
Maritime industry set to make some noise on Day of the Seafarer

As an island nation, Australia is dependent on shipping and the international and domestic seafarers that work these ships. More than 90% of trade is conducted by sea, with approximately 1.9 million seafarers currently at sea. June 25 is the International Day of the Seafarer and on this day, Maritime Industry Australia Ltd (MIAL) urges the Australian States and Territories to recognise seafarers as key workers to facilitate crews changing over.

Currently, seafarers are not recognised as key workers by the Australian Government and there continues to be extreme challenges faced by the industry in conducting crew changes for domestic and international seafarers. Ensuring timely and efficient crew change is critically important to maintain seafarer wellbeing and ensure safe operation of vessels.

The domestic border closures within Australia are unworkable for crew changes with some seafarers enduring six rounds of 14 day hotel quarantine in the last 12 months. Prolonged time on board, multiple and extended periods of quarantine leading to unprecedented separation from family and loved ones during what is a very difficult time for many, has taken a major toll on the mental wellbeing of seafarers. This in turn risks the safety of ships and their crews as fatigue kicks in.

MIAL has been advocating on behalf of the Australian maritime industry throughout this difficult period to highlight to government the particular and unique challenges faced. MIAL is very concerned that despite strong calls from the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the UN General Assembly, the Australian government has not joined other IMO Member States in designating seafarers as key workers.

In March 2021, MIAL and Hunterlink – an employee assistance provider, undertook an Australian Seafarer Welfare Survey. The results indicated that:

- The majority of Australian seafarers (65%) reported feeling less valued by their Government now compared to before COVID-19, with 39% of respondents indicating they felt *much less* valued
- The seafarers indicated that designating them as essential workers would enhance their sense of value

Teresa Lloyd, MIAL CEO says:

“Whilst it would be valuable for the Federal Government to declare seafarers as key workers, Australia’s complex border system, means that it is the State Governments and Territories who we call upon to declare seafarers’ as key workers. They must recognise the value and sacrifice seafarers have continued to make throughout COVID-19 allowing Australians to sustain their lifestyle during a global pandemic.”

To highlight the plight of seafarers, the global shipping industry will commemorate the Day of the Seafarer with a ‘Sounding of the Ships’ Horns’ at 12 noon local time. #ShoutOutForSeafarers #Dayoftheseafarer. A number of MIAL members will be participating.

ENDS



Teresa Lloyd, MIAL CEO *Video: Svitzer Tug performing Tug Ballet in Port of Newcastle, International Day of the Seafarer 2020*

Notes to editors

- The Day of the Seafarer was first celebrated in 2011, following its establishment by a resolution adopted by the Conference of Parties to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, held in Manila, Philippines, in June 2010, which adopted major revisions to the STCW Convention and Code. The Day of the Seafarer has now been included in the annual list of United Nations Observances.¹
- Maritime Industry Australia Ltd (MIAL) in conjunction with Hunterlink undertook the Australian Seafarers Welfare Survey in March 2021, the report can be found [here](#).
- Of the world's 1.7 million seafarers, 900,000 are from developing nations, where vaccines might not be available for all until 2024
- Last year's campaign brought the crew change crisis to the world's attention. Almost a year on, the number of crew impacted by the governments' border restrictions has halved to 200,000.
- To aid in the global seafarer vaccination effort, ICS has published a Vaccination Roadmap to help establish seafarer vaccination hubs, and follow the example set by Singapore, Antwerp, Rotterdam, and across the United States.
- Governments must declare seafarers' keyworkers, ensure seafarers are given the rights of keyworkers, and vaccinate seafarers delivering at their ports.
- They must recognise the value and sacrifice seafarers have made throughout the pandemic while supplying the world with food, fuel, and critical PPE.

Further information

If you would like to film a ship sounding its horn, or interviews please contact:
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About Maritime Industry Australia Ltd

Maritime Industry Australia Ltd (MIAL) represent the collective interests of maritime businesses, primarily those operating maritime assets or facilities from Australia. MIAL is uniquely positioned to provide dedicated maritime expertise and advice, and is driven to promote a sustainable, vibrant and competitive Australian maritime industry and to expand the Australian maritime industry.

¹ <https://www.imo.org/en/About/Events/Pages/Day-of-the-Seafarer.aspx>