

MEDIA RELEASE

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Deceptive Maritime Union attempts to justify strike action

Statement from Scott Barklamb – AMMA executive Director

THE Maritime Union of Australia is again demonstrating how irresponsible it is by completely misrepresenting the position of the resource industry and a number of maritime support employers in ongoing industrial negotiations.

The continued mistruths told to the press and its own members are calculated attempts to justify striking against an industry already under intense global competitive pressures.

At the same time as it threatens the critical export activities of Port Hedland in a separate industrial matter, the MUA intends to strike against maritime employers supporting Australia's \$170bn offshore resources sector.

Prior offer rejected by the MUA

The MUA is completely misrepresenting a wages and agreement proposal put to them last year.

The industry tabled a responsible deal which included a fair wage increase and measures to satisfy the union's job security concerns, on the condition that it drop its extensive shopping list of other unsustainable claims.

The MUA outright rejected the 2013 offer and has since said it wants the proposed wage increases as well as its long list of other costly and irrational demands.

Some vessel operators are facing more than 40 additional claims on top of the core employment issues, which would impose 30-50% total cost increases on vessel operators. This would come after the union used wide damaging strikes in 2010 to secure 30% pay rises.

When the industry rejected the MUA's demands, the union told its members and the press that the wage offer had been withdrawn – this could not be farther from the truth.

Cost impact of roster changes

The MUA is demanding roster changes from the standard five week swings (five weeks on, five weeks off) to four week swings (four on, four off).

The union is well aware that five week swings are critically important to servicing Australia's offshore resource sector and thus ensuring a viable industry in our waters. Their roster demands would hit each employer with a \$480,000 cost on average per vessel per year.

With seafarers earning on average \$170-240,000 for working less than six months of the year, this industry already has some of the most attractive working arrangements in the country.

By continuing to pursue its unrealistic and reckless agenda, the MUA is unfairly damaging the offshore resource industry and delaying a fair and sustainable pay rise to Australian seafarers.

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