



THE BRIDGE WATCH

January 2012



President's update

Let me start off by thanking you for your support during the last year and wishing you a peaceful and successful 2012.

Much progress has been made in the rebuilding of our Society during 2011 and I look forward to working with our Executive Committee in taking this progress further in 2012.

September's National AGM (previously referred to as Congress) marked a turning point for the Society. Apart from the financial, tax and constitutional matters which have been sorted out, we commenced a coordinated process of seriously reconsidering the Society's future and the development of a strategic plan that would take us confidently into this future.

One of the key steps I felt necessary was to canvass members on their opinions about various aspects of the Society and their involvement in it.

This has now been done and the results of this survey are shown in this newsletter.

Some fairly predictable trends as well as a few surprises emerged from the survey and I would like to touch on a few now.

There clearly is a belief among our membership in the need for the Society to play a significant role in the maritime development of South Africa and in the promotion of our member's experience to Government with 95% to 99% of members agreeing or strongly agreeing to this.

Also agreed to or strongly agreed to is the desire to retain a strong South African identity (89%) and that the focus of the Society should be on issues surrounding the Master/Deck Officer and associated shore-based disciplines (88%).

More of a surprise to me was the strong feeling that the Society should retain "Master Mariner" in its name. 74% of members disagreed or strongly disagreed with removing the emphasis on this name. I must admit to slowly changing my view on this issue in that a year ago I would have fully supported a radical name change.

During 2011 however, I made contact with several similar organisations around the world in order to look at their structure and constitutions to see what we could learn from them.

It amazed me just how many "Master Mariner" organisations there are! To name just a few:

- Company of Master Mariners Australia
- Master Mariners Association of Tasmania
- The New Zealand Company of Master Mariners
- Company of Master Mariners Sri Lanka
- Company of Master Mariners of India
- Master Mariners Society of Pakistan
- Council of American Master Mariners
- Company of Master Mariners of Canada
- The Honorable Company of Master Mariners
- The Irish Institute of Master Mariners

We probably don't appreciate it but we are part of a much larger group of professionals than we think and collectively we have the potential to meaningfully contribute to our profession (in its broadest sense) internationally as well as locally.

The decline of our Society in recent years has not been because of our name (although it may have been tainted) but rather because we have lost our way (and many members) within the massive political realignments we have seen in South Africa. Many members feel marginalized and irrelevant within this "new South Africa" and don't see any point in trying to build the bridges needed to connect us to the new order.

Members of our executive Committee and myself have however had opportunity to work closely with Governmental maritime agencies during the latter part of 2011 and we have been very pleasantly surprised at the openness and inclusiveness with which we have been welcomed as a professional organization able to contribute to our industry.

We, as the Executive, are committed to this country and the development of our maritime economy and I look forward to working with you in the challenges ahead.

Rob Whitehead

Society's Benevolent Fund awards its first bursary



Fund Chairman, Rob Whitehead, congratulates Nelson Beja on his award

At the annual Lawhill Maritime Centre's awards evening during November last year, a large group of Society members witnessed the presentation of our Benevolent Fund's first bursary.

The changes to the Fund's constitution (passed at last years AGM) and the merging of the Bursary Fund into the Benevolent Fund now allows the use of funds for this important purpose.

The recipient of the bursary, Nelson Beja, has just completed Grade 12 at the Lawhill Maritime Centre. Nelson, a 17 year old who hails from King William's Town in the Eastern Cape, has always dreamt of becoming a seafarer and entered Lawhill

in 2009 as a boarder for Grade 10, 11 and 12.

The bursary, worth around R28,000, is for a years study towards a National Diploma: Maritime Studies at either the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) or the Durban University of Technology (DUT). Nelson has elected to study at CPUT in 2012.

