



# QUEENSLAND BRANCH NEWS

NEWSLETTER of the QLD Branch of the MARITIME UNION of AUSTRALIA

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To be truly radical is to make hope possible, rather than despair convincing - Raymond Williams

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Automation in Ports - Special Report - CSL Thevenard Crew Dumped - ATIVO EBA - ASP EBA  
Weipa Visit - Amrun Project - Penalty Rates - Super Returns - Shirts for Sale

## SPECIAL REPORT

### Automation in Ports and Labour Relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

*ON STARTING TO read this report, some members will no doubt think Bob has become a little unhinged. However, the reason I have put it out in its entirety is due to its importance and the coming avalanche of automation in the industries we cover.*

*So, this report is important. All terminal and bulk and general areas will be sent five hard copies so delegates and committee members can peruse and debate. Ships and towage areas will also be sent hard copies.*

*The International Dockworkers Council commissioned this report which was put together by two highly regarded European academics.*

*One of them, Raquel Varela will be one of our keynote speakers at our Get Wise, Organise Conference in November 2017.*

*In part of this study, which is the mathematical analysis, clearly concludes and I quote, "the automation process is not profitable for the operators nor the State, and it is CATASTROPHIC for each local country as a whole. Automation is VERY PROFITABLE for the corporations producing automated systems and detrimental for all other agents. Only when there are hidden factors related to labour restructuring viewed globally..... does this process of automation make some sense for the capital owners."*

*Part II of this document deals with precarious employment and the role of the State and takes, for example, the nation of Portugal. It is, I think very interesting on how the Welfare State Model has been eroded by deliberate policies of the State.*

*Bob Carnegie - Branch Secretary*

Please click on this link to access the comprehensive report on automation:

<https://gallery.mailchimp.com/e9081ab83098f019dc350d4e6/files/0c334d13-de8d-43e9-8d37-2345d0b120c6/studyAutomation.pdf>

IF ANY MEMBER/VESSEL WISH FOR A HARD COPY, PLEASE CONTACT THE BRANCH.  
**CSL Thevenard Crew Dumped as Turnbull Government and Shippers Crush Freight Rates**  
ON THE 4TH JULY CSL notified the MUA that the CSL Thevenard would be leaving the coast and not returning to its trade as had been committed to by the company. This crushing blow to the industry and workers is part of the ongoing and systematic political and economic attack on Australian shipping.



The CSL Thevenard has left the coast for the very same reasons as we have seen other Australian crewed vessels leave. The ease with which a Temporary Licence is available to shippers and shipowner's beggars' belief. The bottom line is that since the Federal Court ruled that freight rates are a viable basis for the issuance of Temporary Licences, after CSL's abortive Federal Court challenge around the primacy of General Licence ships, the opportunity for the big bulk commodity shippers and shipping companies has been to choose the easy and cheaper shipping path that was laid out for them by the court and Government policy settings. This has led to massive open competition, which never advantages the worker, and a consequential reduction in general freight rates.

The fact that we have vital Australian industry policy determined by the courts on the basis of maximising profits for shippers and shipowners speaks volumes about the Turnbull Government's commitment to maintaining national economic control let alone protection for a vital industry. Make no mistake this is a matter of wilful Government activity that prefers low cost high exploitation foreign shipping operations. The Turnbull Government prefers this approach because their corporate masters demand a position that maximises profits regardless of the fact that the wealth created in these operations invariably flows offshore into the pockets of foreign multi-nationals.

The MUA has now met with CSL on two occasions in Australia. The MUA, led by National Secretary Paddy Crumlin will proceed to another meeting with the company CEO, Louis Martel on the 20<sup>th</sup> July. In that discussion, the MUA will be accompanied by the Seafarers International Union (SIU) from Canada, our fraternal union, who have a direct relationship with CSL and have been advocating to CSL the need to repair the relationship in Australia in the interests of Australian seafarers.

