

## INDUSTRY SKILLS 360 SERIES – MARITIME WEBINAR

**Webinar held:** 12 March 2021

**Panellists:**

Steve Moon OAM, Chair, Maritime Industry Reference Committee

Klausch Schmidt, Director of IRC Operations, AIS

Paul Walsh, CEO (facilitator), AIS

### Q & A with the panel

1. Not all seafarers are registered with the regulator, 13000 volunteers marine service not represented on the IRC.

**Paul Walsh:** I will just say Chris, that the makeup of the IRC membership is actually the responsibility of the Australian industry and skills committee that and they do take a view of how people are appointed to that. The actual IRC has responsibility for replacements of organisations that have a membership so for instance, if toll shipping had a member and the member moved the IRC can actually manage the change over from one person from toll shipping to the next person but bringing new organisations in is actually the responsibility of the AISC and I'm sure that if you needed to talk to someone about that Chris, I'm sure Klausch, Anna or Ron could help you with that. But anyway, I'll hand over to Klausch and Steve and let them say more if they need to.

**Klausch Schmidt:** Thanks Paul, look just to let you know they are actually on the IRC, it's not the maritime IRC, they're on the public safety IRC, which fortunately AIS actually also look after. So there is a very close knit between the two so we are able to take any information required and we do get a lot of feedback when we are putting projects out from the volunteers around what are the skills needed but we do have a direct link through that public safety IRC, so they are represented, so just thought of letting you know that.

**Steve Moon:** I just want to add to that too. Chris for your information, when the IRC decides it's going to take a project on we will actually form Technical Advisory Committees, so it's not actually the IRC itself that goes through the qualifications. It makes all the amendments or changes or whatever it is a Technical Advisory Committee that puts those changes together and puts it back to the IRC for consideration. Now search and rescue was represented when we did phase one, way back because that was the update. I believe that's probably the most appropriate place where the majority of your qualifications would lie. So we're not leaving anyone out of the loop on purpose, but we also bear in mind there are going to be some things that interest some people that don't interest others. However, we do value you know every everyone's contribution, if it's appropriate to their sector and yes I do recognize all those volunteers and it's just like other sectors of the marine tourism industry. For example, where we have people who are not necessarily qualified seafarers working within the industry, so there is a wrath of people out there that are not included in those figures so that's why I said at the beginning you've got to be careful

where you go looking for your data because it's really important that you actually get the data right so I hope that helps Chris.

**Klausch Schmidt:** Steve, it might be worth mentioning also that we've just reviewed the General Purpose Hand qualification and there are components in there that may be very useful to them.

**Steve Moon:** That's right, I'm probably going to speak out of school a little bit here, but as you are aware as I mentioned earlier AMSA are reviewing Marine Orders 505 and 504. The review of MO505 has actually taken two and a half years believe it or not, and out of that you will see that the general-purpose hand qualification which incorporates the ESS will probably come to the forum, play a bigger role in seafarer [you are] going to see in the future and that's not me pre-empting what AMSA is going to do, they're hoping to release the final draft of MO505 in June. Between now and June though we have to sit down and review MO504 which complements MO505 to make sure that we dot the i's and dot the t's and don't put anyone in a position where they're not going to be able to operate. So a bit of a quirky one but a general purpose hand does incorporate ESS as most of you will know. So basically we're looking at an expanded ESS but it will be, I'm sure it will be fingers crossed I'll probably lose my head over this, general purpose hand will become compulsory for vessels that have a certain length, so I'll leave that with you guys thanks.

2. Ocean qualification challenges finding training for newcomers to the industry most rely on international students. Is there a way to get industry partners to promote and keep cadets trained?

**Steve Moon:** How are you? Look, I hear what you're saying and it's not just international qualifications that are suffering at the moment, but we've had a heap of inquiries from people wanting to try to get into the domestic sector who can't actually get seats on now to finish off their training. So it's not unique just to the international sector but I think this is something I'm not sure if it's something the IRC would get involved in. But I would be more than happy to work with you and talk to the regulator and talk to anyone else around. I know for a fact that up in north Queensland we have one shipping company that is taking on cadetships at the moment and doing it very well, but you're right with the numbers coming through the colleges we need somewhere for these people to go and until this pandemic [is] over I really don't have a definite answer for you I'm sorry.

