



Caring for seafarers  
around the world

## The Mission to Seafarers, Sydney NSW

24 Hickson Road, Miller's Point, NSW 2000

Tel: +61 (0) 2 9241 3009

Website: [www.missiontoseafarerssydney.org.au](http://www.missiontoseafarerssydney.org.au)

### Media Release

June 24, 2024

## THANK YOU FOR NEW SEAFARERS WELFARE FUND IN NSW

In an Australian first, The Port Authority of New South Wales, NSW Ports and Port of Newcastle have joined forces to provide funding security to seafarer welfare charities with proven track records in NSW.

The Mission to Seafarers (MtS), which has been serving seafarers visiting NSW for over 150 years, has thanked the welfare initiative members for selecting our Sydney, Newcastle, Port Kembla and Eden Missions as round 1 beneficiaries of the new Seafarers Welfare Fund.

“Seafarers work in one of the world’s toughest jobs and some of their suffering hit our television screens during covid and when the Portland Bay floundered off our coastline,” said Clayton Strong, CEO of Mission to Seafarers Sydney.

“We are extremely grateful for this welfare initiative members for recognising the need and combining together to build this commitment. This funding will help to ensure all our Mission centres can reach more seafarers than ever before with our practical, caring services,” Mr Strong said. “The Initiatives’ co-ordinated approach will help us all to do our part in delivering the wellbeing services that will help make NSW the leading state for seafarer care and potentially a model for other ports.”

In response to our submissions, MtS Sydney received significant funding for one year that will be used for an additional part-time seafarer support staff member for one year and assistance so we can serve more seafarers with services such as free seafarers’ buses, running our support and recreation Centre in Millers Point and visiting seafarers in need on ships and in hospitals.

Over 400,000 seafarers from container ships and cruise vessels visit Sydney’s ports each year so the potential to reach out to help more seafarers is significant with additional support. They face tough working conditions and the onerous demands of life at sea such as isolation, interpersonal conflict, fatigue and homesickness.

Mr Strong said seafarers need respite and support while in port to be able to continue to stay healthy as individuals and as workers. This strong healthy workforce protects not just the maritime industry, but the Australian economy and our environment.

“Although we have been praised for our dedicated service, exemplary track record and innovative responses to the pandemic lockdowns, it is always a challenge to find secure, strategic support,” Mr Strong said.

“Each of our Missions in NSW have practical plans to ensure we have the right teams in place to serve seafarers. We are aiming to significantly increase the number of seafarers we are currently reaching but there is still significantly more need, so we look to the Port Community to build on this great program.”

“After covid restrictions ended, we reopened our Centre in Sydney seven days a week and restored our seafarers’ free bus services and Chaplain’s ship visits, but our funding is still below pre-covid levels. This new funding will help to fill that funding vacuum and provide more long-term security for our work,” Mr Strong said. “Like all charities, we are facing downwards trends in volunteering and donations. We are also battling a spiralling downturn in support from shipping companies which have not restarted their contributions to our seafarer bus transport.”

“We thank the port community who have supported us in many ways for many years,” he said. “We greatly appreciate this new initiative because it will ensure we can continue to provide secure effective, practical support for Seafarers who visit NSW for the long-term.”

Philip Holliday CEO, Port Authority of New South Wales formally announced the exciting news to over 170 representatives of the port community and supporters at The Mission to Seafarers Sydney Annual Luncheon on June 21, 2024.

NSW Ports Jonathan Lafforgue, General Manager, Operations and Environment, and Port of Newcastle CEO Craig Carmody also addressed the group sharing why it was so important to enhance the welfare of these essential workers.

The Hon Jo Haylen, NSW Transport Minister, Dr Marjorie Spooner O’Neill, NSW Member for Coogee, and the Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP, Federal Member for Kingsford Smith, also attended the event, run by MtS Sydney annually in the week of the International Day of the Seafarer.

Representatives of Cruise Line International, Carnival Australia Cruises, DP World Sydney, Hapag-Lloyd, International Chamber of Shipping, Shipping Australia, Dan-Bunkering (Australia) Pty Ltd as well as charities Stella Maris, Tas Bull Seafarers Foundation and HunterLink also attended the Luncheon.

“We especially thank all the Seafarers Welfare Fund inaugural members for their wisdom and care in setting up this exciting initiative,” Mr Strong said. “We hope their foresight and commitment will encourage other maritime organisation to join and help established seafarer welfare organisations in NSW to give seafarers the opportunity to rejuvenate their body, mind and spirit during their brief, precious times onshore.”

*MtS is the largest seaport-based welfare organisation in the world. Its network based in 200 ports in 50 nations serves the world’s almost 2M seafarers and their families of all nations and faiths. MtS Sydney has been operating since 1881 and MtS Newcastle has been in operation for over 150 years.*

---

**Images and videos from the announcement at the MtS 2024 Annual Luncheon can be downloaded at:**

<https://missiontoseafarerssydney.org.au/thank-yous-photos-from-the-mts-2024-annual-luncheon-june-21-2024/>

For a video of how MtS Sydney helps seafarers, see:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bfbrFgzKVp0>

**For interviews, other images or background information, contact:**

Nadja Leffler, MtS Sydney Communications,  
e| [nadja.leffler@missiontoseafarers.org.au](mailto:nadja.leffler@missiontoseafarers.org.au) m| 0414670913

