



SEACARE AUTHORITY QUARTERLY REPORT

Report 03/2001

Outcomes of Seacare Authority Meeting 36 of 14 August 2001

Redesigned Seacare Authority website – launch is imminent

The launch of a new design for the Seacare Authority's website is imminent. The new website has been completely overhauled to ensure it is much easier to use, and to find information. It has also been designed to enable companies to use the site to complete and submit periodic Seacare Authority forms such as the Insurance Arrangements form. The Employee and Ship Details form will be available for web completion and submission from the December 2001 quarter.

Review of Seacare scheme legislation

The Chairperson of the Seacare Authority advised meeting 36 of the Authority that the Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business, the Hon Tony Abbott MP, had agreed that the Authority review its legislation and advise on any deficiencies that may need to be addressed. The Authority has requested that the Secretariat bring forward a proposal on aspects of the legislation (both the Seafarers and OH&S(MI) Act) requiring review, for Authority consideration. All stakeholders will be consulted as part of the review.

Seacare Authority Annual Report

The Authority approved a first draft of the 2000-01 Annual Report at its meeting on 14 August 2001. The final draft was subsequently endorsed at a special teleconference meeting of the Authority held on 13 September 2001. The Authority's Annual Report is expected to be tabled in the Parliament out of session by 31 October 2001. It will be circulated to Seacare Authority stakeholders in November and will also be available on the website from mid November 2001.

A rehabilitation and return to work best practice guide to be produced

A guidance note on best practice rehabilitation and return to work for the shipping industry has been endorsed by the Authority. The guidance note will be published in booklet form and will be distributed free of charge to the industry later in 2001.

Seacare Authority occupational health and safety awards and conference

The Authority has agreed to further develop proposals to sponsor an annual OHS awards event, aimed at recognising strong OHS performance in the industry. The Authority indicated a preference for such an initiative to be run in conjunction with a significant industry event to ensure its sustainability and to ensure it gains a strong profile, particularly among employers. The Seacare Authority is currently identifying an appropriate industry event and will give the proposal full consideration at its next meeting in November 2001.

The Authority is also considering sponsoring an OHS conference, similar in concept to the successful rehabilitation and return to work symposium held late in 2000 in Melbourne, with a focus on OHS performance in the industry.

OHS brochure

A Seacare Authority OHS brochure, outlining the key features of the *Occupational Health and Safety (Maritime Industry) Act 1993* was endorsed for publication at meeting 36. It is expected to be distributed to stakeholders during early October 2001.

OHS practical guidance material

The Authority also endorsed a proposal to develop OHS practical guidance material as part of an OHS hazards manual. The initial guidance material will focus on: (i) manual handling; and (ii) safe access and egress (slips, trips and falls).

Maritime Legislation Amendment Bill 2000 (the 500 GT Bill)

The Authority was updated on developments with the MLA Bill at meeting 36.

There was some doubt, with the press of Parliamentary business, whether the Bill was to be considered by the Senate this session.

If the Bill is not passed by the Parliament, the Authority asked that the Secretariat consult with the States and NT, the industry and AMSA to clarify coverage under the Seafarers and OH&S(MI) Acts. This clarification will be aimed at ensuring that all employers to whom the Seacare scheme legislation applies are fully complying with the legislation. The Authority has requested that it be briefed on coverage in the NT, particularly in relation to operators of small ships (including those involved in the fishing and pearling industry), at its next meeting.

Coverage of foreign flagged ships

The Authority has considered legislative options to provide a choice for operators of foreign flagged ships to become covered by the Seafarers Act. One option involves an opt-in provision. The options will be considered as part of the legislative review referred to earlier in this Bulletin.

Discussions with scheme insurers

The Secretariat reported that it had commenced a round of discussions with scheme insurers to canvass issues such as insurer commitment to maintenance of workers' compensation to the shipping industry, premium costs, opportunities for improved performance rating, the legislation review and the role of insurers in claims management. A full report will be presented to the next meeting of the Authority.

