



# SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



## Veterans' Stories of Australia's Offshore Oil and Gas Industry

MLAANZ members may be interested in a recently-released set of podcasts which capture the recollections of veterans of Australia's shipping industry during the early days of Bass Strait oil and gas exploration during the 1960s and 1970s. The immediate past president of MLAANZ, David Goodwin, conducts the interviews.

The "Offshore Shipping Podcast Series" is the result of a collaboration between Victoria University, Melbourne, and the Offshore Shipping and Specialist Ships (OSSA) organisation. The series was enabled by funding from Victoria University.

The four-episode collaboration entails:

- Roustabouts, Roughnecks and Rogues: Aboard the Glomar III in the 1960s (Tony Krins)
- Offshore Construction and Commissioning (Dennis White Ep1)
- Safety Sustainability and Modern-Day Challenges (Dennis White Ep2)
- A Seafarer's Perspective (Jim Anderson)

According to broadcasters, the project encouraged industry veterans to "talk about the pioneer spirit, about life at sea and about the role offshore shipping plays in servicing some of Australia's most important economic activities".

Industry veterans with diverse experiences were interviewed. They reflected on the harsh conditions they faced in the windswept Bass Strait, the hazards and also fulfilment they experienced working offshore, and the array of characters who were their co-workers.

The student-led project design enabled dialogue and familiarity-creation on the part of young undergraduate students of Victoria University's College of Education and Arts, who were engaged in interviewing, recording and sound editing the reminiscences of the industry veterans.

This occurred via a small number of interested students volunteering their time and talents to be part of the project, through their involvement in a capstone unit in their Arts Degrees.

The work was undertaken from 2021 to 2023, largely coinciding with the lengthy COVID-19 lockdowns that occurred over that period in Melbourne. With Zoom and similar technologies consequently having to be utilised, there are occasional consistency of sound issues in the recordings. However, the insights of the interviewees are fascinating and have real contemporary relevance.

By listening to these podcasts it is possible to gain a sense of the significant safety and environmental challenges that faced seafarers and those who worked on oil platforms during the early years of operation of the Bass Strait oilfields. These challenges continue to be important considerations for modern-day projects such as the installation of offshore wind turbines.

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