



## AMMA MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 13 November 2009

### **MARITIME UNION LAUNCHES INDUSTRIAL ACTION IN DESTRUCTIVE GRAB FOR CASH**

The peak national employer body representing Australia's resources and energy sector, the Australian Mines and Metals Association (AMMA) has accused the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) of reckless and destructive conduct following confirmation that it will take strike action in the offshore oil and gas sector.

The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) is about to embark on a campaign of strike action in the offshore oil and gas sector, which in the opinion of AMMA, will be counterproductive to the Australian shipping industry and future investment in the Australian oil and gas industry.

AMMA Workplace Policy Director, Mr Geoff Bull, said the MUA were demanding oil and gas vessel operators pay an exorbitant allowance of up to \$500 a day for work on offshore construction projects, a 30% wage rise over three years, and demanded \$45.00 per day, per employee, be **paid into a union established training fund**.

The MUA has given ship operator Farstad Shipping (Indian Pacific) Pty Limited notice that it will shut down shipping operations for two days commencing next Tuesday with further industrial action to follow. Farstad has 20 vessels working in Australia including on the Montara oil field clean up exercise.

AMMA, which has been assisting its offshore oil and gas vessel operators in renegotiating the MUA enterprise agreements, said Farstad was the first cab off the rank out of a dozen vessel companies to be targeted - with other companies soon to be caught up in strike action unless the MUA brought their claims under control.

Mr Bull said the MUA was prepared to jeopardise the Australian shipping industry to achieve their exorbitant demands.

Mr Bull said the construction allowance claim of up to \$3,500 per week if successful would make Australian seafarers by far the most highly paid in the world.

"The industry has already made a generous pay increase offer to the MUA approaching 25% over three years, but balked at the construction allowance claim which would double the salary of seafarers currently working on some of Australia's largest offshore construction projects." Mr Bull said.

"At a time when the oil and gas industry is recovering from a serious downturn, overseas investors in the offshore construction projects would take no comfort in seeing Australian vessels coming to a standstill on such projects".

"Despite an offer to take the claim to Fair Work Australia for independent arbitration, the MUA is intent on taking strike action and bring the industry to a standstill." Mr Bull said.

"Seafarers in the oil and gas sector earn over \$100,000 for working six months a year. Massive wage and allowance claims will not assist in rebuilding the Australian shipping industry, nor build confidence in Australia's recovering oil and gas sector."

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