

**Resolutions of  
the Bluewater  
Seafarers  
Commission  
11 – 14  
December  
2016**

## Resolution One

This Bluewater Seafarers Commission (“the Commission”):

- Prioritises job security and safety of those engaged in the Bluewater industry.
- Notes and endorses the political, legal, industrial and policy reports presented over the course of the Commission.
- Notes the campaign initiatives that have been undertaken to date in support of the retention of Australian crewed ships in the Australian coastal trade.
- Acknowledges the commitment and sacrifices of many rank and file members who have been at the forefront of struggles.
- Notes the policy, lobbying, industry liaison, legal, industrial and communications strategies the union has recently undertaken. The Commission acknowledges that these have been aimed at ceasing the loss of Australian ships and providing a foundation for better shipping and freight policy/legislation. Noting the overall goal being to ensure a role for Australian seafarers in Australian shipping who can enjoy job security and decent work.
- Commits to developing a clear, unambiguous legal and policy agenda leading towards the next Federal election, and to continue to target marginal and regional seats of Parliament.
- Want to retain and expand the merchant fleet and increase tonnage, with realistic wages and conditions.
- Acknowledges the support of our political allies, other unions, the ACTU, State Labour Councils and the community, in support of Australian jobs in Australian shipping.
- Commits to improving our communications with Indigenous and Torres Strait Islanders and to increasing their employment in the industry.
- Commits to educating the public about the role that the merchant fleet plays in military conflict.
- Expresses concern in regards to the increasing:
  - Foreign control of Australian shipping;
  - Excessive use of foreign labour on ships in coastal shipping; and
  - Declinature of the maritime skills base and adverse consequences for national security, Defence support, fuel security, national freight transport policy and the marine environment from the critical decline in Australian participation in coastal shipping.
- Commits to rebuilding the Australian shipping industry as a national strategic industry that plays an important economic and strategic role in Australia’s future.

- Endorses and commits to implementing an MUA shipping policy and campaign strategy that is based on the following policy principles:
  - The primacy of General Licensed [GL] (Australian crewed) ships in the Australian coastal trade i.e. to retention of a policy of national maritime cabotage;
  - A workable and effective Australian International Shipping Register (AISR) on condition that such ships cannot undermine GL ships, as a means to extend Australian content in Australian shipping;
  - Consistent policy application to both interstate and intrastate shipping; and
  - The right of Australian seafarers to job security and decent wages and conditions.
- Accepts that a national shipping policy that maximises Australian participation in Australian shipping, which ensures shipping services are competitive and efficient, requires a commitment by all stakeholders to ensure its success and sustainability. We expect a strong role to be played by Government in providing a regulatory, fiscal and industry policy framework to grow Australian content in Australian shipping.
- Notes the Coastal Trading Green Paper prepared by MIAL and accepts it as a helpful contribution to assist Government in considering improvement to Australian shipping policy, noting that the MUA will be contributing its own policy proposals to Government and will strongly advocate for MUA policy outcomes.
- Makes a commitment to help strengthen support for the union's policy and legislative objectives for Australian shipping at the political level, within the industry, amongst other unions and in the community.
- Makes a commitment to campaign on the job and in the community to defend Australian seafaring employment, along with an acknowledgement that our members are responsible for this as caretakers of the industry.
- Commits to showcase Australian seafaring to the world.
- Commits to adopting a bargaining strategy aimed at securing seafaring employment over the long-term, which incorporates a process of continuous improvement in delivering productive and efficient ships that meet the needs of the owner/operator and their clients. To also adopt an approach which helps reduce the cost gap between Australian and international shipping in coastal trades.
- Supports any new jobs in the maritime industry. However, it is acknowledged that the proposed container terminal in Burnie, in Tasmania, whilst creating a small amount of local jobs would have detrimental effect on the Bass Strait Shipping services. We believe a full assessment of the proposed terminal should be conducted by federal and state politicians, putting the interest of Australian seafarers currently working on these services before the interests of large foreign multi-nationals.

## **Resolution Two**

To assist unemployed seafarers this Bluewater Seafarers Commission calls on:

- Members to take excessive leave;
- The MUA to assist unemployed seafarers where possible when they are not at sea, into associated activities; and
- Officials to negotiate with employers to use the database for all reliefs outside the members in the red.

## **Resolution Three**

This Bluewater Seafarers Commission (“the Commission”):

- Calls on the MUA to provide regular updates via its website and newsletters.
- Acknowledges the importance of officials’ onsite visits. The officials hereby make a commitment to increase their physical presence on site.
- Delegates make a commitment to undertake delegate training within the next twelve months.
- Makes a commitment to re-engage with the membership with the view to collectively activate, increase and educate members and new crew, on our union’s history, political engagement, representation and blue water shipping.
- Acknowledges the importance of sharing the information learned during the Commission with family members, the community and the rank and file, and commits to doing same.

## **Resolution Four**

This Bluewater Seafarers Commission:

- Stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters of the SIU Canada in their battle with Woodward over the re-flagging of their vessels to the Marshall Islands (an FOC Country) and the loss of 104 Canadian seafaring jobs just before Christmas. The local workers, mainly from Newfoundland, are maintaining a picket in the harshest of Canadian winter conditions and we send our support across the oceans.