The MUA has identified to CSL that one of our major issues is the ability of workers from the CSL Thevenard to be transferred to the either the Donnacona or the CSL Whyalla. This will be a large part of the focus of the meeting with the CSL CEO on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

The company have committed to defer the redundancy process until after the meeting with the global CEO on July 20. A range of matters need to be sorted out with CSL and the union is using whatever influence we have to prosecute these arguments within the company.

The MUA has raised the issue of who will be targeted for a redundancy from the Thevenard. It is unfair and even discriminatory that only Australian ratings (MUA members) receive redundancy while CSL's host of imported Visa workers are immune from any downturn in shipping. This must be addressed.

The MUA is undertaking a comprehensive legal analysis of this visa situation with a view to legally challenging the 457 redundancy immunity, redundancy processes, roles and classifications as well as validity of 457 visa labour.

Support has been forthcoming from the ACTU and a range of ALP politicians with statements coming out from Anthony Albanese, Justine Keay and Glenn Sterle. The union is also raising this issue of the Thevenard and the general state of the shipping industry with cross-benchers and industry bodies advocating the requirement for a political and legislative fix of shipping laws that promote the primacy of General Licenced shipping.

The MUA will be conducting inspections of CSL's operations in Cape Preston at the Citic site and on the CSL Whyalla. Working conditions aboard the Donnacona and CSL Whyalla are reportedly very poor with a range

of WHS issues that need attention as well as general conditions of work.

Our immediate goals with CSL are to see the workers from the CSL Thevenard transferred to other operations that are also covered by MUA agreements. Further to this we are seeking agreement from the company on a system that ties CSL into utilising General Licence vessels with MUA crews and that any FOC usage is based on averaging out the freight rates to ensure that Australian seafarers remain viably in work on the coast.

The longer term fix is being addressed through the multitude of actions emanating from the union's shipping campaign which aims to reconstruct the regulatory and legislative environment for Australian shipping to flourish and grow. This is ultimately a political battle which the MUA will not shy away from. A further report will be issued following the Canada meeting.

### **ATIVO EBA**

INTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS FOR a new EBA took place over two days on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of July in the union rooms.

These discussions were held in an atmosphere of getting an EBA done efficiently and quickly and giving certainty to, most importantly, our members and secondly the client.

It is pleasing to note that we have touched hands on an Agreement that:

- 1 has income protection guaranteed based at 2%
- 2 delivers pay rises ahead of inflation
- 3 has definitive improvements in redundancy provisions

The Branch pays tribute to the work of delegate Shaun Bolton, Brett Stokes alongside co-delegate Mick Ryan. Their work, prior to these discussions was outstanding and make it possible to get a landing subject to members endorsement.

### **ASP EBA**

A RECENT MEETING was held in the Queensland Branch union office between delegates, Branch and National officials.

After two days of often heated discussion, the parties eventually met on an, in principle, Agreement. Jason Miners will be heavily involved in the drafting process and once that is complete we will go onboard for meetings and eventually to a vote.

The Branch congratulates all parties involved on reaching an Agreement in this difficult climate. This EBA covers the four RTM vessels on the Gladstone Weipa run and Investigator which is a research vessel.

### **Weipa Report**

BRANCH SECRETARY, BOB Carnegie and Deputy, Jason Miners visited Weipa as part of the Branch commitment to members ensuring they see an elected official at least every 6 months.

Well attended meetings took place with the towage members in Weipa who were happy to hear of the struggles and successes of the Branch.

A comprehensive report was delivered on the extensive work the Branch is doing to protect its towage members and the fight for fair industrial outcomes during the enterprise bargaining periods under heightened pressure from unsafe operators and principal contractors.

The members gave the Branch a clear mandate to pursue their expectations to maintain and increase their industrial standards. *Jason Miners – Deputy Branch Secretary*

### **Amrun Project**

The visit saw a review of the difficulty faced by all unions, organising workers in such a remote area, which has largely been non union since the mid 1990s.

