Although the youth programme for the tall ship, 'Young Endeavour,' is currently in abeyance due to onboard maintenance issues, it is pleasing to report that our most recent candidate, Hayden, returned full of enthusiasm for his experiences on the eleven day voyage.

Hayden departed in late January and was farewelled at HMAS Waterhen by family members, friends and AMWS Councillor, Chris Green. Included in the farewell party was a friend, Jaydon, who was a recipient of one of our earlier 'Young Endeavour' awards. Jaydon summed up his personal experience aboard as the "best experience of his life".

After a successful voyage, AMWS was pleased to receive a written letter from Hayden summing up his time aboard:

"I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for the incredible experience I had aboard the 'Young Endeavour'. The adventure was truly transforming and I am deeply grateful for

the opportunity to have been part of such a remarkable journey.

“From navigating the open seas to learning the ropes of sailing, every moment was filled with valuable lessons and unforgettable memories. The challenges faced together as a team helped me grow, and I am so grateful for the guidance and support of the crew throughout the voyage.

“The skills and lessons I learned aboard the ‘Young Endeavour’ will stay with me for a lifetime, and I am so grateful for the opportunity to have been part of such a programme.

“Thank you for everything you do to inspire and empower young people like me to discover their full potential.”

The AMWS congratulates Hayden, and looks forward to supporting many young people like him in the future.



## SEAFARER CRIMINALISATION

*Martin Orchard - AMWS Councillor & Editor*

Last April, the International Maritime Organisation’s (IMO) Legal Committee met in London to finalise guidelines on the fair treatment of seafarers detained on suspicion of committing crimes.

The objective of these Guidelines is to ensure that seafarers are treated fairly during any investigation and detention by jurisdictions, other than that of the seafarers’ nationality, on suspicion of committing crimes during their employment on board a ship.

Criminalisation continues to be one of the most serious problems facing seafarers, and has occurred where seafarers have been detained as suspects of maritime crimes, for instance the smuggling of illicit cargo, or anchoring illegally whilst awaiting clearance for entering a port.

The International Maritime Organisation’s (IMO) and the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) Guidelines on the fair treatment of seafarers in the event of a maritime accident were adopted in 2006. Many countries follow these guidelines, but many countries do not, and the International Transport Federation (ITF) wishes to see them more widely promoted and enforced.

However, maritime crimes are not covered by these Guidelines concerning the fair treatment of seafarers.

As a result of the work carried out by the ITF, working alongside industry partners, the IMO’s Legal Committee has made the criminalisation of seafarers part of its work programme and is currently seeking to widely promote these Guidelines.

Another party involved in this subject is the Seafarers’ Rights International (SRI).

Criminalisation continues to be one of the most serious problems facing seafarers.

SRI is a non-profit organisation that was founded in 2010, and from that date has conducted strategic research in support of an efficient and fair maritime industry, and the decent employment of seafarers. Criminalisation of seafarers has been a focus of its work.

For instance, in 2018 SRI carried out a face-to-face survey of 5,200 seafarers in 10 labour supplying countries concerning their working conditions. In this survey, almost 83% of respondents expressed concern about criminalisation in connection with incidents related to their work, such as fatal accidents, marine pollution and drugs discovered on ships.

Through the IMO Legal Committee, Governments can obtain assistance to implement the Guidelines. SRI can also supply countries with technical assistance.

Seafarers have the right to be treated fairly in all legal jurisdictions following a maritime incident. The Guidelines are voluntary, but they seek to balance the rights and obligations of all stakeholders, including port or coastal States, flag States, the seafarers' States, shipowners and seafarers, to ensure the fair treatment of seafarers, and to avoid their criminalisation in the future.



## MERCHANT NAVY WAR MEMORIAL

*David Parmeter – AMWS Chair*

**O**n 14th April, 2024, the 59th Annual Commemoration was held at the Merchant Navy War Memorial in Rookwood Cemetery, Sydney. This event is held to honour the memory of Australian Merchant Mariners who gave their lives in the service of our nation in the two world wars. This year's Commemoration was extremely important as it marked the official opening of the new and remedial works at the Memorial.



