



# AIMPE



Hon Jim Chalmers,  
Treasurer  
Parliament House  
Canberra

28<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Dear Treasurer,

### **October 2022 Budget – submission re training for Maritime Officers**

Further to our correspondence of 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2022 addressed to the Minister for Skills and Training Mr Brendan O'Connor (copied to yourself) and the correspondence of the Maritime Union of Australia of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2022 to you about seafarer training, the Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers (AIMPE) and the Australian Maritime Officers Union (AMOU) write to request urgent consideration for funding allocation for Maritime Officers training in the October 2022 Budget.

As you may be aware AIMPE represents Engineer Officers and the AMOU represents Masters and other Deck Officers. Together these Maritime Officers, who hold Certificates of Competency issued by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), comprise approximately 50% of the seafarers on any particular ship or other maritime vessel. Due to the lack of a comprehensive maritime industry training program over the last 25 years, Australia's maritime workforce has shrunk significantly. Work carried out by one of the main employer groups – Maritime Industry Australia Ltd (MIAL) – has identified a major shortfall particularly of Maritime Officers over coming years.

AIMPE and AMOU support and endorse the Albanese Government's commitment to establish a Maritime Strategic Fleet and at the Surface Transport Roundtable convened by Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Hon Catherine King we raised the critical need for a national maritime industry training program. That proposal was one of two maritime specific outcomes of the Surface Transport Roundtable [see attached].

In order to implement a national maritime industry training program, it is most important that allocation be made in the October Budget and in the Forward Estimates for an agreed level of support. The structure and scope of the program would need to be sufficient to enable the implementation of the Maritime Strategic Fleet policy and the other maritime policies of the Albanese Government including the Pacific Step-up of the Defence Department and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Offshore Wind policy of the Department of Climate Change.

One aspect of a national maritime industry training program that you may not be familiar with is the greater length of time required for the training of Maritime Officers when compared with the training of Integrated Ratings. Maritime Officers need to spend around three years at college (plus compulsory sea-time) to obtain the basic qualification required under Australian law and the international conventions for ships at sea – the Certificate of Competency as a Watchkeeping Officer. This may be shortened for individuals who have pre-existing skill sets for instance those with a relevant Engineering Trade qualification may take approximately 18 months to obtain the qualification as an Engineer Watchkeeper. Note that higher qualifications require further training and experience, and it takes up to 10 years for a new entrant to progress to the highest level of Maritime Officer qualifications – Master Class 1 and Engineer Class 1.

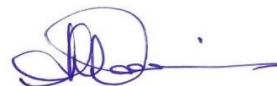
However, these training time periods referred to above demonstrate the lead time required to prepare for a significant addition to Australia's maritime workforce as is required to enable the Maritime Strategic Fleet to proceed. The training of a new generation of Australian Maritime Officers needs to start as soon as possible to ensure the availability of sufficient qualified personnel to provide the necessary crews for future requirements.

As a consequence of the much longer duration of training periods and the greater expense of the courses required for Maritime Officers (in comparison to Integrated Ratings), a larger financial allocation will be required to produce the numbers of Maritime Officers required to operate the ships anticipated in the Maritime Strategic Fleet. Our estimate is that this would be well in excess of double the budget allocation proposed for Integrated Rating training.

Yours faithfully



Martin Byrne  
Federal Secretary



Mark Davis  
Executive Officer

Att. 1

CC: Hon. Brendan O'Connor MP, Minister for Skills & Training  
Hon. Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development & Local Government  
Ms Angel Gillham, CEO MIAL  
Mark Davis, Executive Officer AMOU  
Sally McManus, Secretary ACTU



# AIMPE



## Attachment 1

### **Jobs and Skills Summit 2022 – Surface Transport Roundtable**

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*On 25 August 2022, the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, the Hon Catherine King MP alongside Hon Carol Brown, convened a roundtable discussion with stakeholders from across the surface transport sector, preceding the September 2022 Jobs and Skills Summit.*

Several solutions were provided for consideration including:

Solutions that are **transport mode-agnostic and end-to-end across the supply chain to boost productivity**. Regular meetings between government and industry could be considered to discuss and measure progress.

**Changes to migration settings and incentives for returning workers** – a faster and more streamlined visa application process, delaying the SAF levy payable, a review of the skilled migration priority lists for occupations such as aircraft engineers, and tax incentives for returning workers

**The recognition of appropriate occupations through ANZSCO**, including truck drivers, to assist with developing effective policies addressing skills and capabilities.

**Support national accreditation** especially across the road and rail sectors, and nationally consistent approach to delivering high quality training through apprenticeships and traineeships, moving to a competency based system, and standardisation of competencies.

**Initiatives to attract women, diverse and new employees** to the transport sector, such as:

- Improving the perception of the industry within the community.
- Establishing clear pathways to for workers to, e.g. reform the VET and university sectors.
- Recognising transport workers as professionals, e.g. through trade qualifications, which should be supported by government.
- Targeting women and younger workers through industry education and recruitment campaigns
- Increasing job flexibility i.e. flexible hours, accommodating family and carer responsibilities for both parents.
- Support female-only recruitment via exemptions to the Sex Discrimination Act.
- For land transport, provide more and better facilities and establish proper, maintained rest stops.

- Consider setting diversity targets as diversity levels have remained constant for two decades.

**Recognise the need to facilitate job re-design and upskilling** to accommodate the digital transformation occurring in the workplace and the adoption of future technologies in transport and freight logistics.

**Specific national training in electrification and hydrogen vehicle servicing and associated services.** This could also include incorporating heavy vehicles i.e. trucks and buses into the work underway on the Electric Vehicle Strategy.

**Beneficiaries of skilled transport workers** should pay some of the costs towards training.

**Support and scale up existing industry-led initiatives** to diversify the workforce e.g. Wayfinder programs.

**Investigate transition pathways for ex-military personnel to move to transport sector.** Need to address regulatory barriers such as failure to recognise competencies across borders or different systems. Provide incentivisation programs to support the transition.

**Support a national maritime industry training program.**

**Improve the availability of re-validation courses to bring people back into the industry (maritime).**

**Reform compliance penalties** in the trucking sector for minor paperwork offences for road transport workers e.g. log book offences.

**A review of the resilience of Australia's Freight and Supply Network** is needed in light of COVID and climate change, this should include workforce resilience and readiness. While there is a 2019 National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy and Action Plan it need updating in light of the above.