



CARING FOR SEAFARERS IN THE PORT OF BRISBANE  
SINCE 1892

# 2022 Annual Report

of

**THE MISSION TO SEAFARERS BRISBANE INC.**

Presented to the Annual General Meeting

11<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

**Celebrating 130 years of the Mission to Seafarers Brisbane**



## **THE MISSION TO SEAFARERS BRISBANE INC.**

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Port of Brisbane  
Queensland 4178.

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### **WORLD PATRON**

His Majesty the King

### **WORLD PRESIDENT**

Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal

### **SECRETARY GENERAL**

Rev Canon Andrew Wright

### **PATRON**

Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland.

### **ARCHBISHOP**

The Most Reverend Dr. Phillip Aspinall AC

# THE MISSION TO SEAFARERS BRISBANE INC.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<b>President</b>	Capt. Ross Nicholls
<b>Secretary</b>	Ms Lisa Davis
<b>Treasurer</b>	Mr. Rick Domann
<b>Member</b>	Capt. Marcus Bochenski
<b>Member</b>	Mrs Wendy Firmin
<b>Member</b>	Capt. Kasper Kuiper
<b>Member</b>	Mr Tony Fry
<b>Member</b>	Mrs Marianne Ross
<b>Member</b>	Vacant
<b>Member</b>	Vacant

## HONORARY CHAPLAINS

The Revd. Ian McGilvray  
The Revd. Stephen Briggs  
(Priest in Charge Anglican Parish of Grovely, RAN Chaplain)

## HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Mrs Marcia Scholes  
Mr Bruce Balnaves  
Capt. David and Mrs. Marilyn Ellis  
Mr. David Thomas

The Mission to Seafarers Brisbane Inc. is an Incorporated Association and Registered Charity in Queensland and registered with the Commonwealth Charities and Not for Profit Commission.

The Mission to Seafarers is financially supported by proceeds from the Seafarers Centre shops, income from investments, donations from parishes, businesses, and individuals along with community grants and projects supported by industry.

**2022 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF  
THE MISSION TO SEAFARERS BRISBANE INC.**

**HELD  
AT THE MISSION TO SEAFARERS, 2 SEAFARERS STREET  
PORT OF BRISBANE  
ON  
Saturday 11th MARCH 2023 at 10am**

**AGENDA**

1. Opening prayer
2. Introduction and welcome by the Chairman
3. Apologies:
4. Presentation of the President's Report by Capt. Ross Nicholls.
5. Presentation of the Financial Statements and Audit Report for 2022 by Mr Rick Domann
6. The appointment of an Auditor for the next year.
7. The election of office bearers and committee members for the next year.
8. NOTICE OF MOTION –
  - a. "That the incoming committee be given power to pass the minutes of The Annual General Meeting of the 11th of March 2023".
9. Any other business of which prior notice has been given.
  - a. Certificates of Appreciation
  - b. Corporate Volunteering
10. Meeting Close
11. Closing Prayer

# **The Mission, Vision and Values of The Mission to Seafarers Brisbane Inc.**

## **Our Mission**

To provide social and spiritual support for the emotional wellbeing of all seafarers

## **Our Vision**

To be a relevant and proactive provider of services to meet today's seafarers needs.

## **Our Values**

We operate with integrity and commit to being:

- ✓ Respectful
- ✓ Resilient
- ✓ Compassionate
- ✓ Inclusive
- ✓ Faithful

***Our Seafarers Centre is a place of safety, comfort and a “Home away from Home” for all seafarers irrespective of Race, Gender, Culture or Faith***

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

I am pleased to present the President's Annual Report on The Mission to Seafarers Brisbane Inc. for 2022.

The direct impacts of the pandemic on our Mission are now predominantly behind us, however we face several challenges as we emerge into world where certain social demographics within our communities will continue to influence how we operate into the immediate future.

