



# BRISBANE MISSION MATTERS

WINTER EDITION 2020

## **Presidents Welcome**

Welcome to our Winter Edition of Brisbane Mission Matters.

Firstly, and most importantly, I trust you and your families have been keeping healthy and positive over the past few months. It certainly has been a challenging time for individuals, businesses and needless to say, Charities. We have been no exception having to close our doors in late March to protect our wonderful staff but also our seafarers who have experienced unimaginable isolation since Covid19 restrictions were implemented early in 2020.

The seafarers' plight has worsened over the months as their strict onboard isolation, poor communication opportunities and inability to travel home has exacerbated their already strained working arrangements. There have been significant international efforts to address the seafarers working and travel conditions and now we are proud to say there are two very local beacons of hope and opportunities for relief in sight for them.

Firstly, our Seafarers Centre has reopened its doors from late June and those seafarers that comply with the Covid19 restrictions have been able to visit. Secondly and extremely importantly, following collaboration between QLD Health and local and federal Government Agencies, Brisbane has become an Australian "hub" for seafarers being able to proceed home after months of an extension to their normal contracts. This is a wonderful outcome for seafarers and a true testament to the Australian willingness and ability to overcome adversity.

We have covered some of these stories and events that have come our way over the past three months in this edition of Brisbane Mission Matters.

Stay tuned, keep connected with us via Facebook and our Website, grab your favourite cuppa, sit back and have a read and please keep our seafarers and our centre in your prayers and thoughts.

*Ross Nicholls*

**Ross Nicholls**  
**President**



## Coping with Covid-19

The statement “We’re all in this together” is so true and we can all appreciate the issues that each other are confronting. Clearly some sections of our Community are more vulnerable or more affected than others so retaining an understanding and respect for each other and helping where we can is a true Australian value that should not be ever devalued. Closing our doors in March was heartbreaking for our Supervisors and Volunteers, knowing that our seafarers will need our services more than they have ever needed us. So, it didn’t take long before we swung into action thinking outside our traditional square.

### The “Online Shop”

The development of an “Online Shop” almost happened overnight, not without a few hurdles and a concerted effort, but it has brought our traditional shop out to the seafarers and smiles to the faces of those who have placed the orders and to those volunteers who have worked daily to keep the shop “open”. While the traditional items were sourced, packed and delivered to the gangway of 45 ships (at time of publishing....) there were some not so traditional items that were craved by our seafarers. Imagine getting a Domino’s pizza or Hungry Jacks or even a carton of Krispy Kreme doughnut order at 6pm and having it delivered by 7pm!!

Now that’s a true seafarers centre service 😊

### MT “Blue Sea”

The Motor Tanker (MT) “Blue Sea” arrived Brisbane from Thailand in early April ready to discharge her cargo of crude oil. Needless to say, all the crew were excited to be arriving into Brisbane with the prospect of spending some time at our seafarers’ centre. Sadly, this excitement

soon turned to dismay when they were told that they would not be coming into port until July at the earliest as the need for that crude oil had evaporated.

It didn’t take long for us to let the seafarers aboard “Blue Sea” know that there was an online shop and a small team of staff at the seafarers’ centre that wanted to help. With some great coordination across our Facebook page and a lifeline offered to us by Brisbane Marine Pilots and their pilot launch, we managed to deliver to the vessel at anchor off the coast of Mooloolaba. A massive thank you to the Pilot launch team and Brisbane Marine Pilots.



*Loading “care Packages” thanks to Brisbane Pilots*

MT “Blue Sea” is still at anchor off Mooloolaba awaiting the “green light” to proceed in for a much needed crew change and discharge of the cargo.



