

Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union

(Registered as AFMEPKIU)



Committee Secretary
Senate Education and Employment Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email: eec.sen@aph.gov.au

13 April 2018

Dear Committee Secretary,

Work health and safety of workers in the offshore petroleum industry

1. I write to you on behalf of the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) and our members who are employed in the offshore petroleum industry.

Western Australian Offshore Petroleum Industry

2. Over the last 15 years Western Australia has been the site of significant growth and activity in the offshore petroleum and hydrocarbons sector. Notable projects include the North Rankin Complex, the Ichthys FLNG Project and the Prelude FLNG Project. The technological change and workforce development across this spectrum of projects is testament to the level of investment and resources that have been dedicated to the industry in Western Australia.
3. The AMWU represents over 8,000 members in Western Australia. In the offshore petroleum industry we cover a range of classifications, including boilermakers, fitters, welders, riggers, scaffolders, pipefitters, trades assistants, non-destructive testing technicians, sheet metal workers and many more. Our submission is based on our representation of these members over more than 20 years, through our active participation in the industry, its benchmark enterprise agreements and comprehensive safety arrangements.
4. Our branch also undertakes regular engagement with the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) as part of the ACTU delegation.

ACTU Submission

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5. The AMWU has collaborated extensively with the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) on their submission to this inquiry. To this effect we strongly endorse the findings and recommendations put forward by the ACTU's submission.
6. The AMWU has considerable experience of the points raised by the ACTU submission, in particular HSR engagement, safety case matters and the importance of right of entry.

OSH Inspections and Right of Entry – Our Experience

7. We strongly support recommendation 3 in the ACTU's submission regarding right of entry, and submit that a best practice approach involves vessel/operators and manning agents facilitating union safety inspections and general right of entry.
8. Our branch is involved in a number of safety protocols and procedures, which can be largely divided into two different categories: vessel/facility inspections of operational projects within Australia and outside of Australia, prior to commencing operations.
9. Inspection visits that are conducted within Australia are normally done through the exercise of union right of entry. In our experience, the facilitation and cost of accessing these facilities (helicopter/travel costs) are borne by the vessel operator or manning agent. These inspection visits would not be financially feasible for our union without this.
10. Inspections that are conducted outside of Australia, before the vessel arrives for project commencement, are done at the invitation of the vessel operators and/or manning agents. In our view, this is best practice to ensure that the vessels/facilities are fit for purpose in line with the relevant acts, regulations and Australian standards. It gives the manning agent/vessel operators and our members peace of mind that accommodation, recreation facilities, medical facilities and work areas comply with contemporary work practices for the industry.
11. The AMWU has consistently received these invitations to conduct pre-commencement vessel inspections by companies across the industry for the last twenty years. In our experience, it is an invaluable practice for both vessel operators/manning agent and workers and provides the most cost-effective opportunity to identify and resolve any OSH issues before the vessel arrives in Australian waters, and the project commencing.
12. We welcome the opportunity to address the inquiry on any matter raised in our submission, the ACTU's submission, or on our experience in the industry generally.

13. Should you wish to discuss anything outlined in this letter, please contact Glenn McLaren
at

Yours sincerely,

Steve McCartney
State Secretary
Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, West Australian Branch