The past year has demonstrated our ability to adapt, improve our resourcefulness and fuel our proactivity within the port, enhancing our resilience while continuing to meet the elements of our Mission, Vision and Values. These key learnings we have gathered over the past two years will hopefully assist us in building a more resilient future.

The relaxation of restrictions on seafarer's shore leave has seen a gradual return of numbers attending the centre. The return of the seafarers smiling faces, the sounds of their children laughing on telephone calls and the general upbeat vibe of assisting seafarers has the centre looking, feeling and sounding like it's meant to be. By the conclusion of 2022, the number of seafarers returning to the centre however was around only 15% of the pre-covid numbers, indicating most seafarers are still not accessing shore leave in Brisbane. This statistic alone indicates the heightened need for ship visiting, open communications with seafarers and access to our "online shop" facility to meet their basic needs.

Our decisions in early 2020 to establish an "online shop" has proven to be extremely beneficial throughout the past two years and has continued to provide for the wellbeing of our seafarers and ultimately our ongoing financial security. It is intended to continue providing essential products through the online shop to cater for the needs of seafarers who cannot access shore leave or shops, which even in years past was approximately 25% of the number of seafarers calling to the port. To this end we have created a new role at the centre to provide the necessary focus that our key income streams require to be efficient and sustainable, while also providing additional support to Heather, our Centre Supervisor.

Our relationships with the local industry stakeholders and organisations further afield continued to provide the necessary support to allow us to operate efficiently as we return to the new "normal" following the pandemic. The communication and collaborative working relationship, specifically with AMSA, ITF, Maritime Safety Queensland, specific Shipping Agents, Poseidon Sea Pilots and terminal operators, has been pivotal in the local management of seafarers issues and ultimately their welfare.

Beyond our local maritime industry our supporters from the Anglican community through to local schools and a cross section of engaged community groups, tirelessly knit, make gifts, gather personal products and deliver these to our seafarers centre all year round. These gifts of love and care in the form of "Care Packs" have been distributed to many a ship and made the seafarers life more bearable, providing that much needed connection with the outside world. We continue to be enormously grateful for their ongoing support and commitment to assisting us achieve our goals.

One year on, our "union" under one roof with Stella Maris has proven to be very beneficial for each of our organisations. The benefits of increased resources, improved communications and the support in reaching our mutually beneficial goals has proven that the collaboration between our

organisations can enhance the welfare service provision in our port. The working relationship between Heather and Wil has enabled the success of this sharing arrangement.

Sadly, it was also a year where we mourned the loss but celebrated the life of our Chaplain Emeritus, Revd. William Robert Pearson, affectionally known to the industry as “Father Bill”. The cheeky blessings and forthright approach to a seafarer’s spiritual support, for which “Father Bill” was renowned, have been tempered but his spirit and sayings remain.

The year ahead for us will undoubtedly continue to provide us with challenges as we look to provide our welfare services to a slowly increasing number of seafarers. Our greatest challenge as we emerge from the restriction imposed upon seafarers, is our key resource – volunteers. While we are not alone in the need for volunteer staff, we have been focussing energy on rebuilding our volunteer team and while it has been slower than anticipated, the green shoots are starting to show. The regular advertising via Volunteering QLD, advertising via Facebook, LinkedIn, our website, FOCUS, online through GIVIT and the soon to be enacted Corporate Volunteering initiative will allow us to engage more closely with key industry stakeholders and hopefully provide us with the intellectual security we will require to sustain our services into the future.

### **KEY STATISTICS FOR 2021**

The following statistics highlight the activity of the Seafarers centre for the past year.