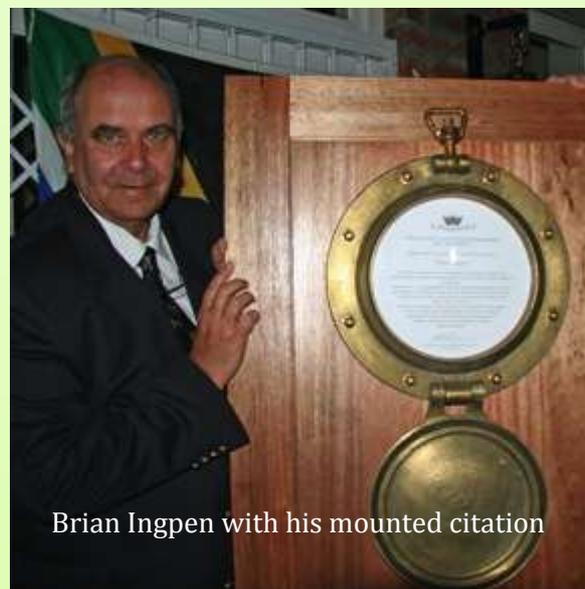
The Benevolent Fund's Governing Board consisting of Rob Whitehead, Keith Burchell, Neil Lawson and Charles Kingon put Nelson through a thorough interview process before deciding to the award of the bursary to him.

Also at the Lawhill awards evening, the Society presented Brian Ingpen with a citation mounted inside a ship's porthole.

Brian's work in building the Lawhill Maritime Centre into the valuable maritime resource it has become is well known and the Society felt some form of official recognition was required.

The citation reads as follows: *"The Society of Master Mariners South Africa hereby desires to recognise the significant contribution Brian Ingpen has made to the South African maritime community as a dedicated educationalist, journalist and loyal member of the Society of Master Mariners South Africa. His passion for and invaluable knowledge of ships and shipping as well as his dedicated recording of South Africa's maritime history has ensured an accurate record for the benefit of future generations of mariners and those who love the sea.*

Further, his dedication and commitment to the education of maritime learners through his Lawhill Maritime Centre has contributed significantly towards the development of South Africa's maritime skills base and the building of a vibrant Maritime Industry."



Brian Ingpen with his mounted citation

At the Society's 2011 AGM, the Executive Committee was tasked with making contact with other like-minded organisations in order to build closer working relationships.

As a result, the Society initiated contact with the main maritime, professionally orientated organisations.

The Presidents/Chairmen of these organisations met for an exploratory meeting at the Cape Grace Hotel in the V&A Waterfront on the 16th November 2011.

Present at the meeting were:

Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers (South Africa Branch)

- Andrew Thomas - President

South African Institute of Marine Engineers and Naval Architects

- Richard Shaw - President

Maritime Law Association of South Africa

- Michael Wragge - President

Society of Master Mariners South Africa

- Rob Whitehead - President

The Nautical Institute (Southern Africa Branch)

- Rob Whitehead - Chairman

The following points were unanimously agreed on:

- ❖ Although each organisation needed to retain their independence there were issues of common interest, which could be dealt with in a more effective manner if presented in a coordinated, collective manner.
- ❖ A number of issues which could be dealt with collectively were identified as follows:
 - The National Maritime Policy – this would be considered once the final document was published.
 - The RSA ship's register –
 - the rebuilding of the RSA ship's register must only be a part of the larger issue of developing a Maritime Economy in RSA.
 - There is an over-emphasis on Tonnage Tax and on getting ships onto the RSA flag in a belief that this will create significant employment. This will not be the case in the short to medium term.
 - South Africa should be modeling the RSA flag on successful, reputable flag states like Singapore (as one example)

- ❖ There was a shared concern for a clear line of responsibility and authority in the event of maritime casualties along the RSA coastline. The SOSREP model was one that RSA should consider.
- ❖ At this stage there was no agreement to create a maritime professional organisation's formal "umbrella" body. There was agreement to meet as and when an issue needed to be debated and a combined strategy developed.
- ❖ There was agreement that an annual Seminar, in which each organisation would participate and contribute to, would offer a good opportunity for maritime professional organisations to raise issues and develop closer ties.