Third National Comparative Performance Monitoring Report

The Authority was advised that Workplace Relations Ministers Council had released the 3rd CPM report on 13 August 2001. Members were briefed on the performance of the Seacare scheme relative to national benchmarks reported in CPM 3. The Chairperson of the Authority issued a media release on the implications of the report for the Seacare scheme – relevant extracts from that release follow:

“In 1999 – 00, the Australian maritime industry recorded a zero death toll for the fifth year and a dramatic improvement on injury level performance from previous years. This was warmly welcomed by the Seacare Authority.

However, by comparison to other industries the injury rate among seafarers remains high. The report provided both strong evidence of the high level and cost of injuries in the maritime industry, compared to other industries.

Mr Geoff Gronow, Chair of the Seacare Authority said “It is difficult to compare the shipping industry with other industries given the moving and isolated nature of the workplace. However, the

report showed that the Seacare scheme and industry injury levels over the past 3 years made significant improvements. But there was still room for improvement.”

The Report highlights by comparison, that the transport industry experiences approximately 29 injuries per 1,000 employees, whereas in maritime it is still up around 35 injuries per 1,000 employees. Both are well beyond the Australian average rate of 16 injuries per 1,000 employees.

Mr Gronow said “The Authority remains committed to ensuring the downward trend continues from the high in 1997 - 98 when it was at a staggering 59 injuries per thousand employees and that the low levels reported in 1999 – 00 continue to fall.”

The CPM report can be found on www.dewrsb.gov.au/cpm.

Next Seacare Authority meeting

The next meeting of the Authority will take place in Melbourne on Tuesday 20 November 2001. If you wish that a matter be placed on the agenda for discussion, please forward your item to the Seacare Authority Secretariat by e-mail at seacare@dewrsb.gov.au or telephone on (02) 6121 7120 by 23 October 2001.

Seacare Authority statistics and performance reports

In 2000 the Authority adopted a new set of standing reports for consideration at each meeting, aimed at keeping a closer watch on scheme performance, and to help identify policy directions. The following charts and tables have been reproduced from those presented to meeting 36 of 14 August 2001.

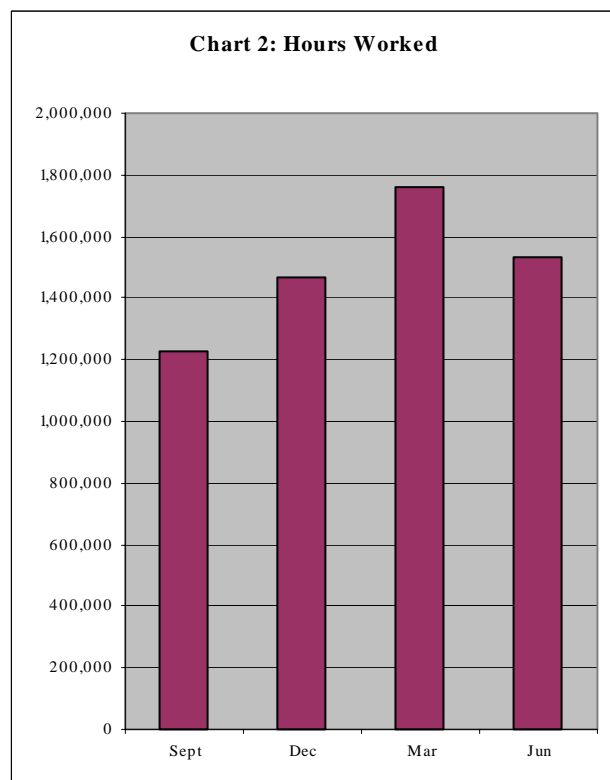
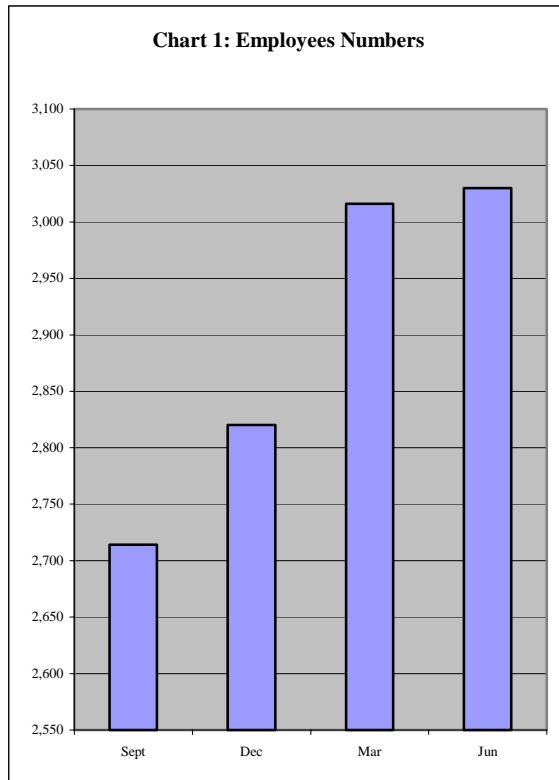