<b>No. of Ships calling Port of Brisbane</b>	<b>2,350</b>	(2,350 in 2021)
<b>No. of Seafarers visiting the centre</b>	<b>1450</b>	(43 in 2021)
<b>No. of bus trips for Seafarers</b>	<b>1305</b>	(68 in 2021)
<b>No. of Kilometres driven</b>	<b>10,500</b>	(4,500 in 2020)
<b>No. of Supervisors</b>	<b>1</b>	(1 in 2021)
<b>No. of Volunteers</b>	<b>15</b>	(30 in 2021, 55 in 2020)
<b>Minimum No. of Volunteer Hours</b>	<b>4500</b>	(1,300 in 2021)
<b>No. of Ship Visits</b>	<b>154</b>	(4 in 2021)
<b>No. of Hospital Visits</b>	<b>10</b>	(15 in 2021)
<b>Value of Donations – Goods and “In Kind”</b>	<b>\$69,000</b>	(\$52,000 in 2021)

### **KEY ACTIVITIES FOR 2022**

Each year, the seafarers center aims to host a variety of events and activities that enable us to thank our staff, key stakeholders and supporters while also hopefully engaging with other community organisations and potential volunteers. We are continuously engaging with our port community and industry stakeholders to pursue a range of projects that will ultimately benefit the

services we can provide to seafarers. While 2022 was initially a quieter year, we're hopeful that the year ahead will allow us to again be a catalyst in bringing our port community together.

I highlight some of these key activities below.

### **Online Shop**

Our online seafarers' shop was established early after the closure of the seafarer's centre due to the pandemic. The concept has turned out to be a financial lifeline for our centre and more importantly, it has allowed us to extend our connections with seafarers beyond the wharf while providing a small amount of "retail therapy" and a much-needed boost to the seafarers physical and emotional wellbeing.

By the end of 2022, there had been a total of 511 orders and net earnings of \$167,261.33 through the online shop, since its inception in 2020. The orders have generally focused on communications with Phone and Internet cards topping the order list. Not unexpectedly, given that even to this day, around only 25% of the world's seafarers have access to internet onboard their ships. Not far behind these phone cards purchases were comfort foods, personal hygiene products, vitamins and some electronics for entertainment. Our online shop continues to provide a sense of normality and comfort that comes with the isolation onboard ship without easy access to shops.

The "online store" concept has proven it's viability during the pandemic and hopefully established a more permanent connection for those seafarers who aren't able to access shore leave while in port. It is intended to carry the concept forward and access to the service will become more readily available and promoted as we invest in a more efficient e-commerce system. The new system will cater for products that satisfy the seafarers human needs, as crew sizes and ship turnaround times continue to be reduced.

Many a Facebook post shows the smiling faces of seafarers who have just received their online order while also reconnecting again with our Mission, albeit at the bottom of a gangway.



*Figure 1 Heather delivery to Santiago*



## **Ukrainian Seafarers**

Ukrainian seafarers account for around 4% of the total number of seafarers engaged on the worlds commercial shipping fleet. The invasion of Ukraine, while another world away from us geographically, was brought closer to home by the number of Ukrainian seafarers regularly arriving in Brisbane and seeking support of our welfare services. The predominant need from these seafarers was, understandably, communications back home and with their families. This need is often followed up with emotional and spiritual support as required. The ongoing war in the Ukraine will require us to remain ever vigilant in recognising the support these seafarers need as they negotiate a life of isolation and upheaval while their families and friends are directly impacted by the conflict back at home.

One such Ukrainian seafarer needed more than communications back home when he was emergency airlifted off his ship on short notice due to a heart attack. While heart attacks are all too common today, to have one offshore aboard a ship, with a potential 4-5 hour wait time to receive emergency support is truly frightening. Anatoili was one Ukrainian seafarer who experienced just that, fortunately with a good outcome only to be faced with the prospect of being repatriated and apart from his family due to the invasion of his home country. The care and support from the Mission to Seafarers Chaplains, staff and volunteers enabled Anatoili to recover and return to Ukraine where today he has been safely reunited with his family. Our efforts to provide a high level of welfare support for Ukrainian seafarers continue.



