



## ***Seacare Maritime OHS Forum – WA***

The *Seacare Maritime OHS Forum - WA* was held on 16 October 2007 at the Western Australian Maritime Museum, Fremantle as part of the Seacare Authority's *Awards & Conference* program. The Forum was also an activity to acknowledge the Seacare Authority's *Sea Safe Work Day* as well as *Safe Work Australian Week*.

The Forum provided an opportunity for interaction, learning and exchange of information, especially for the Authority's Western Australian stakeholders. The Forum included presentations on OHS in the maritime industry from a range of perspectives and facilitated discussion on best practice OHS strategies. It was attended by around 70 participants.

### ***Forum Program***

The Forum began with a series of presentations on *Maritime OHS – trends, issues & gaps*. The presentations gave differing perspectives on the topic: a regulatory viewpoint, according to each of the three key OHS regulators in the WA maritime sector; an employee or seafarers' perspective; and an employer's perspective.

The second half of the Forum was devoted to round-table discussions on *Improving Maritime OHS* where participants identified strategies and tactics for improving OHS performance across the industry and within their own maritime workplaces.

### ***Summary of presentations on Maritime OHS – trends, issues & gaps***

#### ***Regulator perspectives***

##### **Allan Schwartz**

Manager, Ship Inspection Group, Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA)

- Injury incident rates have been declining since the commencement of the OHS(MI) Act
- Statistics point to areas of concern including: bulk carriers; slips, trip and falls / being hit by a moving object / body stressing together account for 75% of injuries; deck spaces / cargo areas / cabin spaces are where most injuries occur; and integrated ratings suffer three times more injuries than any other category of seafarer.
- Risk assessments may appear to be undertaken but are often not reflected in work practices.
- Companies are responsible for driving safety culture on vessels rather than seafarers.

- Underreporting of OHS incidents and dangerous occurrences is a significant problem.
- AMSA is continuing to explore the training need of the Inspectorate and to increase training standards.

### **Gavin Guyan**

Team Leader, National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority (NOPSA)

- NOPSA's role is to enforce its legislation but the provision of information to improve OHS performance is also central. Accidents and dangerous occurrences/circumstances are investigated with a view to providing lessons learnt to offshore petroleum operators.
- Offshore safety regulated through duties of care and safety cases, not prescriptive rules. An inspection to ensure compliance typically lasts 2-3 days onboard and focuses on areas where incidents have been prevalent.
- Joint inspections undertaken with AMSA
- Skills shortages in the industry can lead to workforce competency concerns. Often promotions to new roles are occurring very quickly with little experience to underpin the roles the personnel are placed in.
- Activity in the industry is high and increasing and the number of incidents and frequency of incidents is also increasing. Pressures to keep pace with demand leading to compromised safety, in some cases.

### **David Harrod**

General Manager, Marine Safety, WA Department of Planning and Infrastructure

- WA maritime sector facing several challenges: the remote locations in the northwest of the state – logistical problems; environmental issues (eg oil spill in remote locations); bigger vessels, more traffic, more congestion; overlapping jurisdictions and confusion over coverage; significant labour shortages.
- problems collecting meaningful data – incidents appear to be rising significantly
- Future plans include: closer cooperation with other agencies (NOPSA, AMSA, ATSB, Worksafe WA, WAPOL); new legislation including a maritime bill, increased intervention / investigation / prosecution powers, blood alcohol concentration limits for both commercial and recreational sectors; codes of conduct for charter boats and ferries; increased focus on safety management systems approach.
- An industry in crisis - due to: lack of coherent, national shipping policy; labour shortages; lack of single, national regulatory framework.

*Employee/seafarers perspective*

**Martin Byrne**

Assistant Federal Secretary, Australian Institute of Marine & Power Engineers (AIMPE) and Employee representative on the Seacare Authority

- Seacare scheme provides holistic approach – injury prevention but fair compensation when injury occurs and rehabilitation. Parallel with national development of Aust. Safety & Compensation Council
- Safety case regime lacks transparency. Supervised self-regulation contrasts unfavourably with IMO conventions established and internationally agreed over many decades.
- Currently a multiplicity of (state-based) authorities under voyage-based coverage provisions. Sensible development would be to establish national maritime laws for all commercial shipping and for Seacare scheme to extend and regulate all OHS and workers' compensation with AMSA regulating all vessel safety. States should retain responsibility for private pleasure craft boating as distinct from commercial shipping.
- No fatalities in Seacare scheme since 1994 and incidents are declining. A tribute to the operators and seafarers involved and to the Seacare system. Fatalities continue to occur in Australian waters on a regular basis.