Chart 1 shows that on current trends, the number of seafarers covered by the Seafarers Act over 2000-01 will on average be slightly over 2,850, up marginally from the 2,800 seafarers covered in 1999-00. One explanation is that the Authority continues to identify new ships that are covered by the Act (note that the actual number of employees in 2000-01 is 2,885 (an average of the 4 quarter figures)).

Chart 2 shows that on current trends, hours worked by seafarers will total approximately 7.1M for the year, compared to 5.9 m in 1999-00. The actual number of hours worked in 2000-01 is 5,986,832 (an average of the 4 quarters).

Table 1: Seafarers Act – Compensation claims data – 2000-01

Claims data at end of each quarter	Sep	Dec	Mar	Jun	Total	Annual estimate*	Previous Year
Total claims reported to AMICA	56	51	31	45	183	183	177
Claims accepted	48	34	20	42	144	144	151
Claims rejected	4	3	0	7	14	14	18
Claims pending	4	14	11	25	25	25	8
Claims accepted - on duty	43	32	20	39	134	134	134
Claims accepted - off duty	4	1	0	10	15	15	7
Claims accepted - other (travel, study)	1	1	0	0	2	2	10
Active or continuing claims	81	47		33	47	47	53
Claims of 5 or more days duration		64		120	184	184	131

Source: AMICA, *Seacare Authority

Table 1 indicates that if the annual estimate of claims reported eventuates, the downward trend in the number of claims may reverse for the first time in over 5 years. While the increased number of seafarers may explain some of the increase, the increase number of claims indicates that the injury rate among seafarers could be on the increase, after a long period of decline.

Table 2: OH&S incident report 2000-01

	Sep	Dec	Mar	Jun	Total	Annual estimate*	Previous year*
Incidents reported to AMSA	15	22	14	20	71	95	80
Dangerous occurrences notified	1	0	5	3	9	12	8
Investigations of incidents	4	1	5	3	13	17	23
Prohibition notices issued	NA	1	NA	0	1	2	3
Improvement notices issued	NA	0	NA	0	0	0	7
Prosecutions commenced	NA	0	NA	0	0	0	0
Prosecutions concluded	NA	0	NA	0	0	0	1

Source: AMSA, *Seacare Authority

Table 2 indicates that despite an apparent increase in the number of injuries occurring, this is not reflected in the number of incidents being reported. The Authority is discussing with AMSA ways to improve incident reporting.