*Some incredibly happy seafarers on MT Blue Sea*



## “Care” Packages

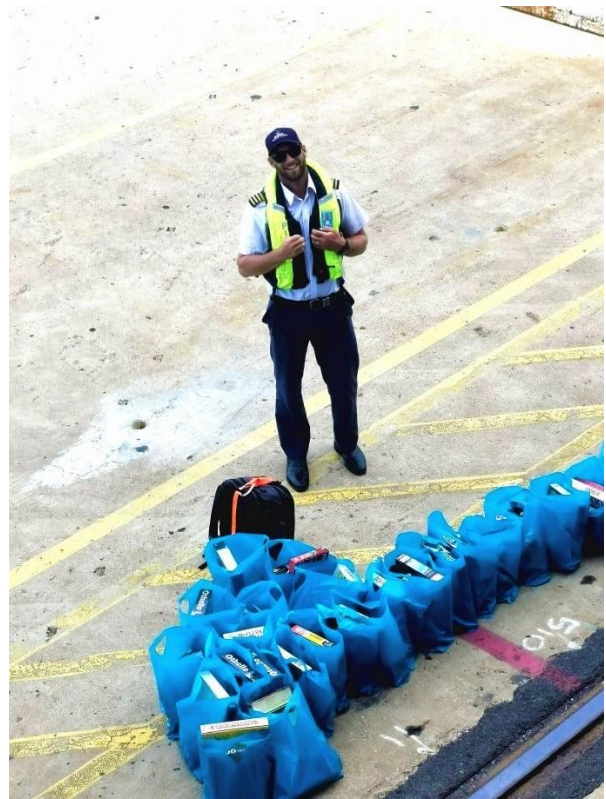
With the doors closed and the need for our support increasing daily, it was agreed that “care” packages should be developed to assist seafarers with managing their out of work time.

A list of items that focused on providing some entertainment value was developed and communicated quickly and widely via our Facebook page, website and directly to many of the local port community businesses.

Within days we were building a capability to fill bags that we could deliver to the gangway of ships bringing some hope and happiness to our seafarers. Working in conjunction with our Apostleship of the Sea colleagues who delivered to the north side of the river berths, our staff commenced packing hundreds of bags.

Given the health and security restrictions placed upon us again we were greatly supported by the Pilots of Brisbane Marine Pilots who have been a wonderful lifeline for us.

One of the earliest deliveries was to our regular trading cargo vessel MV Sounni



*Capt. Kyle Marks (Pilot) makes the delivery*



*Captain of MV Sounni*





## David Beckinsale

At the spritely age of 70 our long term volunteer and Committee Member (David Beckinsale) had decided there must be something more than just running marathons, so he decided to take on a mammoth 404km paddle along the Murray River, over 5 days, retracing a section of Charles Sturt's 1828 journey while also raising awareness and funds for Mission to Seafarers.

Following several training sessions each week leading up to the event, and with a new kayak underneath, Dave and his fellow paddlers set off on the mighty Murray last November. While it might have started as a measured paddle along the Murray, when Dave's team heard that Mission to Seafarers Sydney were also participating, it became a competition.



*David with paddle in hand*

David raised \$1823 for Mission to Seafarers Brisbane and helped raise awareness of our Charity while also completing a significant personal milestone.

The event, formally the Murray River Canoe Marathon, has been running since 1969. Further details can be found on their website <https://www.massivemurraypaddle.org.au/>

## Rescued by Seafarers

Nic and Erica Nicholson were living their dream, sailing their beloved yacht and home – **Jepeda IV** – to and from Australia to SE Asia. After covering nearly 30,000 nautical miles exploring the oceans, anchorages and ports of SE Asia they were heading home. While only 230 miles from their home in Darwin, luck for Nic and Erica ran out. Following a failure in their rigging and subsequent problem with their engine they were adrift in the Indian Ocean with no more “Aces up the Sleeve”.

With the use of modern satellite communication and the guidance from the Australian Maritime Safety Authorities Rescue Coordination Centre in Canberra, hopes for Nic and Erica had been raised as the merchant vessel IVS Phinda had been despatched to the rescue.

The following day, the IVS Phinda, her Captain (George) and her Filipino crew were nearby and ready to affect the rescue. With challenging weather and concerns about manoeuvring of the ship in close quarters with their “Jepeda IV”, Nic and Erica were eventually successfully rescued. As difficult as it was leaving their home behind, they were warmly welcomed and cared for by the Captain and his crew of IVS Phinda enroute to Singapore for the next 7 days.



*Capt. George and crew of IVS Phinda with Nic and Erica*



Memories of their rescue and the wonderful care and concern received from seafarers of IVS Phinda will remain with Nic and Erica forever. Seafarer Jeff who was on IVS Phinda during the rescue and met with Nic and Erica at our Seafarers Centre.



*Seafarer Jeff from IVS Phinda met Nic and Erica at our Seafarers Centre*

## Vinnie – The Seafarer

Vinnie the bear has become the honorary seafarers' friend at the Brisbane Seafarers Centre. While Vinnie is not quite old enough (yet...) to be able to join as a crew member, he spends his days actively engaging with those seafarers that have the pleasure of visiting our seafarers centre. To keep in touch over this period of isolation, Vinnie has started his own Facebook page to keep his many seafaring friends connected with what has been happening at the Mission. If you have time to keep abreast of the travels of Vinnie and friends, follow him on Facebook at Vinnie the Volunteer Mission to Seafarers Brisbane



*Vinnie the Volunteer*

## Bette Millward turns 97

Long term supporter of our seafarers' centre, Bette Millward has just turned 97. Bette has a keen interest in seafarers, their care and what's happening down at the Mission. Unfortunately, due to the current restrictions, we weren't able to visit Bette face to face but a special bunch of flowers and a card from us all made up for this. Keep well Bette from all us down at the Seafarers Centre.