The maintaining of Cabotage laws where they exist and establishment of strong Cabotage laws where they don’t exist, should be a high priority for any government. The MUA through its work on the ITF Cabotage taskforce commits to supporting our brothers and sisters in Newfoundland and anywhere around the world where profit is put before local workers jobs. We condemn Woodward for this move.

## **Resolution Five**

This Bluewater Seafarers Commission (“the Commission”):

- Acknowledges the significant work by the ITF both internationally and more closely the Australian inspectorate. The ITF has supported the MUA’s campaign for Cabotage and an improved coastal shipping policy by highlighting the dangers and impropriety of Flag of convenience vessels.

The ITF support has included a senate inquiry into so-called flag of convenience shipping and the targeted inspections of vessels on temporary licenses that have replaced Australian crewed vessels on coastal trade.

There has been incredible support from the International affiliates of the MUA in their campaign and we endorse this work to continue through the Seafarers section and the ITF Cabotage taskforce.

The Commission would like to thank ITF Australian inspectorate for their tireless work in exposing the inhumane and often illegal dealings of FOC vessels on the Australian coast with a special mention of the investigation into the tragedy on the Sage Sagittarius.

The Commission supports the work of the ITF and the union’s affiliation with the ITF including support for Paddy Crumlin as the president of the federation.

## **Resolution Six**

This Bluewater Seafarers Commission (“the Commission”):

- Commits not to disparage or defame other members or officials on public forums. Further, the Commission notes that the Maritime Union of Australia will not countenance in any form of intimidation by any member, official or employee of the union in any forum.

This Commission notes that there is an ongoing review of the union’s policies and rules on dealing with assaults, threats, intimidation, bullying and harassment in any form and also on dealing with vexatious content on social media, emails, texts or voice message. It needs to be clearly stated that the Maritime Union of Australia will not countenance in any form these intimidations by any member, official or employee of the union in any forum.

In line with the leading role this union has historically taken in opposing all forms of abuse, bullying and harassment in the workplace and with our continued determination to remove these types of behaviour and to protect any and all workers subject to them whether in our union, the maritime workplaces or in the community, it is resolved that we take whatever actions are available to the union under our rules and under the law to protect any member, official, or employee from these attacks regardless of whether these are in person, on social media or via text or voice message, email, or phone.

## **Resolution Seven**

This Bluewater Seafarers Commission (“the Commission”):

- Congratulates the ETU, the AMWU and the 55 Carlton United Brewery (“CUB”) workers on their victory in returning to work on 12 December 2016, and endorses the union’s continued ongoing support to comrades of the ETU and AMWU.

The Commission wishes to recognise the significant strategic campaign by the unions and the movement as a whole, which effectively implemented a widespread consumer boycott which saw thousands of members of the community condemn the actions of CUB. Employers are constantly changing tactics to deny workers the right to decent pay and conditions, which was highlighted in this campaign when maintenance workers were stood down and offered their jobs back on less favourable terms and conditions.

This highly visible grass roots campaign brought workers’ rights to the attention of the nation like none has done for a long time and broadened the minds of blue collar workers everywhere to the possibility that this could happen to them. This campaign has translated into a strengthened movement, a closer working relationship of unions and a heightened sense of urgency that a government that stands up for workers is needed more than ever.

Once again we congratulate the officials and members of both unions and applaud all the other unions and activists that assisted in this wonderful victory for every working class person in our country.

## **Resolution Eight**

- The attendees of the Bluewater Seafarers Commission wish to make the following declaration of support to:
  - Assistant National Secretary Warren Smith, for his tireless work on the successful campaign for a National Stevedoring Code of Practice. The members also wish to pass on their best wishes to comrade Smith for a speedy recovery from recent illness.

## **Resolution Nine**

- The attendees of the Bluewater Seafarers Commission wish to make the following declaration of support to:
  - The family of comrade Rod Carr. Comrade Carr tragically passed away during the conference, and members wish to pass on their sincere condolences to his family.

## **Resolution Ten**

- The attendees of the Bluewater Seafarers Commission wish to make the following declaration of support to:
  - Peter Simpson, Queensland State Secretary and Divisional Branch Secretary of the Electrical Trades Union, in his battle with melanoma. The members recognise comrade Simpson’s outstanding leadership in the movement and our work with him and his

union during recent campaigns. We wish Peter well and send strength and solidarity in this tough time for him and his family.

### **Resolution Eleven**

This Bluewater Seafarers Commission:

- Endorses the proposed amalgamation between the MUA and CFMEU.

### **Resolution Twelve**

This Bluewater Seafarers Commission:

- Condemns the actions of the APMT in Gothenburg, Sweden and declares full support and solidarity with the Swedish Dockworkers Union. As a union affiliated with the International Transport Workers Federation and with Branches affiliated to the International Dockworkers Council, we recognise our obligation and responsibility to defend the rights and interests of all maritime workers around the world.

We stand in solidarity with our comrades in the Swedish Dockworkers Union and will undertake practical actions of solidarity so that APMT are under no illusions as to our willingness to engage with them in defence of our comrades. We offer our full support to our courageous comrades and call upon maritime workers all over the world to participate in actions so as to assist the Swedish Dockers. We in turn offer our full assistance and support to the Swedish Dockworkers Union to continued struggle against APMT.

- Makes a commitment that the MUA will communicate with its membership, the reasons and benefits for its association with the International Transport Workers' Federation and the union's broader engagement internationally.