

Melbourne Branch

The Log
The Monthly Newsletter of the Melbourne Branch of
The Company of Master Mariners of Australia Limited
Hon. Secretary
email Melbourne@mastermariners.org.au



NEXT MEETING

1800 hrs 25th February 2026

Mail Exchange Hotel

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Hon. Editor Capt Ian French
Email icfrench@bigpond.com

From the Branch Master

Dear Melbourne Branch members,

At our last Branch Court meeting on 29 October, we were thrown a bombshell by our Treasurer Mario D'Souza who, after about 7 years in the role, has decided to call it an 'early night'. Mario has been the heart and muscle of the Branch, undertaking a variety of roles in addition to the Treasurer, to ensure that Branch business was up to date. It is with great reluctance that we have accepted his resignation, and I now must look out for at least 3 able bodied members to take over from Mario! We will be holding a 'farewell' dinner for Mario at our February 2026 meeting.

Speaking of which, it is that time of year already, when we need to start thinking of 2026. We have had a pretty impressive run through 2025 with some very good speakers and better than enthusiastic participation from members. It was heartening to note the slight increase in numbers at our monthly meetings. That's the silver lining. If you have knowledge of relevant speakers and/or appropriate topics for 2026, please let us know.

But every silver lining, some old sea dogs say, has a cloud ☺. There are a number of events held during the year commemorating the merchant navy and seafarers – Merchant Navy Day, Seafarer Service, Operation Pedestal, etc – to which we are invited. We would do well to show our appreciation of the organisers wanting to honour us by attending the events. To be discussed in further detail in 2026.

And so, we plan our move into 2026. We are developing a new invoicing system for membership subscriptions – CoMMA is moving towards a unified (all Branches) accounting and invoicing system. How you receive your membership subscription invoice may look different, but how you pay will remain the same. Membership subscription notices will be sent out mid-January, all going well. In this invoice you may note a request for nominal donations, entirely voluntary, to help us meet our charitable objectives.

The Mail Exchange Hotel has been very cooperative regards the use of their facility and for want of anything more convenient/economical, we would like to stick with them through 2026; on the last Wednesday of each month, February to October. We shall hold November in abeyance, depending on how we want to celebrate our end-of-year function.

I cannot end this page without expressing my appreciation for our October speaker, Capt Glen Colaco. His presentation on Chartering was very well received and opened the floor to numerous questions. That Glen had an answer to every question speaks well of his knowledge of the subject.

Yours aye,

From the Branch Master, Francis Castellino

And my grateful thanks to the Court Crew – Aaron, Sam, Mario, Gordon, Graeme, Ian, Lee-anne and Rudy, who helped us make 2025 a very good year!

Federal Court news:

The Federal Court met on 8 November. The Minutes of the meeting will be distributed to you as soon as they have been approved for distribution. It was (if I may say so) a bland meeting, tying up the loose ends of 2025 and opening the doors to 2026, with a couple of interesting initiatives.

The Directors identified the need to have a Strategic Plan moving forward – who we are, what we stand for, our mission and our vision and how do we achieve that. Ideas from the floor are broadly welcome to help us define our future. Lets talk SWOT (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats).

The Company is losing members due to natural attrition as well as waning interest. Branches were asked to suggest ideas to rejuvenate interest in and improve the relevancy of the CoMMA. This point ties in with the one above.

Work on redrafting the Constitution is ongoing. Perhaps the long summer break will help us get closer to completing the first draft.

All Branches are working to develop mutual participation agreements with other maritime related organisations namely, OSSA (Offshore and Specialist Ships Australia), NI (Nautical Institute) and WISTA (Women's International Shipping and Trading Association).

Wanted: Would anyone be interested in taking over the role of Federal Secretary? It would relieve me playing a 'double role' on Federal Court.

End of year party

After all the hullabulloo of the change of venue and change of date, the end-of-year party (or, as some like to call it, "Christmas Party") went off very well, even if I may say so myself. Sincere thanks to about 40 odd members and friends of CoMMA that turned up. PS: When I say "odd" I'm not referring to the kind of persons present!! 😊

This event could not have run without serious assistance from **Lee-anne Diano**, **Rudy Rietwyk** and **Ian French**. Ian has posted a few photos in The LOG. To be honest, the feedback I got made my ears burn and makes me want to do it all over again next year.