*The upgraded Memorial*

Photograph  
by David Parmeter

This has been a major project undertaken by the Merchant Navy War Memorial Fund (MNWMF). The existing Merchant Navy Memorial site with Columbarium and surrounded by the Merchant Navy Rose Garden, was granted to the MNWMF by the Church of England Cemetery Trust in 1947.

The 'remedial' part of the works involved a tasteful and respectful updating of the Memorial.

The 'new' works are very significant as they involve the installation of four brass plaques bearing the names and respective ships of all 862 Australian Merchant Mariners who made the supreme sacrifice: 184 in World War One and 678 in World War Two. Their names will live for evermore.

I am delighted to report that AMWS was one of the major sponsors of the works.

The Memorial Service was very well attended with a wide range of maritime



*The NSW Governor with  
Mr. David Field, Immediate  
Past Chairman of MNWM*

Photograph  
by David Parmeter

industry organisations, concerned individuals and relatives of veterans represented. All were given the opportunity to place wreaths on the Memorial as a sign of their respect and regard. I attended in conjunction with our immediate past Chair Captain Alan Tait.

The new and remedial works were officially opened by Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley, AC, KC, Governor of NSW, who delivered the keynote address. The Governor's speech acknowledged the gallant service of Merchant Mariners in wartime and the vital role played by the Merchant Navy of all combatants in ensuring allied victory in World War Two.

One remarkable person present was Don Kennedy, the Veterans' Advisor to MNWMF. Don is a Merchant Navy veteran from WW2 and is still hale and hearty. He delivered the Ode of Remembrance:

*They have no grave but the cruel sea;  
No flowers lay at their head;  
A rusting hulk is their tombstone, afast on the ocean bed.  
They shall not grow old, as we who are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them or the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning;  
We will remember them.  
LEST WE FORGET*



## **AMWS' CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS SEAFARERS' WELFARE**

*Martin Orchard – AMWS Councillor & Editor*

**T**he AMWS focus remains on the welfare of seafarers, whilst at sea or ashore, to ensure they can go about their task of ensuring the world trade is moved in a safe and efficient manner.

In addition, AMWS provides assistance and relief towards the welfare of past, present and future seafarers in Australia in the following ways:

- Provision of subsidised home-unit accommodation for ex-seafarers of modest means.
- Annual grants to the Mission to Seafarers and Apostleship of the Sea (Stella Maris) in recognition of their offering a 'home way from home' for visiting mariners at around 40 centres around the Australian coast.
- Project grants to assist with the upkeep and improvement to these centres including, but not limited to, IT facilities, storm damage, maintenance of the centres' buses to transport visiting seafarers between their vessel and the local

centre.

- Offering maritime scholarships to those studying to become qualified seafarers. Plus tall-ship training experience to young people aged 15-19 years who meet AMWS eligibility criteria.
- 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 and Newcastle Port Welfare Committees.

During the calendar year of 2023, the grants approved by AMWS for the Mission to Seafarers (MtS) and Stella Maris totalled almost \$211,000 to contribute towards major cost items incurred in their various stations.

In addition, in 2023 AMWS paid out almost \$49,000 in the form of welfare payments to MtS and Stella Maris' stations around the Australian coast to assist the management of these stations to continue to provide ongoing support of visiting seafarers to Australian ports.

In 2024, during the three month period ending 31st March, AMWS approved over \$35,000 in grants, and a further \$9,000 to MtS and Stella Maris' stations around the coast as a contribution towards the costs associated with communications and the maintenance of their buses.



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## **AMWS' WEBSITE**

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





## AMWS MEMBERSHIP – JUNE 2024

The Hon James Allsop AC  
Captain Ian Anderson  
Mr Karl Andersson  
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Mr Martin Orchard  
Mr David Parmeter  
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Captain Richard Pocock  
Captain Adam Roberts  
Mr Llew Russell AM  
Mr Conrad Saldanha  
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Mr Michael Taman  
Mr Jordan Tofler  
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