



AIMPE

Australian Institute of
Marine and Power Engineers
HEAD OFFICE

Hon Scott Morrison,
Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra

8th April, 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

Re: COVID-19 travel restrictions - Maritime Crew (non-passenger vessels)

AIMPE writes to seek the agreement of the National Cabinet that the exemptions that have been incorporated in various Federal, State and Territory Directions need to be amended so that Australian maritime personnel are able to travel between their ships/vessels and their homes without quarantine restrictions. Of course, self-isolation at home is necessary and absolutely understood.

The Australian maritime industry plays a vital role in keeping Australia's international trade moving and in keeping Australia's domestic economy functioning. Ships cannot move without crews. The Marine Engineers who make up the AIMPE operate and maintain the engines which drive these vessels. Marine Engineers work on vessels for periods of 4 weeks straight or more, then have a similar period of time off duty on leave.

The tightening of travel restrictions on maritime personnel is making it practically impossible to keep the Australian maritime industry functioning properly. This is particularly so for those who work across State/Territory borders from their home. NOPSEMA has issued a Safety Alert [attached] about the possible adverse safety consequences of some of the proposals that have been suggested in the offshore oil and gas sector highlighting the negative consequences on seafarers' health and well-being.

AIMPE understands and agrees with the need for strict measures to control the spread of the virus. (All AIMPE staff have been directed to work from home since 31st March.) But Australia's Marine Engineers cannot work from home. They must be on their company vessels to carry out their duties. In many instances the vessels that they are working on are operating with the minimum crewing number of Marine Engineers required by statute. Reductions in numbers are not legally permitted in these circumstances.

It is emphasised that AIMPE is writing about vessels which have small crews, and which do not carry passengers. On-board protocols have been put in place across the industry to avoid contagion. After a 4-week swing on a ship/vessel without any indication of any symptoms, these personnel have been effectively in self-isolation and represent no contagion risk on returning home (for self-isolation).

Yours faithfully,

Martin Byrne
Federal Secretary
Att. 1