My greatest gratitude is reserved for Lee-anne for providing us the venue, Stella Maris, free of cost; and for volunteering her volunteers to 'serve and obey' – is that the term they use? (LOL). Lee-anne, please thank your merry bunch of assistants. They made the service run smoothly, like a ship on Force 1 seas. The caterer was extremely pleased with the help they got. You'd make a good ship captain.

Rudy, you are a master at selling raffle tickets and setting up games. You have been hired for next year too! Thanks a lot for coming in early and helping to set up. Honestly, what would the Branch do without Rudy?

Ian, thanks for keeping the front of house honest. The guests were swept into the hall quite seamlessly and the payment system worked very well. You may also have a permanent job as 'official photographer' if you would consider it.

Thanks would be incomplete without acknowledging the donations from **Mario D'Souza** and **Len Fernando** towards the raffle and other games. And to Tom Webster and Jacia Lakra, for the Salsa exhibition dance. When I grow up, I want to be a Salsa dancer!!

While on the 'thanksgiving bandwagon', I'd also like to thank **Toby Shelton** for donating a trip for 2 on the pilot boat through the Heads to observe a pilot embark/disembark a ship; to **Sheldon Rodrigues** for donating a guided visit for 6 to the VTS Tower; and to Mail Exchange Hotel for a dinner gift voucher.

That I was able to win none of those prizes speaks of how highly contested the games and the raffle was.

So then, this was another year in our annals, another year of fun, frivolity and a bit of seriousness inbetween. I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you all, and your families, a splendid festive holiday season. If you celebrate Christmas, like I do, may it be joyous and wonder-filled. I hope 2026 is a good year for all of us, and not just for the wine! May success, joy and satisfaction be with you all, and with your families, through out the year.

Application for Membership

Zachary LOH has applied for ordinary membership of Western Australia Branch.

Zachary holds a class 1 (Master Mariner) certificate of competency issued by Singapore

He has over 15 years experience across cruise, offshore, terminal and towage industries.

Zachary is currently serving as Marine Operations Superintendent at Kotug Port Headland Towage Ltd.









A Successful Event

When planning the Christmas Break Up Party the most important decisions to be made were the appointment of the caterer and the menu selection. It reminded me of an account I read of a feast put on by one of the colleges of Oxford University over 200 years ago.

In 1793 the Duke of Portland who was the Dean of Christ Church, was installed as Chancellor of the University. In honour of this the college decided to put on a huge banquet.

The practice in those days was that the Bill of Fare depended on how far up the dining hall you sat.

The noblemen had turbot in lobster sauce followed by roast beef, lamb, duck, goose, chicken and veal pie with a fool to follow. The Chaplains and those lower down the pecking order had just salmon, lamb and peas.

In these enlightened times the organising committee decided that everyone at the CoMMA Christmas Party would enjoy the same menu.