*Figure 2 Anatoili and Heather*

## **Gender Inclusivity**

Seafaring has been historically recognized as a male dominated industry and remains so today with less than 2% of the worlds seafarers being women. Fortunately, these statistics are growing

organically as the role of a seafarer is promoted more broadly and young women see it as an opportunity to undertake an adventurous role and receive above average pay for their country of origin.

Our Values at the Brisbane Seafarers Centre capture inclusivity and diversity and seafaring today would not function without it, given the sourcing arrangements for the worlds fleet. Locally we recognised that our contributions must incorporate welfare support of women seafarers. We have established a women’s department for clothing and health care products and have committed to arrange shopping trips to ensure their specific needs are met around their work commitments. In conjunction with these initiatives, we have also arranged external support from female Chaplains in the event “one on one” spiritual support and guidance is required.

We are also encouraged that 40% of our workforce at the Brisbane Seafarers Centre are women who truly recognise the needs of women and seafarers.



*Figure 3. Margaret, Anjila and Heather*

### **Chaplains Reach Out / Sea Sunday**

Our Chaplains continue to reach out to seafarers in a variety of ways. For two years, during the shore leave restrictions, Revd. Ian recorded and posted weekly reflection videos to Facebook given we were unable to hold physical services. These videos were very well received by seafarers and Christian followers of our page. In conjunction with these videos, our Chaplains attended seventeen hospitalised seafarers, twenty-one ships and coordinated a number of hospital chaplains to provide the essential spiritual support to seafarers often required in these more stressful situations. It was also recognised that with a slowly growing number of female seafarers, having access to a female chaplain would enhance our service offering. Two “on demand” external female chaplains have joined our broader team to provide a more inclusive service to our seafarers.

Sea Sunday, an international day for the Mission to Seafarers to recognise the commitment and sacrifices of Seafarers, was held in the All-Saints Parish of Grovely, where beanies were required for entry. It is our intention to recognise this day each year in a supporting Parish to engage more closely with our followers and supporters.

Our Chaplains provide us with spiritual grounding and a strong connection within the merchant navy, Royal Australian Navy and Christian communities enabling us to provide a broad level of welfare and pastoral care required by all seafarers.



### **National Welfare Providers Conference**

A National Welfare Providers Conference was convened in Melbourne during September 2022 to ensure that the strong connections between providers, welfare centres and the key stakeholders of seafarers' welfare and rights within Australia continue to receive the focus they require.

Heather represented our seafarers centre, connecting and collaborating across all levels of the national and international organisations attending the conference.



*Figure 4 Heather and Sec. Gen Andrew Wright*

## **Mission meets the Governor.**

Our ability to network across all levels of society, including Government is a vital requirement given seafarers welfare is on a state, national and international playing field.

International Day of the Volunteer often passes without fanfare, however this year, Mission to Seafarers Brisbane was invited to join the Governor, Her Excellency the Honorable Dr. Jeannette Young AC PSM for afternoon tea at Government House, in recognition of the work volunteers do within our community.

The afternoon tea was attended by Heather and Marcia Scholes OAM who had the opportunity to meet the Governor and network with a range of organisations who rely upon the generosity of volunteers to sustain their business model.



*Figure 5 Heather and Marcia at Government House*

## **OUR PEOPLE & SUCCESSION**

Each year I am humbly reminded of the role our front-line people play in not only the day-to-day services we provide but also on how we prepare ourselves for the future. Everyone working at the seafarers centre contribute from their hearts ensuring that we compassionately cater for the physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of seafarers. I can't thank Heather, Rick our Treasurer, our committee and volunteers enough for their ongoing dedication and passion for what we do. This level of dedication and passion is evident by the feedback we receive and the five stars that adorn our Google home page where seafarers provide us with open feedback.

The impact of Covid19 on our operations has reduced our volunteer pool by a dramatic 75%, limiting our opening to Monday to Friday. This has been our most significant challenge, recognising

that shipping operates 24/7 and a seafarers access to shore leave is now further limited by our shorter, less flexible opening hours. Our commitment to the year ahead is to again expand the opening hours of our services but this is easier said than done with a national shortage of volunteers.

