

MISSION TO SEAFARERS

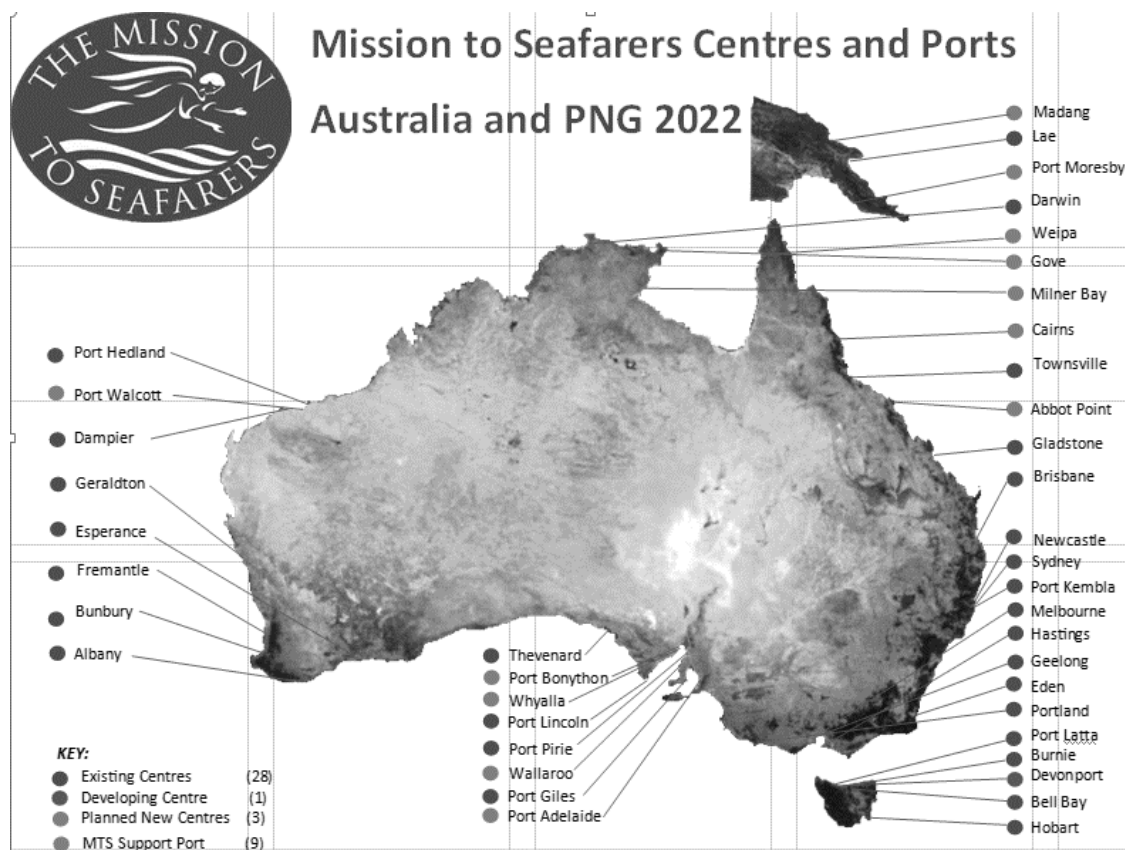


PURPOSE:

As a missionary organisation of the Anglican Church, we live out the five marks of Mission set by the Communion.

Established in 1835 to preach the Gospel to all Seafarers, the Mission took as its logo the Flying Angel after the verse in the book of Revelation, *“Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation and tribe and language and people.”* (Rev. 14:6 NRSV)

There are currently 37 ports around Australia and Papua New Guinea that provide some support to Seafarers, 28 of these have centres. The purpose remains strong: to proclaim an eternal Gospel to every Seafarer who comes to Australia and PNG.



MEMBERSHIP:

Nationally the MTS is governed by the Australian Council. Membership of the Australian Council (AC) is through election by all MTS centres represented at the biennial conference, in accordance with the rules set out by its constitution. Two Bishops are appointed by the House of Bishops. The AC employ a Regional Director

OFFICE BEARERS:

Chair: The Right Reverend John Stead

Vice: The Right Reverend Gary Nelson

Members: The Very Reverend Darryl Cotton (Tres.), Mrs Sue Dight, Mrs Ranjani Sundar, The Reverend Un Tay, Mr Graham Miller (Sec.).