ATSB Investigation MO-2024-001

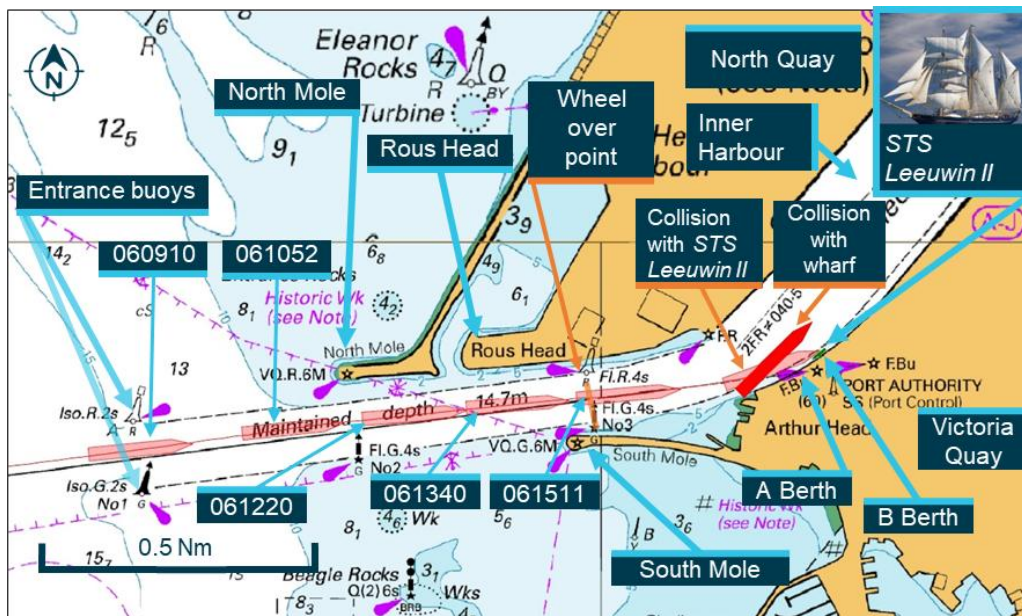
The ATSB has released its report into the collision between the 8,814 TEU Container ship *Maersk Shekou* and the sail training ship *Leeuwin II* on 30 August 2024. The collision occurred when the *Maersk Shekou* was entering the Port of Fremantle. The *Leeuwin II* was berthed alongside B Berth at Victoria Quay.

At the time there was a 25 to 30 Kt wind gusting to 40 Kts with rain which at times made steering difficult. Four tugs were engaged to assist the two pilots. The primary pilot conned the ship from the bridge front but in the period leading up to the collision the second pilot was engaged in a non essential phone call and was taking no part in the pilotage until the primary pilot told him that they were in trouble.

Maersk Shekou was heading towards Victoria Quay and not turning to port to enter Inner Harbour. The pilots used the ships engine, tugs and bow thruster to attempt to turn the ship to port. No orders were given to the helmsman who continued to attempt to maintain the course that he had previously been given.

The combined action of the engine, tugs, bow thruster and dropping the port anchor stopped the ship and caused the bow to swing to port but not enough to prevent the starboard bow flare colliding with the *Leeuwin II* bringing down her masts. The *Maersk Shekou*'s stern then swung towards the wharf and the outer most stack of containers on the poop deck struck the roof of the Maritime Museum. The hull scrapped along the wharf edge resulting in a rupture above the water line.

The two pilots were replaced by relief pilots and the *Maersk Shekou* proceeded to her berth without further incident.



The investigation found that the primary pilot did not give the helmsman the planned helm order of 10 degrees to port to turn into the Inner Harbour.

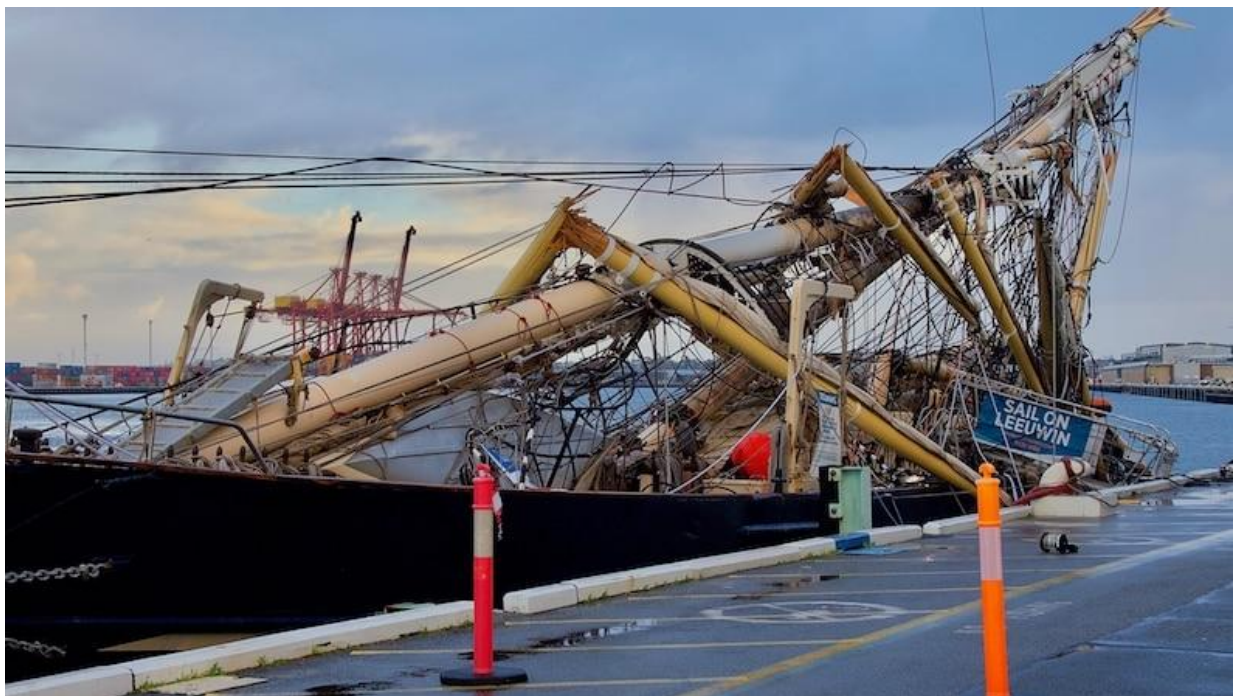
The pilot and the bridge team were distracted at that time by the need to make the fourth tug fast which should have been done much earlier. The second pilot was on the phone and so was not aware the helm order had not been given.

