



Hon. M. McGowan, MLA  
Premier,  
Western Australia.

20<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

By email: [wa-government@dpc.wa.gov.au](mailto:wa-government@dpc.wa.gov.au)

Dear Premier,

### **Travel Restrictions on Australian Maritime employees**

The Nautilus Federation Australia (NFA) is a strategic partnership between the two unions representing maritime professionals, the Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers and the Australian Maritime Officers Union.

We write to raise with you our concern that various maritime operations in WA may face interruption in coming months due to the inability of personnel from NSW and Victoria to travel to WA. NFA is also concerned that in a desperate attempt to overcome this potential problem, maritime operators have already signalled that they may seek to bring foreign personnel into WA under temporary visas as replacements for the Australian ship's officers unable to travel from Eastern States.

It is understood that the current outbreak of the Delta strain of COVID-19 is a matter of grave concern for the Government of WA. However, it is also understood that interruption to maritime operations relating to vital WA export commodities is a highly undesirable possibility.

In the road and rail transport sectors the Freight Movement Protocol and Code have established procedures that allow freight to keep moving between Eastern States and WA subject to a range of control mechanisms. NFA suggests that a similar approach should be adopted to enable the maritime employees who are based in the Eastern States to fill their essential roles in operating a wide range of maritime vessels in WA waters.

Under the National Plan to transition Australia's National COVID-19 Response, it is anticipated that once the targets of 70% and 80% double vaccination are reached then restrictions will be progressively eased. In NSW first dose vaccination has already reached and surpassed 80%. This gives a very solid basis for expectation that NSW will reach the double dose figure in the near future. Projections are that this will happen in mid-October [70%] and in November [80%].

In this context it would seem that there must be scope for a pathway to be created to allow for double vaccinated maritime personnel from Eastern States with the appropriate vaccination level to enter WA, undertake quarantine and testing and then proceed to their vessels using exclusive transport arrangements.

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Personnel who have been onboard their vessels for extended periods will naturally and reasonably wish to be relieved from those vessels and allowed to return to their families in order to take their leave. This pressure will increase as we get closer to Christmas. Meanwhile their replacement Officers are at home and are running out of the leave they have accrued in the service of these vessels, and they face the prospect of going off pay in the period ahead. For those personnel to be forced to continue to stay at home and possibly see foreign personnel on temporary visas fly into to WA to take up their positions is a rotten prospect in the run-up to Christmas. We believe this is not a situation that any Australian State or Territory is comfortable condoning where the potential exists to address the core issue.

NFA seeks to engage constructively on these issues and requests your intervention to address the looming problems.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Byrne".

Martin Byrne  
**Federal President**  
**AIMPE**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Davis".

Mark Davis  
**Executive Officer**  
**AMOU**

CC	Hon R Cook	Minister for Health	<a href="mailto:Minister.Cook@dpc.wa.gov.au">Minister.Cook@dpc.wa.gov.au</a>
	Hon M. Roberts	Minister for Police	<a href="mailto:Minister.Roberts@dpc.wa.gov.au">Minister.Roberts@dpc.wa.gov.au</a>
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