

INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION REGAINS ITS STRONG VOICE



BY ALAN MOORE

I was recently reminded of that age old adage, “Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat, please put a penny in the old man’s hat.”

As I pondered on that I thought, Christmas is coming, we have no control over that, we don’t traditionally eat a goose, maybe turkey could be on the menu, we are a nation of ageing workers and a penny would not go very far at all.

Nevertheless times are looking good, the economy is on the mend, the government have done their hundred days and haven’t imploded, in fact their popularity seems to have improved. Let us hope that this reflects in a boomer summer and we all come out the other end tired, worn but happy.

Things are certainly on the up for the MTA. We have been diligently going about our business which is communicating with our members, reacting to their concerns and looking to improve their lot in our somewhat fragile industry.

I recently attended a meeting Maritime NZ and the Ministry of Transport where the one of the agenda items was “How do the Industry see the regulators and what can we do to make things better”.

As you can imagine, this provoked considerable discussion and the outcome was a frank and sometimes frustrating exposé of the issues we all know exist when dealing with bureaucrats. One of the big concerns here is that New Zealand is a party to the IMO and as such, is bound by rules and regulations promulgated internationally by that organisation for SOLAS class vessels. We, the workers at the end on the line, have to put up with rules that sometimes bear no relation to reality. When we question these matters we are told, “oh, New Zealand has signed a convention and we have to abide by those rules”.

No arguments, no exceptions. A classic example of this is the Collision Regulations specifying the size, position, shape, intensity etc of navigation lights. This determines that the masthead light of every vessel “shall be in the forepart of the vessel, on the centre line where it can best be seen at a height not less than the beam of the ship above the deck.”

Question. How do you comply with that on a bow loading vehicular ferry or barge?

Answer. You have to build a tower 10 metres in the air, across the bow of the ship, to carry the light.

Question. Is that practical?

Answer. NO.

Question. Can we get an exemption from the rule?

Answer. NO.

Another example is that of the *Anatoke*. She is a local coastal ship trading in restricted limits around New Zealand. She is 51 metres long and as such must be a SOLAS vessel. She cannot be in the Safe Ship Management System because the rules restrict that to vessel no more than 45 metres. This increases the Marine Safety Charges by about 600 percent.

Question. Can she get an exemption?

Answer. NO.

Solution. Fit a second collision bulkhead in the bow, make the bulbous bow and previous collision space no longer watertight by drilling holes in the bow, effectively reducing her registered length to 44.9 metres. Is this fair? Should an operator have to

resort to creative ship altering to be able to operate? No.

These matters were put to the government officials attending the meeting and, it is fair to say, there was a meeting of minds. They acknowledged the fact that there was a problem and that they needed to listen to industry over their concerns. Just what happens next will be determined by the attitude of all to reach a solution.

The manager of Transport Logistics, who operate the *Anatoke*, have just joined the MTA and have asked our organisation to assist them in their constant battle to get things right.

Over the past two years we have been working with the major vessel operators assisting them with their problems as well as bedding the MTA down onto a stronger footing. Now has come the time to focus on the small ship section of our industry, work boats, charter boats, aquaculture vessels and the like as the association rebuilds on the outcomes of our recent conference in Picton.

This well attended conference was a resounding success and clearly identified the future directions in which our members seek us to head. Part of this will be member’s benefits with this association. We are currently in the process of negotiating an insurance deal for the smaller vessel owners that are a significant part of our organisation. We ▶

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have been negotiating with PIC Insurance Brokers to provide a comprehensive range of insurance products that will suit many of these smaller members.

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- To pay the MTA members fees if these members take up a vessel policy in conjunction with other products.
- To renegotiate the MTA Southern Cross Medical Insurance scheme with a view to increasing the benefit to members or providing an alternative.

PIC already have an extensive presence in the recreational yachting and leisure marine market and, as such, we can recommend this firm to you and you should hear from them shortly. If you are interested please contact MTA secretary at alan@marinetransport.co.nz

At the conference, the first maritime professional representative and member to be elected and appointed to the board was Katherine Walker from Nelson.

We are also discussing the framework for an MTA Scholarship in association with The Spirit of Adventure Trust. Open to young people aged between 15 and 19 years of age who are reasonably fit and in good health. This is likely to take the form of an initial 10 day training voyage on the *Spirit of Adventure* followed one year later by a five day leadership voyage and cumulating in the 5th year with a five day senior leadership voyage. If the candidate proves satisfactory they may be offered a 15 month

scholarship to go through The SOA Trust cadet training scheme, coming out with an ILM Certificate.


This scholarship will be available on application to the families of MTA members and families of their staff and we are sure that it will prove popular. There is considerable value in the offer and there will be three spaces available, one from each of the geographical areas of the top half of the North Island, central area including Nelson – Marlborough and the rest of the South Island. Candidates will need to apply for selection and meet The Spirit of Adventure Trust’s fit and proper person criteria. More information on this proposal can be obtained on application to the secretary.

MTA have just concluded a deal with Call Plus Mobile for cellphones and land lines. We have obtained a very attractive

There is considerable value in the offer and there will be three spaces available

rate for members at \$20 per month and 24 cents per minute on account. This is a much better deal than that which we currently enjoy with Vodafone and has been brought about by the Commerce Commission’s edict for the big two to unbundle their duopoly. Anyone interested in this proposal contact alan@marinetransport.co.nz

Don’t forget the other trade discounts that are on offer. TransDiesel have AGIP Oil, Gull Petroleum have good rates on diesel, Caltex still offer the fuel deals at their service stations and *Professional Skipper* magazine is free to all members. But you must be a member to qualify.

Have a good Christmas, a happy New Year and a successful season. 

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