When the pilots attempted to turn the ship using the main engine and tugs the helmsman tried to maintain it on the previously instructed heading “rigorously opposing the ships planned turn.” Nobody checked what the helmsman was doing and he did not report that he was having difficulty maintaining his heading.

The ATSB Chief Commissioner Angus Mitchel said that the report found the bridge team comprising the two pilots and the ships crew ineffectively implemented bridge resource management practices. They failed to adequately monitor or challenge the ships turn and position in the channel. One error then being compounded by others not picking it up and not rectifying it.

As a result of the incident Fremantle Ports will implement passage monitoring. The procedures relating to the usage, attachment and release of tugs will be updated. The second pilots role will be reiterated through a Harbour Masters Instruction.

Fremantle Pilots will update its procedures and the use of mobile phones. All pilots will undergo emergency exercise simulation based on the *Maersk Shekou* event.



October Speakers Summary

The speaker at the October meeting was Melbourne Branch member Glen Colaco who spoke to us about chartering.

Glen in his 40 years in the shipping industry both at sea and ashore has developed a wide range of experience and expertise. He has been a vessel owner, operator and manager. He has been a ship broker, maritime consultant and has acted as a shipping expert in a Federal Court proceeding.



Glen explained that ship chartering is a niche industry where you have to know people. The role of the broker is to unite ship owner with those who wish to charter the ship and negotiate terms that are acceptable to both parties.

There are different types of charters and they differ in who and how much control they have over the ship.

Voyage charters are a short time contract where the ship is required to arrive in Port A and load within a period and proceed to Port B to discharge and is paid at a rate per ton. The owner retains control of the ship.

On a time charter the ship is chartered for a fixed period at a daily rate. The charterer controls the ships operation but the owner has his crew onboard.

A bareboat charter is a long term charter. Control of the ship is with the charterer who provides the crew and controls its operations.

Chartering requires a contract between the vessels owner and the charterer and contains clauses covering such matters as freight rates, laytime and demurrage, performance warranties, arbitration and dispute resolution.

Glen went on to speak about the Dry Bulk Trade which in the Australian context means coal, iron ore, grain and bauxite and involves ships ranging from handy size bulkers to capsizes. Glen spoke about the market dynamics involved. The Wet Bulk Trade includes crude oil, refined products, chemicals and LNG. In this trade geopolitical risk, sanctions and tanker availability effect market dynamics.

The fixture process starts with a cargo inquiry. Suitable vessels are identified and a period of offer and counter offer insures before a charter party is agreed.

The role of the broker is to match the cargo with suitable vessels and provide market intelligence so that terms can be negotiated. He is also involved in the implementation of documentation. Amongst the matters considered would be strategic considerations, freight rates, fuel costs emission control and risk management.

Glen concluded his presentation by working through a case study of a 65,000 ton vessel chartered to load grain in Adelaide for discharge in China.

Glen gave a very interesting talk on a subject most of us had little knowledge or experience.