The cohabitation of the seafarers with Stella Maris has teased out the synergies from each organisation and we have developed a stronger, more collaborative and efficient working arrangement for the provision of seafarers welfare services in the port. This will hopefully be enhanced further by the creation of a Corporate Volunteering program which has been structured to commence in 2023, providing greater stability and hopefully longevity to the Management Committee.

The Mission continues to maintain its community profile by engaging in range of ways that interact and regularly communicate with our key stakeholders, supports and followers. The year ahead will be no different:

### **Financial Matters**

Our financial health has been challenged over the reporting period and the two years immediately prior given the impact that Covid19 has had on seafarers access to the centre. Without sufficient sales from our “online shop”, adequate distributions from our investment income and prudent expense management, our operational status would have been significantly different than it is. The variability of these income sources reminds us how financially vulnerable we are and the critical importance of our centre being open to seafarers on a seven day basis.

Our financial results for 2022 will show Mission to Seafarers Brisbane has delivered an operating profit for the year, which has been substantially due to investment income distributions and a “one off” Estate donation. While this surplus is pleasing and reassuring that we can continue with our work, we must be mindful that without the appropriate sustainable income streams, this surplus will be significantly eroded with a potential for an operating loss. Without similar income in the year ahead, we are forecasting an operating loss.

Continued prudence in managing our expenditure for the year ahead, along with assessing opportunities to improve our more sustainable sources of income from our shops and an increase in volunteer numbers will allow us to maintain and hopefully extend our operations and services to meet the needs of our seafarers.

### **Mission to Seafarers Brisbane Inc. Points of Contact:**

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Website: Visit us at [www.mtsbrisbane.org.au](http://www.mtsbrisbane.org.au)

Facebook: Like us at MISSION TO SEAFARERS BRISBANE

E-newsletter: Please send your email address to [tfa@mtsbrisbane.org.au](mailto:tfa@mtsbrisbane.org.au) to be added to the mail-out list for this quarterly newsletter

President – Ross Nicholls – [presmtsbrisbane@gmail.com](mailto:presmtsbrisbane@gmail.com)

Treasurer – Rick Domann – [treasmtsbrisbane@gmail.com](mailto:treasmtsbrisbane@gmail.com)

Secretary – Lisa Davis – [secmtsbrisbane@gmail.com](mailto:secmtsbrisbane@gmail.com)

Centre Supervisor – Heather Turner [volsupmtsbrisbane@gmail.com](mailto:volsupmtsbrisbane@gmail.com)

**Bank details:**

Account: Mission to Seafarers Brisbane Inc

BSB: 704 901

Account Number: 0000 3660

**Conclusion**

The past year has reminded us of our vulnerabilities but also driven us to consider opportunities to sustain our service into the future. The union with Stella Maris at the seafarers centre, the development of a Corporate Volunteering arrangement with key industry stakeholders and the evolution of our online store will underpin the future provision of our services in meeting the needs of seafarers.

The issues that continue to impact the employment and welfare of seafarers are still prevalent and widespread in the shipping industry. While attempts to address these at an international level are progressing, the reality is the working environment remains challenging, their isolation in this very connected world is pronounced and the impact of very commercial competitiveness in shipping culminates in a significant impact on a seafarer's wellbeing. These factors reinforce the ongoing need for our services not only in our port but worldwide.

We are blessed that AMSA, the ITF, our Port, MSQ and other key stakeholders continue to provide us with support and guidance that enable us to be a vital and trustworthy connection for seafarers.

In closing, we pray that our valuable and vital ministry to seafarers visiting the Port of Brisbane will continue with the kind and heartfelt levels of support that we are currently blessed with.

**Capt. Ross Nicholls**  
**President 2022**



# BRISBANE



*ANCHORED IN CHRIST*

SINCE 1892