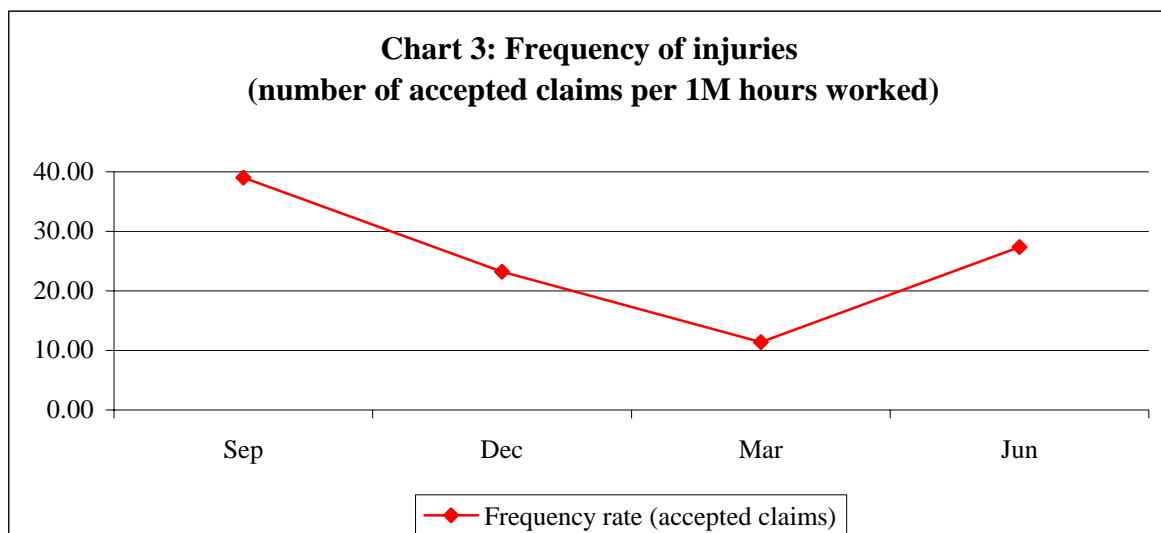
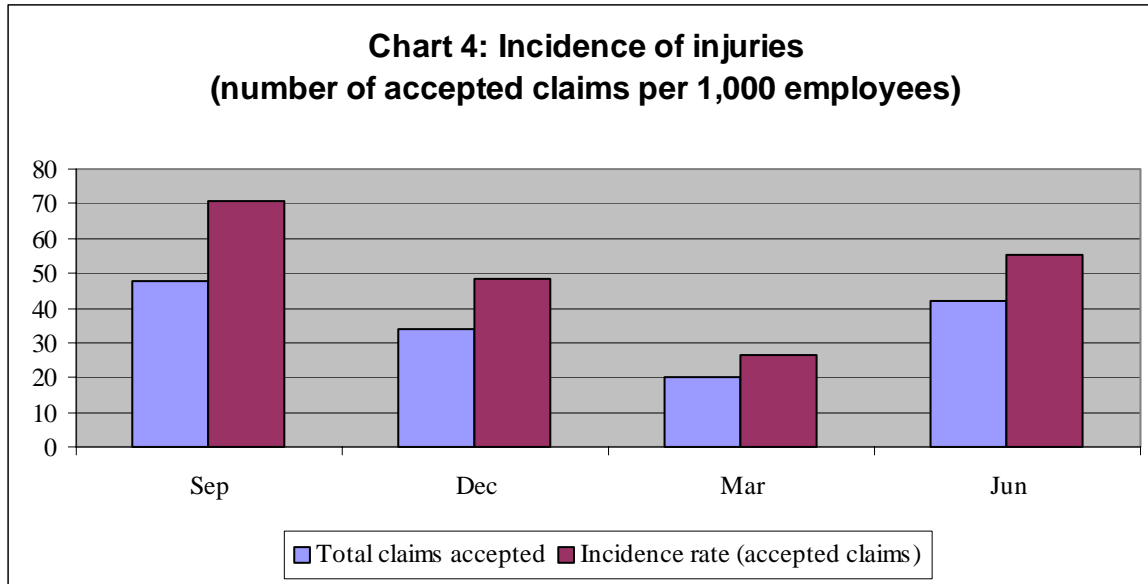


Chart 3 shows a strong downward trend in the injury frequency rate over the first 3 quarters and an increase in the 4th quarter. Care should be taken in interpreting this chart because accepted claims at the last day of the quarter are subject to significant adjustment with the passage of time. In addition, the larger number of hours worked for a relatively stable seafarer population will also result in an apparent trend shift.



The same qualifications provided in relation to Chart 3 apply to Chart 4.

We encourage you to replicate this Report in part or in full in your organisation's newsletter or journal. No permission is required to publish but it would be appropriate to acknowledge the source. Another way in which you can ensure your organisation improves communication is by creating a direct link between your website and the Authority's website. Some organisations have already done so.

HOW TO CONTACT THE SEACARE AUTHORITY

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 Chairperson

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Visit the Seacare Authority Website at www.seacare.gov.au