Regional Director: The Reverend Canon Garry Dodd.

ACTIVITIES:

Every centre and port has its own way of meeting the needs of Seafarers who enter their port. Generally however the following activities occur:

Pastoral care of Seafarers, Ship visits, Bibles/Bible studies, books/magazines, Transport Internet, Clothing, Food, Entertainment, Hospital visits, National and International connection and support and many more services.

Chaplains and volunteers are often called upon to ensure: starving crews are feed, wages are paid, dangerous work practices are fixed, bullying stopped and sick or injured Seafarers are adequately cared for once repatriated.

COVID:

International Seafarers were the very first group to be refused entry into Australia when COVID first struck. At the time of writing this report, International Air crew have free access into Australia but Seafarers do not.

This has had a devastating impact on the MTS. Financially the Mission is struggling to stay afloat and have reached out to the federal Government to assist us in caring for the spiritual, mental, emotional and practical needs of Seafarers. We are asking the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications to assist us because Diocesan support is at its lowest, centers are surviving off reserves and the threat of Missions closing is real.

SOLUTION:

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC) fulfil its international commitment to Seafarer welfare, under the Maritime Labour

Convention (2006) and fund shore-based welfare centers. That is – fund MTS centers.

The Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) is a set of basic human rights for Seafarers. It ensures they have minimum standards of work/rest, food, living conditions, medical care and the free access to welfare centers like ours. The MTS injects over \$10M of support to the poorest people entering our country each year, but this has been severely impacted by COVID.

GENERAL SYNOD RESPONSE:

We call on every Diocese of Australia to contact their local Federal and State member to strongly urge them to support a national levy to fund all MTS centers.

Not only does this empower MTS centers to continue functioning, it afford MTS to grow its mission and evangelize to the least, lost, lonely and last in our communities.

Land locked Diocese need to do this as well. Despite not having a port in your Diocese, Seafarers still bring you everything you need. If you are reading this report on your computer, iPad, Tablet or phone – a Seafarer was involved. 'if you import or export anything from Australia' – a Seafarer was involved.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

All Diocese are encouraged to write to the Australian Council, affirming they have made contact with their Federal and State members, asking them to support a national levy to fund the MTS in its Shore-Based Seafarers Welfare (SBSW).

The MTS lives out Matthew 25:35-40 ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

We minister to this invisible workforce 365 days a year in 37 locations with love and conviction.

We bring HOPE, we share the GOSPEL, we are GENUINE.

Please make a commitment to write, speak and continue to facilitate dialogue with your Federal and State Politician's.

More importantly, please actively support the MTS nationally. Bishops, please tell your clergy to celebrate Sea Sunday and pray for our Seafarers - even donate funds to the MTS either locally or nationally.

The Mission has the opportunity to 'proclaim the everlasting Gospel' to over 605,000 Seafarers. A vast number of these Seafarers come from countries where Christianity is not openly practiced and have never had the opportunity to even hear about Salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. It is amazing how many times Seafarers ask "Why do you Christians do this for us?" In this environment it is easy to share about the love of God. There are many scriptures such as 1 John 4:19 (*¹⁹ We love because he [God] first loved us.*) for us to openly share with Seafarers who are genuinely astounded to hear this news.

All centres give bibles, religious tracts and information to Seafarers who, literally for the first time in their lives, are encountering the Lord Jesus. General Synod can imagine how inspiring this is, as we sow into the lives of so many who are genuinely giving their lives to Christ as a result of this incredible ministry.

MOTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY GENERAL SYNOD

The following motions will be moved and seconded by members of the Australian council who are also members of General Synod, the Rt Rev'd John Stead and the Rt Rev'd Gary Nelson.

- a) *That the report of the Mission to Seafarers be received*
- b) *That this Synod recognised and seeks to include the celebration of Sea Sunday annually as a way to support the ministry of the Mission to Seafarers and highlight the plight of Seafarers.*
- c) *Calls on the Federal and State Governments to take seriously its responsibility under the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 and fully fund shore-based Seafarer welfare centers.*
- d) *Respectfully request the Primate to convey the above terms of this resolution to the Prime Minister and Federal Transport Minister and Shadow counterparts.*