



Caring for seafarers
around the world

Media Release

July 11, 2022

MV Portland Bay Proves No Better Time to Support Seafarers - Port Community United at Mission to Seafarers Inaugural Luncheon

At the end of the week that saw the dramatic rescue of the bulk carrier MV Portland Bay, more than 165 Sydneysiders gathered to ensure long-term support for seafarers visiting local ports.

At the inaugural Annual Luncheon of Mission to Seafarers, Sydney, (MtS), on Friday July 8, speakers acknowledged how the MV Portland Bay had highlighted the dangers of seafaring.

As Captain John Bradley, a Master Mariner and MtS Board member, thanked those attending, he noted how the MV Portland Bay's incident had showcased what the maritime community could achieve when it worked together. He also praised the skills and bravery of the seafarers on the four tugboats who had helped to avert disaster.

"So many organisations were involved in bringing the bulk carrier through the severe weather conditions safely into shore," he said. The Mission to Seafarers' Chaplains visited the vessel at Port Botany to offer counselling and practical support to the 23 crew. Especially appreciated was the Chaplains' delivery of SIM cards so the crew could reassure and reconnect with their worried families back home.

Captain Bradley, an experienced senior executive in container shipping, said the maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC) outlined the responsibilities for member states including Australia to provide shore-based welfare facilities and services for visiting seafarers. "The Sydney Mission to Seafarers provides these facilities, transport, emotional support and more, free of charge to seafarers so it makes sense for us and the industry to work together – and not only when there's an emergency," Captain Bradley said at the luncheon held at NSW Parliament House.

"The challenges of covid lockdowns and structural changes over the last 20 years have taken their toll both on seafarers and those of us trying to support them here in Sydney," said Captain Bradley. He said with more maritime companies moving abroad, industry support for the charity's essential services in Sydney had dropped dramatically.

"We could do so much with additional financial support including extending our services to seafarers at Kurnell and White Bay. Our seafarers continue to face wave after wave of challenges and we do currently support about 10,000 per year from our Sydney mission. But with on average another 350,000 seafarers visiting our ports, there is great potential to serve many more if we had more support from industry," Captain Bradley said.

Keynote speaker, Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) Executive Director Operations Michael Drake spoke about the challenges facing seafarers and the importance of the continued support that Mission to Seafarers provides. He said AMSA's work monitoring and checking visiting ships and crew work conditions had made more international ship owners aware of the importance of seafarer health and safety. However much more could be done to assist seafarers.

"AMSA strongly supports the work of The Mission to Seafarers in Australian ports and works closely with the local Mission when it is necessary to solve and support crew with welfare issues," Mr Drake said.

During Covid lockdowns when many seafarers were not able to leave their ships for about 18 months, MtS continued to serve seafarers by helping to facilitate free vaccinations from their buses on the docks, assisting stranded seafarers and delivering goods and gift packs. All funds raised from the luncheon will go towards helping MtS to restore and increase our vital wellbeing services as seafarers are once again slowly being allowed onshore to enjoy the MtS 'home away from home'.

As the lunch ended, previous and current seafarers, industry representatives and supporters lingered to swap tales. Organiser and MtS Board Member Greg Bondar announced the luncheon had been so successful, it would be held again next June. Join the MtS supporters list for your invitation at our website www.missiontoseafarerssydney.org.au.

The Sydney mission team is part of a global organisation working in over 200 ports helping seafarers for over 165 years.

Media Inquiries: John Bradley Chairman MtS Fundraising Committee m| 0415600519

Thank you to our event sponsors:

Gulf Agency Company (Australia) Pty Ltd, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and the Daily Cargo News.



Mission to Seafarers, Sydney, Australia

ABN: 91451928534 | P. 02 9241 3009 | enquiries@missiontoseafarers.org.au
www.missiontoseafarerssydney.org.au

