



AIMPE

Australian Institute of
Marine and Power Engineers
HEAD OFFICE

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

23rd October, 2020.

By email: wa-government@dpc.wa.gov.au

Dear Premier,

Request for Exemption – Trident LNG employees

The Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers writes to request an exemption for Trident LNG employees from certain aspects of the *Quarantine (Closing the Border) Directions Approval for Maritime Crew (No. 4) under paragraph 27(r)*.

From our reading of the new Direction, Australian seafarers returning to West Australia from overseas on ships will be required to quarantine in WA for 14 days. AIMPE seeks that if this is the intent of paragraph 14 of the Direction then an exemption be granted to employees of Trident LNG when they disembark from one of the following vessels:

- Northwest Sanderling
- Northwest Sandpiper
- Northwest Snipe
- Northwest Stormpetrel.

These four LNG tankers are all Australian flag ships which means that Australian law applies at all times to these ships and the crew on board them. These ships are the only four Australian flag ships which engage in international trades from WA ports. No other Australian flag ships undertake international trading voyages to and from WA ports.

The 4 LNG Tankers are operated by Shell Tankers Australia /Trident LNG and trade exclusively for the North West Shelf project. The first of these ships commenced trading in 1989 carrying LNG to Japan. The four ships have been dedicated to this trade for their entire lives. They do not trade to any other ports. After discharging their cargoes in Japan, they steam directly back to Australia. The return voyage to Australia takes 14 days or longer. They do not visit ports in any other country during the return voyage.

Ever since the first outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020 there have been zero cases of coronavirus infections on these 4 LNG Tankers.

This result has been achieved because of the strict access and hygiene protocols that have been implemented by Shell Tankers Australia /Trident LNG on all 4 ships. I visited all four of these ships in late February/early March 2020 and even at that stage the hygiene regime on board these ships was exemplary. Social distancing was enforced on board the ships. As a visitor I was temperature tested before boarding, required to wear a face mask and limited to restricted areas on board which were

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cleaned before and after our visit. Hand sanitiser was provided on every table – and this was before the pandemic was declared. Protocols have been greatly tightened since that time. COVID testing of course takes place for all crew members before joining their ship but there is also daily temperature testing for all crew while on board.

These ships trade to secure gas terminals around Japan and the crews are not allowed any shore leave in Japan. Gas terminals are very secure facilities and access to and from the facilities themselves is heavily restricted. No unauthorised access is possible through these terminals. The crew members on these four ships have been refused shore leave ever since the outbreak of COVID-19 so they do not even set foot on Japanese soil while the ship is in port or at any other time. The discharging of the gas cargoes in Japan is a contactless process.

If there is a need for verification of the above, I am certain that Shell Tankers Australia /Trident LNG would provide a full presentation of all measures on board are being taken to prevent COVID-19 infection.

These four ships can clearly be distinguished from the vessels which have recently visited WA ports and had COVID positive crew members on board.

The new Direction will mean that the Australian seafarers working on these four ships that trade internationally out of WA will be required to quarantine for 14 days each time that they leave [sign off] their ship. This is in addition to the existing 14 days quarantine each time they join their ship [sign on] -which is now accepted practice. That is for each full work cycle they will be required to quarantine for 28 days. This is on top of the duty cycle of two or three return trips to Japan which can require an individual seafarer to be on board their ship for 90 days or more. This cannot be good for the mental health of these seafarers.

AIMPE requests that the WA Government give consideration to exempting the maritime crews on the 4 LNG tankers from these new quarantine arrangements.

It seems that the recent problems with foreign flag ships with foreign crews have led to a response that is going to have a significant and adverse impact on a particular Australian operation which has been an exemplar in COVID-19 management. These Australian ships should not be punished for the failings of other shipping operators.

Yours faithfully,



Martin Byrne
Federal Secretary

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