With reference to this last point, the Society's Exco has already agreed with The Nautical Institute to plan a seminar for maritime professionals in the second half of this year.

ICS, SAIMENA and the MLA will be invited to join us to make this event a major feature of our region's maritime professional's annual calendar.

Annual Memorial Service



Cape Town Branch held their annual memorial service on the 9th November.

Due to inclement weather the ceremony took place indoors at the Mission to Seafarers. The wreath was transferred to the memorial in front of Port Control after the service.

The memorial reads:

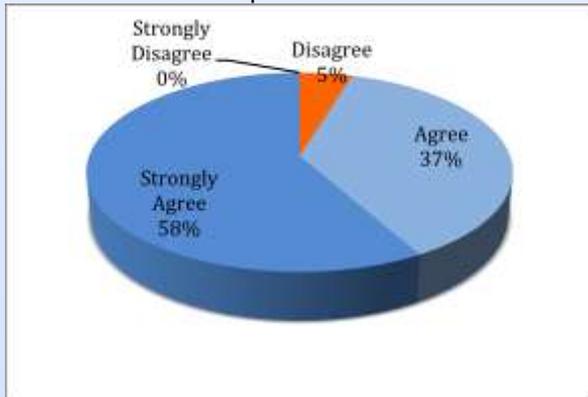
"To the memory of South African seamen of the Commonwealth Merchant Navies who lost their lives during the Second World War 1939 – 1945 and who have no known grave"

Results of the December Questionnaire

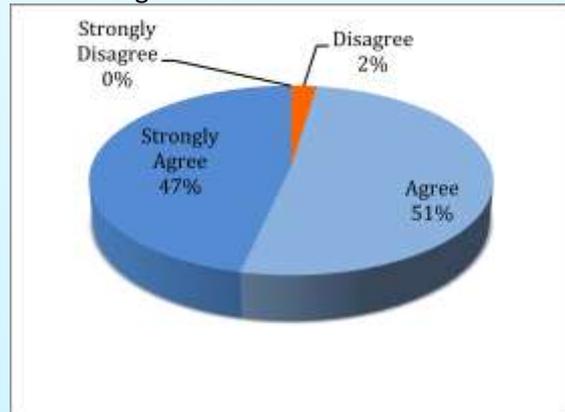
Some 90 members submitted completed questionnaires. Your Executive Committee appreciates the prompt response and will use this data to develop the Strategic Plan for presentation to members during 2012.

As can be seen from the responses below the trends are generally very clear and reveal some interesting insights into how members feel about the Society and their profession.

The Society should be playing a significant role in the maritime development of South Africa.



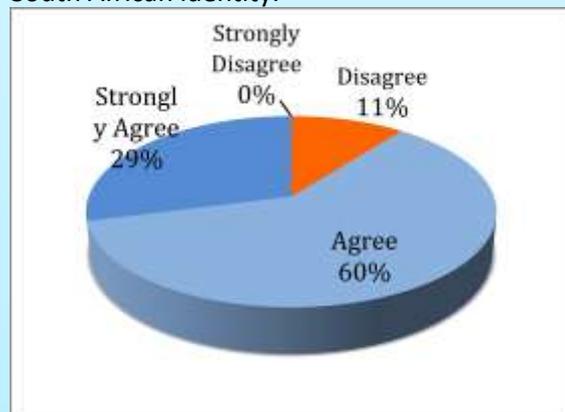
The Society's should seek closer alliances with like-minded organisations.