**Klausch Schmidt:** Probably just to add to what you've said there Steve, is the maritime industry is not the only one suffering in that space in the zoo as you know there's pretty much all of the international students across the board given our borders are closed and are struggling. So, it's not just the maritime sector, it is all sectors and a lot of them feed into your hospitality side. You come and work in the vessels at sea, so it is something across the board that is a worry to the industry, in particular RTOs and TAFEs.

3. How do you think autonomous vessels will impact the type of skills for Maritime workers?

**Steve Moon:** I'll take that one if you like. I think it'll have zero impact on the current skill requirements for maritime workers. I mean at the end of the day yes, drones will become a reality whether they're USVs or AUVs (when I'm talking unmanned surface vessels or autonomous underwater vessels), they will be a specific skill set in addition to the mariner's qualifications. Apart from those unmanned surface vessels that are going to be remotely operated from shore, and I'm talking about the ones that currently exist where we have small, unmanned service vessels currently running around the coast, taking weather observations and relaying them back via satellite. So, I cannot see it having a massive impact in our lifetime, at least on maritime industry training. As I say, this [is] where we're at now with these two types of vessels are basically

going to become skill sets, that you will have in addition to your normal maritime training. If that make sense.

4. Are many of the autonomous vessels for remote craft?

**Klausch Schmidt:** Good to hear from you Michaela. Look at this stage the ones that have been put forward are the unmanned underwater vessels and the autonomous underwater vessels. They are starting to get used more and more in Australia, so there's a requirement from defence and the requirement from environmental agencies as well as search and rescue I think that will be the next progression, but whether it's in the next one or two years I couldn't tell you, I think we probably have to wait and see from an industry point of view as to how that rolls out into Australia. Now it may be about managing the vessel in Australian waters and relating with a control centre overseas somewhere, we probably just need a bit more information to understand the skill requirement before we go to that step. Steve did you want to add to that?

**Steve Moon:** Hi Michaela, yeah I totally agree Klausch and yes I am aware of these autonomous vessels running around up around those colder parts of the world up north doing their thing now. They are going to be a challenge and not just from a navigation point of view but also from a cyber security point of view, as you can imagine something being run by a computer is prone to be hacked by someone at some stage and who knows what's going to happen. You know we've seen what's been happening internationally with Iran and the hacking that's going on over there with navigation systems and things like that, so I think we're a long way from that. I don't think that we should be giving any serious consideration to that at this point in time. Maybe in the years to come once these vessels have proven to be safe and be able to be operated autonomously given whatever the requirement is or whatever they are going to do I think it is time to look at them. But totally aware where you are coming from Michaela and understand, and it is on the radar thank you.

5. Is there any input to AMPA's coxswain grade 3 skills set?

**Steve Moon:** Yeah, g'day Jim, I'll take this one on board, only because I've had a bit to do with it I guess. Coxswain Grade 3 or exemption 38 (whatever you want to call it) has been a bit problematic from the start. Under the review of, within the review of, Marine Order 505 there has been a lot of discussion around Coxswain Grade 3 which will replace the exemption 38 hopefully and once again I'm not pre-empting what the regulator will do come June. But I believe the plan at this stage is that it will not be a skill set, it will not be part of the AQF system.

Basically Coxswain 3 will be awarded on production of a recreational boat license plus a practical assessment by the employer. They will then take those bits of paper along with the first aid certificate and a medical to the post office and the regulator will actually issue a ticket to say they're a Coxswain Grade 3. So that's why that's where that one sits at the moment and I believe that's probably where it's going to end up so exemption 38 will disappear in June and be replaced with the Coxswain 3.

6. What do you think is the most important technology introduced to the Maritime sector?

**Steve Moon:** Thanks, look let's start on the navigation side and we've all seen the introduction of ECDIS and Klausch mentioned earlier on that paper charts are on their way out and there is no doubt about that they are on their way out, there is still a role for them at the moment and I still believe there's a role for them within the training sphere. However, electronic chart displays sort of one step down from ECDIS [are] becoming more and more popular, and you might have noticed that on the regulator's website when you look at safety requirements for vessels now, the main requirement is you can have an electronic chart display and a backup for that electronic

chart display. It says that paper charts may be that backup but not essential so you could have an iPad basically if you wanted to I guess if you wanted to really stretch it.

So the introduction of electronic chart displays with layering is probably one of the biggest advancements we've seen and then also of course with tracking devices. Now it's very interesting to be able to see what's going on around you and to be able to identify passing vessels you know at the click of a button it's really exciting. The autonomous vessels both underwater and surface are also very good but we've also got to look at engineering technology and how far that has come.