*Employer perspective*

**Neil Butt**

HSEQ Manager, Farstad Shipping (Indian Pacific) Pty Ltd

- Offshore sector is booming creating big challenges. There is a real need for cooperation between stakeholders like never before. Industry gatherings are becoming increasingly important as a way of reviewing current performance and seeking improvement. Australia's oil and gas production sector lags about 50% behind rest of the world in LTIFR.
- Growing range of new build vessels demanding new crews but it is increasingly difficult to attract people to a seafaring career.
- For Farstad, a decreasing number of reportable injuries and other indicators showing improvement, however, lower level injuries rates still very high. Major challenge is to reduce occurrence of low-level, no treatment type injuries.
- People entering offshore sector not aware of risks and the "hostile environment" they face. Also, many people promoted before they are ready for their role and safety responsibilities. Induction programs are very important. Simulated experience approaches may be the key.
- More emphasis should be placed on seafarers identifying risk, and recognising and take ownership of remedies. Seafarers must anticipate risk and intervene.
- All personnel have a role in safety leadership and workgroups must promote this culture. There needs to be an ongoing "safety conversation" where information about risk is continually communicated.

## *Summary of Round Table Discussions on Improving Maritime OHS*

### **1. What can the industry do to achieve better OHS outcomes?**

- Establish return to work networks.
- Look at the reliability of AMSA medicals and fitness for sea duties certification.
- Enhance knowledge and effectiveness of Inspectorate through increased training.
- More understanding through better data / difference between injury rates for casual workforces versus permanent.
- Lack of clarity on jurisdiction leading to confusion over inspection regime; under reporting and not reporting to correct authority.
- Establish a one stop shop help service that can provide direction on where to go / what to do.
- Lack of shipping industry knowledge in government.
- Establish a national maritime jurisdiction.
- Lack of ongoing training and training facilities. Establish an industry-funded group trainings scheme (traineeships).
- Develop a greater sense of maritime career. Promote at high school level.
- Interface of Australian and foreign workers holding different concepts of safety standards, different attitudes, different acceptable standards.
- Improve qualifications through increased training with enhanced curriculum. Online computer-based to create greater opportunities for onboard learning.
- Create more robust safety culture. Provide incentives and recognition for safety initiatives. Foster greater seafarer involvement. Shift focus from blame to outcomes. Culture change driven from the top.
- Establish a national maritime OHS system that resolves jurisdictional issues.
- Ongoing training (shipboard where possible) with greater competency assurances.
- Create a baseline induction for the offshore industry.
- Regulators provide more materials to be used on vessels that address current issues/trends.
- Greater sharing of industry knowledge; more opportunities / conferences / forums.

## **2. What should your workplace do to achieve better OHS outcomes?**

- Increase safety focus during induction programs / more emphasis on induction.
- Use mentoring to assist less experienced seafarers / mentoring approach can be very effective.
- More training / greater involvement in training.
- Foster a reporting culture whereby individuals take responsibility rather than blame.
- Pre-employment testing.
- Maintain focus on safety (especially around Christmas); remain vigilant and avoid complacency; continually refresh the message and keep the message(s) simple / clear.
- Provide the tools and technology for safer work
- Review OHS policy regularly including employer's duties and employee's duties; Policy as a reflection of a company's OHS commitment.
- Develop strategies for greater crew retention.
- Focus on positive performance and lead indicators rather than negative.

## **3. Does the *Seacare OHS Strategy* assist and meet the needs of the industry?**

- Raise Strategy's profile through better communication.
- Establish a national health & safety representatives' conference.
- Establish a Seacare train the trainers' forum.
- Reduction targets are important / employers should commit to targets
- Strategy provides a device for engagement of industry; target setting important. However, need more seafarer engagement.
- Hold awards program annually.
- Build in positive performance indicator measures.

## **4. Is there other OHS guidance, or forms of guidance, that could assist the industry?**

- Standards and guidelines underpinning legislations.
- Codes of practice specifically for offshore industry / seafarers.
- Confined spaces.
- High risk plant.
- Online availability of tools to assist small operators eg risk assessment forms; job hazard analysis forms; inspection proformas.
- Industry forums for sharing OHS information between regulatory bodies and companies.