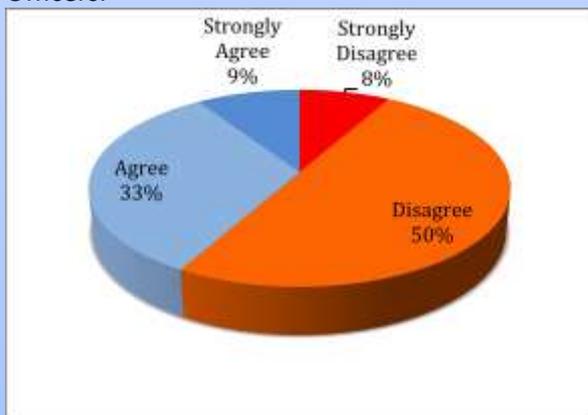
The Society should actively promote its ability to offer its member's experience to Government.



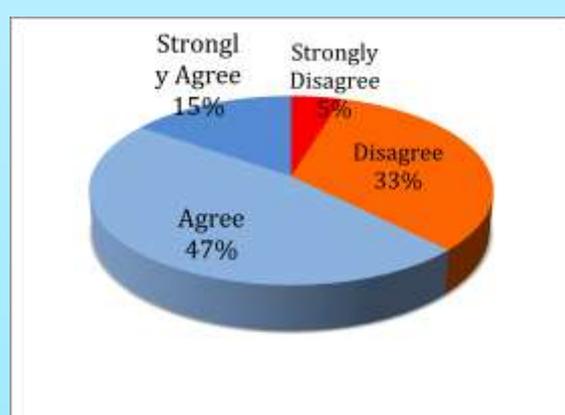
It is important for the Society to retain a strong South African identity.



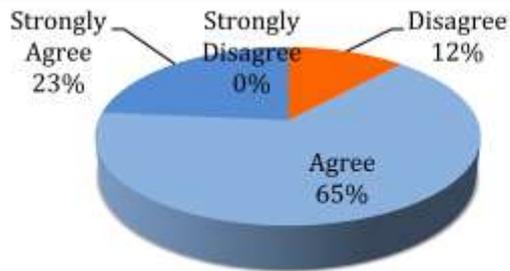
The Society's primary purpose should be as a social network of current and ex Masters and Deck Officers.



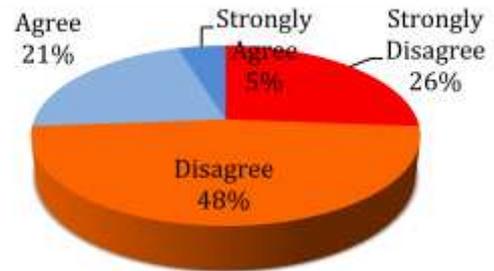
The membership criteria for Full Membership should be broadened.



The Society should be focused on issues surrounding the Master/Deck Officer and associated shore-based disciplines.

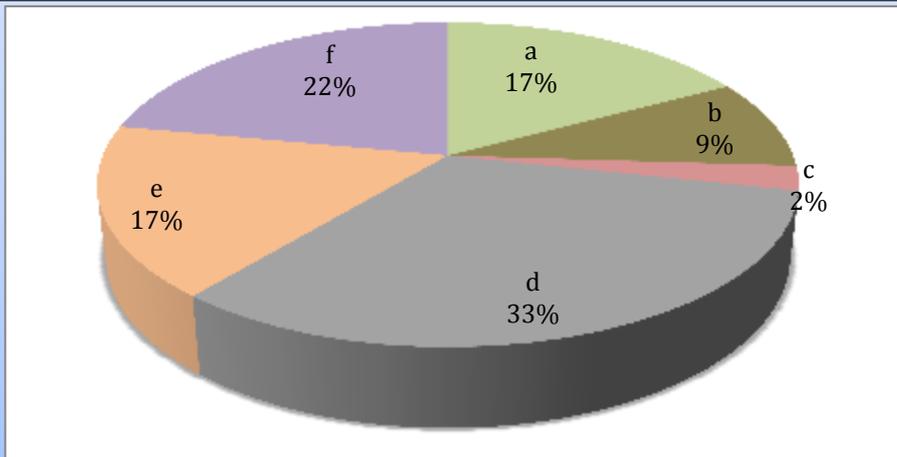


The Society should change its name so as to remove the emphasis on "Master Mariner".