## Sea Sunday 2020

Sea Sunday is traditionally held on the second Sunday of July each year, however, given the changing restrictions that have disrupted many activities that were held on traditional dates in this half of the year, we have rescheduled our Sea Sunday this year to occur on **Sunday 30th August**. Our Honorary Chaplains - Revd. Ian McGilvray and Revd. Stephen Briggs - are looking forward to hosting our Sea Sunday down at the Seafarers Centre from 3PM Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August.

Given the current restrictions we are currently allowing up to 50 people to attend the service at our centre while maintaining social distancing requirements. If you would like to attend this service, please respond either via our email [tfa@mtsbrisbane.org.au](mailto:tfa@mtsbrisbane.org.au) or contact our centre on 07 3895 1181 and let our Supervisors know your



details. If you are planning to attend the service, please monitor our Facebook page and Website as the service may be postponed should there be any change in the current restrictions.

Further information is available in our Sea Sunday packs. If you would like more information or to receive our Sea Sunday, package, following the link below to our website and then click on the link to order a Sea Sunday pack.

<https://www.mtsbrisbane.org.au/sea-sunday/>



*Sea Sunday at the seafarers centre*

## Christmas Bag Appeal

While most of us have been focusing on the ever changing implications of Covid-19 on our lives, Christmas is probably not on our minds. Given the significant isolation that our seafarers have been experiencing we have already started working on how we can make their Christmas. We are building our inventory for the Christmas Bags so if you are interested in donating items for our Christmas Bag Appeal, the usual items we are seeking is below;

**Personal:** toothbrush and toothpaste, soap, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shaving cream, comb, handkerchiefs, razors, after shave, hair product (limit to around 100ml containers)

**Souvenirs :** baseball cap/hat, fridge magnets, drink coasters, caps, small soft koala/kangaroo

etc, key rings, post cards, other Australian type objects

**Small gifts:** chocolate bars, small tins spaghetti/baked beans in multi-packs (will be split with a tin in each bag), pack of cheese and biscuits, small pack sweet biscuits, pocket note book and pen sets, pocket 2021 diary, small Christmas decorations they can place on desk or hang in cabin, playing cards, bag of lollies, basic wallet/credit card holder, small alarm clock and battery, small torch and battery

**Christmas Cards:** Children from Sunday Schools, child care agencies and pre-school along with families wrote personalised Christmas cards to a seafarer to be placed in the Christmas Bag. Such a personal message at Christmas tells a seafarer and their family they're being thought of and provides a terrific personal touch that the bags are an act of giving Christian love.

Contact Jacquie or Heather on [tfa@mtsbrisbane.org.au](mailto:tfa@mtsbrisbane.org.au) or call 07 3895 1181 to let them know how you can help







## Open Again

Following three months of having our doors closed, we reopened again on 18<sup>th</sup> June under a CovidSafe plan and revised opening hours. While it's been a quiet start down at the centre after weeks of preparation, we have welcomed some of the more fortunate seafarers back to our centre.



*Jacque and seafarers from MV Super Valentine*

It's likely the number of seafarers who can attend the centre will be limited given the isolation conditions and the concerns from those onboard the ships that they may contract the virus while visiting ashore. This makes the need for our "care" packages and "online shop" even more important to their daily lives

## Containers for Change

We are taking an opportunity to save our environment and also put money back into our seafarers' centre for the seafarers. Containers for Change is an Australian organisation that is recycling our container waste. Sadly, QLD is down the list when it comes to recycling but you can help both the environment and Mission to Seafarers Brisbane by recycling your containers.

For each container we recycle, 10 cents is deposited into our account. If you're interested in assisting, follow the Containers for Change link below, identify your closest recycle station, deposit your used containers at the recycle station and quote our account number to have the 10 cent refund credited to our account.

Every little bit counts towards a cleaner environment and more funds for us. Our current recycling return is around \$1500 per year and this is a significant contribution towards providing our much needed services to seafarers.

### Containers for Change

<https://www.containersforchange.com.au/qld>

Mission to Seafarers Brisbane

Account No. **C10005960**



We hope you enjoyed this edition of Brisbane

Mission Matters 😊