



**AIMPE**



**The Maritime Union  
of Australia**

Hon. B. Joyce  
Acting Prime Minister  
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development  
Parliament House,  
Canberra  
ACT 2600

23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021

Dear Deputy Prime Minister,

**Re: Freight Movement Code and Protocol**

On 20<sup>th</sup> August you announced the adoption of the revised National Freight Movement Code and Protocol by the National Cabinet to assist in ensuring the continued movement of freight around Australia during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

The Infrastructure and Transport Ministers have produced the Freight Movement Code and Protocol to cover road and rail workers and support personnel and ensure as far as possible the consistent application of COVID-19-related protocols around Australia. This is a very good step to keep the national economy moving during the difficulties of the pandemic.

However, we write to draw attention to the fact that maritime freight movements and the maritime crews who facilitate maritime freight movements are not covered by the Freight Movement Code and Protocol.

As you know the most recent statistics record that coastal shipping carries over 109 billion tonne kilometres of freight around Australia each year. This includes bulk and non-bulk freight. This is a not insignificant amount of freight and a substantial proportion of the total domestic freight task.

In many instances coastal shipping is the only way that these quantities of freight can be economically moved from source to destination. This notwithstanding, maritime crews are not covered by the National Freight Movement Code and Protocol and do not have a consistent set of protocols to ensure that maritime crews can continue to travel to and from the ships that carry these cargoes.

There are many other maritime personnel who are also involved in the movement of goods and supplies to and from Offshore Oil and Gas facilities. While these movements may not be included in the Freight statistics published in the BITRE Australian Infrastructure and Transport Yearbook, they also perform functions vital to the effective continued functioning of the Offshore Oil and Gas sector – the product from which is for both domestic consumption and export.

At the moment the inter-State movement of these maritime crews is being severely hampered by the constantly changing requirements associated with various border closures. There is no consistency for people who cross borders to join their ship or other vessel. In some situations, maritime crews are unable to travel even though it might just be once in a 5 or 6 week period – compared to the road and rail drivers who may cross borders weekly or even more frequently.

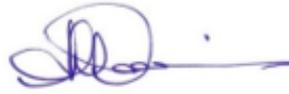
We seek the inclusion of maritime crews in the Freight Movement Code and Protocol or the adoption of a similar Code and Protocol exclusively for maritime crews so that the Australian maritime industry can continue to play its part in keeping the Australian economy moving as smoothly as possible during these difficult times.



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