The Amrun Project has the rogue operations of Bhagwan dominating the maritime area of the project paying UNDER AWARD rates which put the financially troubled operation in the box seat as soon as Rio Tinto and Bechtel colluded to exclude all unions from a "heads of agreement EBA" which has always previously prevailed.

The remote locality and reluctance of unions to waste members resources on the Amrun Project is why, on already limited and reduced resources, the Branch has not targeted Amrun where Bhagwan enjoy a below Award non union Agreement in Queensland unlike other parts of the country.

We must learn from not taking a national approach to inshore outfits such as Bhagwan as they have singlehandedly destroyed the inshore maritime industry in the unsafe and unfair race to the bottom where workers across many maritime employers miss out to unsafe, unfair practices in arguably the lowest period the industry has faced. *Jason Miners – Deputy Branch Secretary*

### **Support Penalty Rates for All Workers**

GIVE THE WYNNUM Leagues Club and Wynnum Workers Club a swerve. I know several of our members enjoy a beer in both the above clubs, so it is with some regret that I inform members that both of these clubs have refused to sign off on respecting their employees penalty rates.

Last Thursday I was in contact with the leadership of United Voice who confirmed the above is definitely the case.

Over the next few weeks, we will be holding a series of meetings to get a determination from members about what you want to do about this so a general consensus can be built up and a powerful message sent to these clubs to do the right thing by their workers.

### **Strong Returns for Super**

THE MARITIME SUPER fund has delivered strong results for its members in the latest financial year. The Growth option has returned 12.34% and Balanced 10.44%.

Australian superannuation funds have overcome 12 months riven with political and economic uncertainty to post an eighth consecutive year of growth.

The gains came despite the potential fallout from the UK's shock Brexit vote in late June, 2016, Donald Trump's surprising election victory in November and persistent expectations of interest rate rises in the US.

On the face of it, those concerns would have been enough to keep share market investors in particular very cautious, but instead we've seen share markets reacting optimistically.

Industry funds outperformed retail funds in 2016/17, with their heavier investments in private equity, unlisted property and unlisted infrastructure performing well and providing some insulation from volatility in other asset classes.

Industry funds were also stronger over the long-term, with returns one per cent higher over the last 15 years.

Allocations to unlisted assets do mean slightly higher investment costs, but those extra costs have been more than justified by the better performance and lower volatility. To discuss superannuation, contact Jim Atley from Maritime Super Financial Planning 07 3399 3775.

### **Queensland Branch Polo Shirts for Sale**

We now have a selection of black or navy polo shirts with the Queensland Branch logo.



The shirts look great and are \$35 each available at the Branch. You can also pay for postage and call the Branch to have one sent to you.

### **Branch Officials Details**

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### Show Your Support for Sugar Cane Workers



Workers at the giant Haft Tapeh sugar cane plantation and mill complex in the southern Iranian city of Shush formed an independent union in 2008 following a 42-day strike to demand long-standing wage arrears. Union leaders have endured arrest, prison and blacklisting.

Today, the workers and their union again face repression as they demonstrate to claim massive wage and benefit arrears.

Conditions have worsened since the company was privatized in a murky deal in 2015 whose details have never been fully brought to light. Since October last year, workers have had to repeatedly hold strikes and demonstrations to demand payment of wages and benefits, most recently in June this year.

Thousands of workers have not been paid their wages for two

months and as many as four. Pension benefits have been suspended in recent months because of the company's failure to pay into the state social security scheme. Over half the plantation and mill workers have no permanent employment contracts and live in a state of permanent insecurity. Current and retired workers and their family members have been harassed and threatened with closure of the company if they continue to demand their rights. Workers are routinely harassed, dismissed and kept under constant surveillance of the security forces.

The Haft Tapeh workers and their union are demanding full payment of wage and benefit arrears; recognition of the union as the workers' legal representative; and the company's return to government ownership.

**Please take a moment to support the IUF's campaign to demand justice for these workers:**

<http://www.labourstart.org/go/haft>

And please *share this message* with your friends, family and fellow union members. Thank you!