



SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



Maritime Unions Ramp Up Collaboration

A new cross-Tasman maritime worker “federation” has been announced by the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) and Maritime Union of New Zealand (MUNZ), which collectively represent tens of thousands of maritime workers.

The formal agreement is intended to further collaboration between the two unions, which already work together in various areas, such as the recent “Nowhere to Hide” campaign in Australia led by affiliated body, the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF).

Commented MUA national secretary Paddy Crumlin: “The fraternal bonds that link our two unions are some of the closest, oldest and most durable in the trade union movement, and given we are working in an increasingly-globalised workplace and standing up against some of the same bosses, it makes perfect sense to expand and bolster the strength of our unions through a formalised federation.”

MUNZ national secretary Craig Harrison said the federation was “an obvious strategic step” given the expansion of global network terminal operators and “the voracious appetite” of large companies to swallow up smaller stevedoring operators across New Zealand.

“The history of maritime industries was one of casual labour, injury and death on the job, and ruthless employers who wouldn’t cede an inch to their workers,” he said.

“Our members had to fight for and defend their right to secure, permanent jobs, a decent wage and safe conditions of work.

“We have stood together to improve the lot of working people and their communities since those early days and we now look towards an even stronger presence on the waterfront and on our ships across the Asia-Pacific through this federation with the MUA.”

Nowhere to Hide

The Nowhere to Hide campaign was held over two separate “weeks of action” last year – the first at three New South Wales ports during June and the second at all ports in the southern states of Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia.

According to a MUNZ statement, the campaign identified and recovered a total of US\$19.9 million in “stolen” wages from 650 ship inspections.

“Half of which was due to non-compliance with the Australian seagoing industry award and coastal trading legislation,” it stated.

“The campaign made several recommendations to the Australian Government to close loopholes, strengthen enforcement, and enhance the information sharing and co-ordination among compliance bodies to prevent and criminalise wage theft from seafarers.”

The ITF report can be read [here](#).

The campaign is expected to be expanded to New Zealand waters soon.



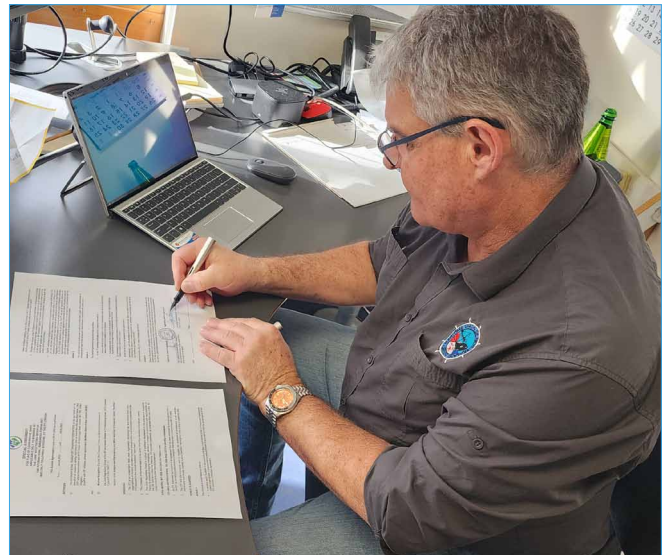
MUNZ Implements First ITF Foreign Ship Agreement

Meanwhile, MUNZ recently secured its first International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) agreement for a foreign-flagged ship in New Zealand.

MUNZ performed as ITF signatory union for the agreement with the Matson South Pacific-operated general cargo ship *Imua*, as the 118.28-metre and 6264-GT vessel's "beneficial owner" is based in the country.

The agreement compels the ship owner/operator to:

- apply the relevant employment conditions laid out in the collective bargaining agreement
- incorporate those employment conditions into individual employment contracts and into the ship's articles
- ensure there is appropriate insurance to cover the company against all liabilities in the relevant ITF agreement
- accurately record working hours
- provide the ITF with a current crew list
- respect and apply the Non-Seafarers Work Clause, often referred to as the "Dockers' Clause"
- pay union membership fees to the signatory union or the ITF Special Seafarers' Department
- pay the ITF Welfare Fund contributions



MUNZ national secretary Craig Harrison pictured signing the first ITF foreign-flagged vessel agreement in New Zealand

Mr Harrison said his organisation would always seek to ensure that foreign-flagged ships have at least the minimum entitlement of an ITF agreement "and to this end we will look to pursue companies."

He said "numerous" carriers had refused to enter into the agreements.

"You find that these are generally the ships that are exploiting crew.

"New Zealand exporters and importers should be required to do some due diligence that they are using vessels that are at least treating the crew in a fair manner and paying them and feeding them."

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