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NEWSLETTER

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Collective Agreements

Negotiations have concluded for Real Journeys; Port Nelson Pilots; C3 Tauranga and Buller Port Services for the *Kawatiri* dredger. Bargaining is underway for Stewart Island Experience; Timaru Pilots; Centreport tugs/launch; and Westport Harbourmasters; An offer for the Golden Bay collective agreement has been rejected, and the parties are discussing further meeting dates. Negotiations for the renewal of the *Pelican* dredger agreement with NZ Dredging Ltd will commence in Auckland in the new year.

Coastal Shipping

At a recent Ministry of Transport Sector Reference Group meeting Maritime NZ, the Shipping Federation and Ministry of Transport officials advised that they had had a meeting to discuss regulatory framework of coastal shipping. The maritime unions were not invited. We understand that the meeting came to the conclusion that the MOT would investigate how the Director of Maritime NZ could be given the power to exempt NZ shipowners from international conventions such as SOLAS and STCW.

The Guild has raised questions about the meeting with MNZ Director, Catherine Taylor, who was not aware of it and is looking into the matter.

Maritime NZ

MNZ's major review of the **qualifications and operating limits** rules is now well underway and MNZ officials have spoken to large numbers of industry representatives including the unions, assuring them that the exercise is not about reducing standards. One proposal MNZ mentioned during a recent update was the possibility that it could extend the definition of "near coastal waters" to encompass the entire Exclusive Economic Zone, thereby presumably allowing vessels such as *Anatoki* or *Rangitira* to sail much further afield without foreign going tickets on the bridge. The next step in the process is for a summary of all feedback to be circulated for comment in January.

Part 90 proposals look set to be implemented in June next year notwithstanding submissions from several parties against some of the proposed reductions in standards contained in the draft, no doubt the result no doubt of pressure from shipowners.

Because of the environmental and safety risks posed by these draft amendments, we will continue to lobby to try and prevent the changes from being introduced.

Real Journeys

Bargaining resulted in a settlement only after notice of industrial action was issued on behalf of skippers employed in Milford and Doubtful Sounds and Te Anau. The

settlement achieved a redundancy compensation package – a claim that had been repeatedly declined by the company, and improvements in pay rates for skippers and crew.

During the bargaining the Employment Relations Authority handed down a decision in favour of the company's right to restructure its operation by making two key union members' jobs redundant and using non-union employees to do that work in future. The two members are skippers in Milford Sound and were very actively encouraging the high union membership the Guild enjoys in this operation. The Guild has appealed the Authority's decision and matter is due to come before the Employment Court in February 2010. Meanwhile, the skippers have received a lot of messages of support and solidarity from the wider Guild membership, which they have much appreciated.

NZSOS Superannuation Fund

The final paperwork for the transfer of this fund into a master trust has now been completed, but the new structure means that the fund is no longer a 'member driven fund'. The unions have been given legal advice about how the structure could be improved on, and an approach will be made to Tower on this matter.

In the meantime, it is the end of an era for former NZSOS Chairman, **Gerry Breen**, who has spent over 20 years looking after the interests of the members' superannuation accounts with Tower. Gerry also put in a huge amount of work over the last 2 years in order to progress the transfer to the master trust. This was not an easy job due to the many mistakes made by Tower, and faltering progress due to its high staff turnover at the time and lack of appreciation of the uniqueness of this "member-driven" rather than "employer-driven" fund. Members have had the benefit over the years from Gerry's wide knowledge of superannuation and of the financial markets both in New Zealand and overseas. His expertise has also been invaluable in monitoring Tower's administration of the fund over the years, and we will be seeking to have him continue on as a 'watchdog' over the new master trust fund.

Guild and AMEA members are very appreciative and proud of Gerry's efforts over many years, along with those of Guild Trustees, Capts Clyde Mason, the late Chris Wright, and more recently, Capt Bill Wood.

Inshore Passenger Tourism

The year began badly for our members in the tourism industry, with dark predictions by employers of minimum 15% declines in the numbers of visitors into New Zealand. In February, a major employer of maritime labour in the Fiordland area, Real Journeys, advised us of a significant restructuring in one part of the region – the one area which had seen the most significant improvement in wages and conditions and which has a high Guild membership.

This restructuring occupied much of 2009 for us. We are still battling to resist redundancies, and in October two Real Journeys members were made redundant and immediately returned to work on fixed term contracts! During negotiations we did manage to achieve pay rises for both crew and Launchmasters, despite continual protestations from the employer about a bleak future ahead.

This same company is now trying to cope with staff shortages, because there seems to have been a minimum number of crew hired at the beginning of the season but the tourists have kept on coming in much the same numbers as before. In fact, according to Tourism New Zealand, the overall decline in visitor numbers to October 2009 has been just 1%, and our members have told us that over the usually quiet winter things were humming along, especially to the lyrical Aussie accent. The Australian Government's

stimulus package included a taxpayer handout and encouragement to take annual leave throughout the year which made New Zealand an attractive destination. Australian visitor numbers are forecast to increase by more than 10% on last year by the end of the summer season.

A major issue in the tourism industry is that employers see the 'maritime' element as secondary to 'hospitality'. All the conditions which the rest of the industry now takes for granted, such as free accommodation and victualling have to be fought for all over again. Even something as basic as maritime safety can be an issue. Where else would a union have to make a claim to have all crew on a vessel provided with life jackets?

and finally.....Meeting venues and dates

Auckland: meetings are held on the first Friday of every month (except January or public holidays), and are held in the Aviation & Marine Engineers premises on the first floor Administrator House, 44 Anzac Avenue, commencing at 0930 hours on the following dates:

Friday 5 February, Friday 5 March, Friday 7 May, Friday 4 June, Friday 2 July, Friday 6 August, Friday 3 September, Friday 1 October, Friday 5 November and final meeting for the year Friday 3 December 2009.

Wellington: meetings are held on the second Friday of every month (except January or public holidays) at the Guild premises on the 6th floor, 94 Dixon Street, Wellington commencing at 0930 hours on the following dates:

Friday 12 February, Friday 12 March, Friday 9 April, Friday 14 May, Friday 11 June, Friday 9 July, Friday 13 August, Friday 10 September, Friday 8 October, Friday 12 November, with the final meeting for the year on 10 December 2009.