



# Maritime deal defies unions

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British conglomerate Swire and Norwegian firm DOF Subsea have signed workplace agreements with more than 100 offshore maritime workers despite union attempts to stymie the deal.

About 170 maritime officers and engineers serving Australia's offshore oil and gas voted for the deal, averting industrial action, which has been under negotiation since 2013.

The workers belong to either the Maritime Union of Australia and the smaller Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers or the Australian Maritime Officers Union.

All three unions urged workers to vote against the agreement.

While Swire Pacific Ship Management and DOF Subsea were able to secure a deal, other vessel operators were unsuccessful.

Danish giant Maersk and local operator MMA Offshore were unable to reach an agreement with their employees, while MUA members also voted against a deal with Swire.

An MUA spokesman said there was no significant gap in the position of the employers and the workers on wages, but significant concerns remained around job security provisions.

The MUA represents deckhands, cooks and other employees aboard the offshore operations, while AIMPE represents engineers and the AMOU represents maritime officers.

Swire Pacific declined to comment, while DOF Subsea did not return calls.

The workplace agreements were negotiated on behalf of employers by the Australian Mines and Metals Association, which hailed the vote "a positive indicator" that wage growth will

remain at a sustainable level. The AMMA last year reached an agreement with employees at Smit Lamnalco, a smaller vessel operator, but the MUA subsequently appealed against Fair Work Commission's approval of the deal.

The most recent agreements entitled workers to a 7 per cent wage rise over four years, and retention of allowances at the current rate.

AMMA executive director of policy Scott Barklamb said the development was a breakthrough in a "long and protracted bargaining dispute".

"This demonstrates that Australia's maritime employees understand and appreciate the difficult conditions facing the offshore resource industry, and that the best way to support job security while also secure a pay rise, is to work with their employers towards a sustainable outcome."