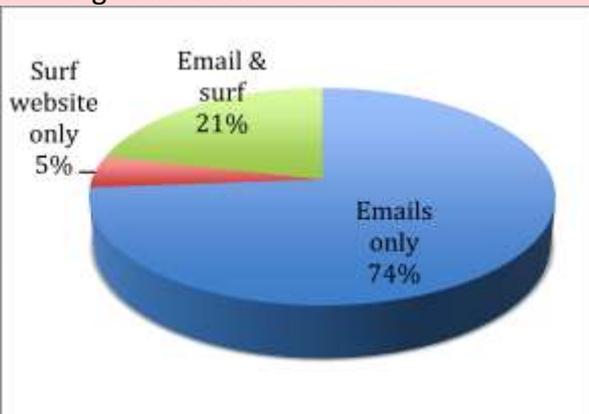


Most members do not attend monthly Branch committee meetings for many different reasons. I would attend a meeting if one or more of the following arrangements were put in place

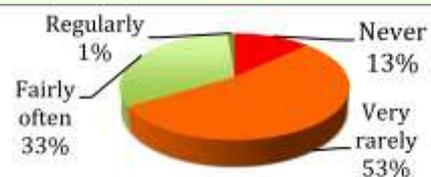
A monthly Branch committee meeting that handled business quickly	a
A monthly Branch meeting that was not also a business meeting	b
A monthly Branch meeting that was purely social	c
A quarterly evening meeting that included an interesting speaker	d
I already regularly attend monthly Branch committee meetings	e
I do not want to or cannot attend any meetings	f



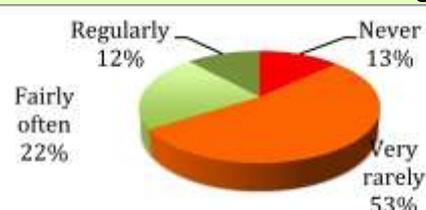
Do you prefer to be sent regular emails with updates of Society news, minutes, newsletters etc or do you prefer to surf the website when wanting information of this sort?



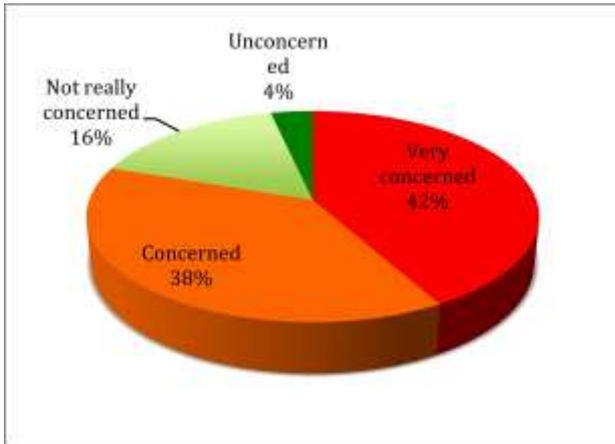
How often do you check the Society's website?



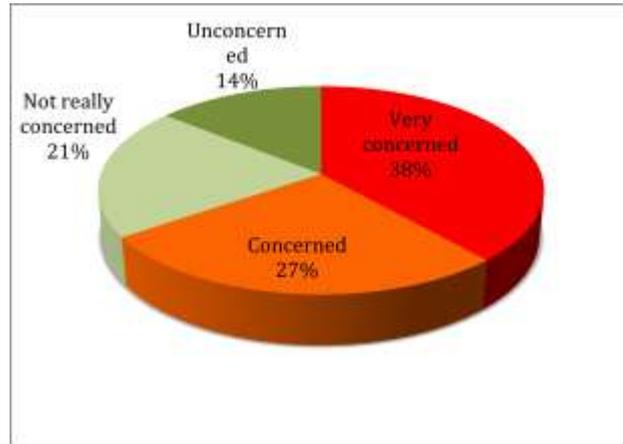
When checking the website do you read the Branch and Exco minutes of meetings?



