



The Hon Darren Chester MP
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
A/g Minister for Regional Development
A/g Minister for Local Government
Deputy Leader of the House
Member for Gippsland

PDR ID: MC17-004778

06 NOV 2017

The Most Reverend Dr Philip Freier
Archbishop of Melbourne
Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia
Suite 4, Level 5
189 Kent Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Archbishop

Thank you for your letter of 21 September 2017 on behalf of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia conveying the resolution passed on 4 September 2017.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge your firm commitment to progress awareness of seafarer welfare and the importance of organisations like the Mission to Seafarers in the provision of welfare services to both seafarers and their families.

As you may be aware, Australia established the Australian Seafarers' Welfare Council (ASWC) to promote seafarer welfare and the services available in Australian ports to support and protect seafarers. The ASWC works to assist those responsible for providing welfare services at the various seafarer centres located around Australia. I note Mission to Seafarers, guided by the Anglican Church of Australia, is represented on the ASWC.

The Australian Government recognises that the welfare of seafarers is a major factor in the health, safe working and operation of the maritime industry. Through the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), support is provided to the ASWC by providing key resources to assist when the ASWC meets and chairing the committee. Nonetheless, I recognise the contribution made by non-government organisations and the broader shipping industry, is imperative to the support provided through seafarer welfare centres.

In Australia, the *Maritime Labour Convention 2006* (MLC), has been implemented through the *Navigation Act 2012* to ensure a fair, safe and secure workplace for seafarers and requires welfare boards at the port, regional and national level. In addition, AMSA ensures vessel owners and operators are fulfilling their obligations under the MLC through its rigorous flag and port state control program.

I note the Anglican Church of Australia may introduce an annual 'Sea Sunday' to recognise seafarers and the organisations that support them. You may be interested to know that since 2010 the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has marked the annual Day of the Seafarer on 25 June, to recognise the contribution made by seafarers from all over the world. In 2017 the theme was 'Seafarers Matter' and it particularly focused on ports and seafarer centres and how important these facilities are for seafarer welfare.

Raising awareness about seafarer welfare has also arisen within the international arena through an initiative of the Sailors' Society called the Wellness at Sea program. This program aims to provide awareness and educate in the mitigation and management of issues such as fatigue, mental health and stress, which affect seafarers on a daily basis.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the important contribution that the Anglican Church of Australia is making to raise awareness of seafarer welfare and to progress initiatives that recognise the contribution that seafarers make every day.

Thank you for again for taking the time to convey the Synod's resolution about these important matters.

Yours sincerely



DARREN CHESTER