Now there have been many questions about whether or not the qualifications that we currently deliver are actually suitable anymore for some of those given that bigger engines are being put in vessels and they're all computerized and should the MED person have to, you know, be able to go down and do this. Should the MED2 limits be increased given these new engine types and the way they function, but that's the discussion for another day as well as things advance it's really difficult to keep pace with the technology that's coming through. It is super-fast and yes it all enhances safety and makes our life easier, but at the end of the day if you're going to sail a boat from A to B you want to be able to get there safely. Having due regard to your cruise safety, the vessel safety, everything else and you should also be able to do it I believe in the absence of some of that technology. So I think foundational training is still going to be around for a while and it's very very important.

#### 7. Maritime Operators work in the tourism sector, how has this been affected?

**Steve Moon:** Look we're in a world of hurt there's no doubt about that. If you look at the Great Barrier Reef Catchment for example, and the marine tourism sector and the jobs that spin off of that, we used to be able to boast 66 000 jobs and I know that's because [it] just happens to be coincidental with the AMSA figure before and generates 6.4 billion dollars to the Australian economy each year. Our tourism fleet up here has been decimated, there is no doubt about that we have operators now that are still operating running at 10% capacity and you can't survive on that. A lot of operators their funds have been depleted. I mentioned before that some have taken their vessels out of the water. Our largest operators had to stand down 400 employees.

It's not just the fact that international tourism from which Cairns relies most, has dried up, job keeper has been very very helpful in a lot of ways, however what we're finding difficulty with and maybe some of the unions might get their back up here, I don't know but with the IR laws the way they stand at the moment trying to roster people on and maintain the integrity of any awards is really really difficult. It's got to the point where you know operators are throwing their hands in the air saying look it's all too hard we can't do this we just got to stop we'll tie our boats up and they've had to do that in many instances. The ports north up here in the marina have you know they've graciously waived any marina fees to help operators get by but it is really really tough so I, yeah it's going to be interesting how this new 1.2 billion dollar support package goes. Especially up here, I see that package and I (and this is just a personal opinion) more as an aviation support package. If you drill down the figures and you shared everything evenly amongst the initial 13 destinations (I know that's 15 now two more got added this morning), you know you're looking at only looking at 600 people today in Cairns, now one of our largest vessels alone carries 300. So how all these operators are going to take a share of that, I don't know, it'll be interesting to see how. I'm not ungrateful I think it's absolutely fantastic that someone's actually doing something is it the be all and end all, I'm not sure, but the answer to your question we're doing it really tough.

**Klausch Schmidt:** Thanks Steve, we can probably throw in Covid's really affected the fishing industry too because obviously they're represented on the IRC and some of the things that they've been saying to us are they found it very difficult because their fishing vessel might leave out of WA with the intention to dock in NT to drop off the catch but that caused issues because obviously the

state borders were closed. Fishermen who were from WA, or flying in and out to join the fishing vessels, all of a sudden had to stop and there was contingency plans had to be made by the fishing industry as well so covid's not only just hit the tourism industry it made it difficult for the fishing industry as well.

8. Could you clarify is AMSA proposing the practical assessment to be completed by the employer?

**Steve Moon:** Well now you are asking me to give too much away Jim but what I can tell you, the form that I have seen, the practical assessment is very similar to the current exemption 38 practical assessment. The assessment can be carried out by a certificated person holding a certificate of competency of coxswain one or higher and has to be co-signed by the employer but I didn't say that won't stand up in court thanks Jim.

9. What are the engagement opportunities to get involved in Maritime meetings?

**Klausch Schmidt:** Look the first thing is you need to go to our website and register to be one of the stakeholders and just select the appropriate box which would say maritime industry. What will happen then is every time we've got a project going or there's a discussion around maritime, you'll get an EDM, you'll be able to decide and it will offer positions on the TAC. It'll say we need subject matter experts for this project and this project you have the opportunity then to put your hand up for subject matter expert for that project. The other part is once we have drafts of those documents that have been done, you have the opportunity to go and read those documents, provide as much feedback as you think and sometimes you know it's important to get it from every sector that is possible because it's often hard to find a line that achieves everything across all sectors of the industry. So 1 get registered with AIS, 2 you'll see at the end of this presentation Anna Jerrems email details so feel free to contact Anna or myself if you would like to participate. If anybody would like anything to go to the IRC meetings as a discussion point or a suggestion for potential projects because there's a need in this specific part of the industry by all means reach out again.