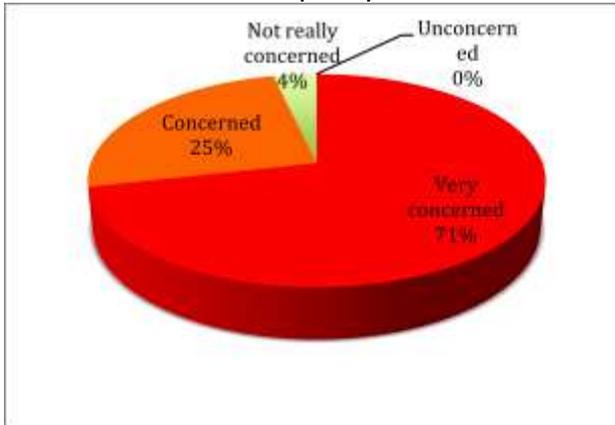
I am concerned by the loss of the RSA-flagged fleet.



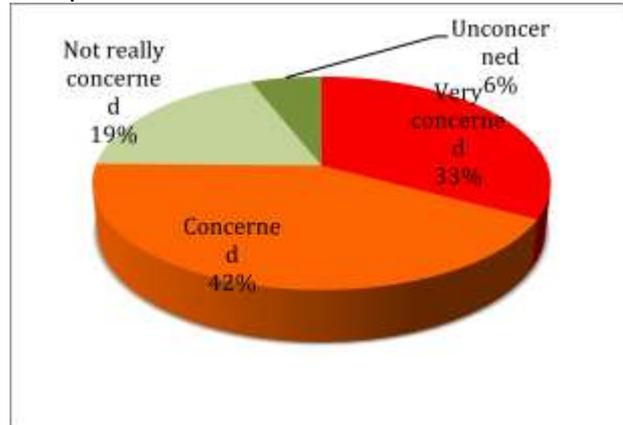
I am concerned that if I work on an RSA-flagged ship I may have to pay normal income tax.



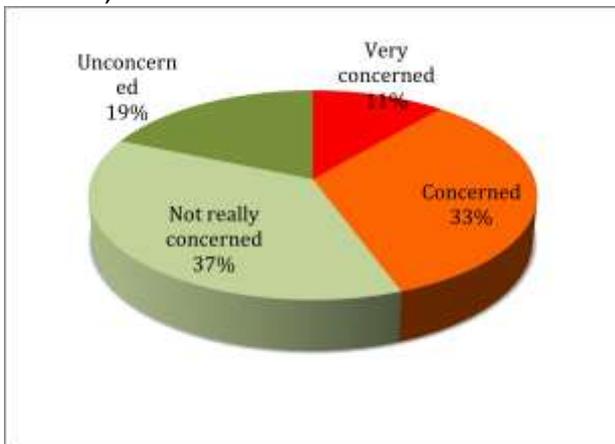
I am concerned about piracy.



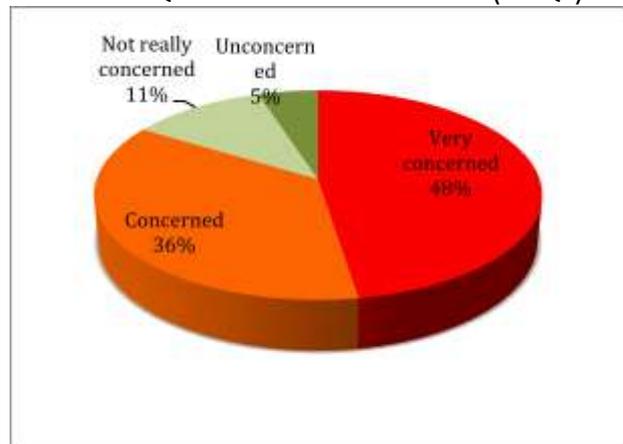
I am concerned about Transnet port security's limiting of my quayside and vessel access in RSA ports.



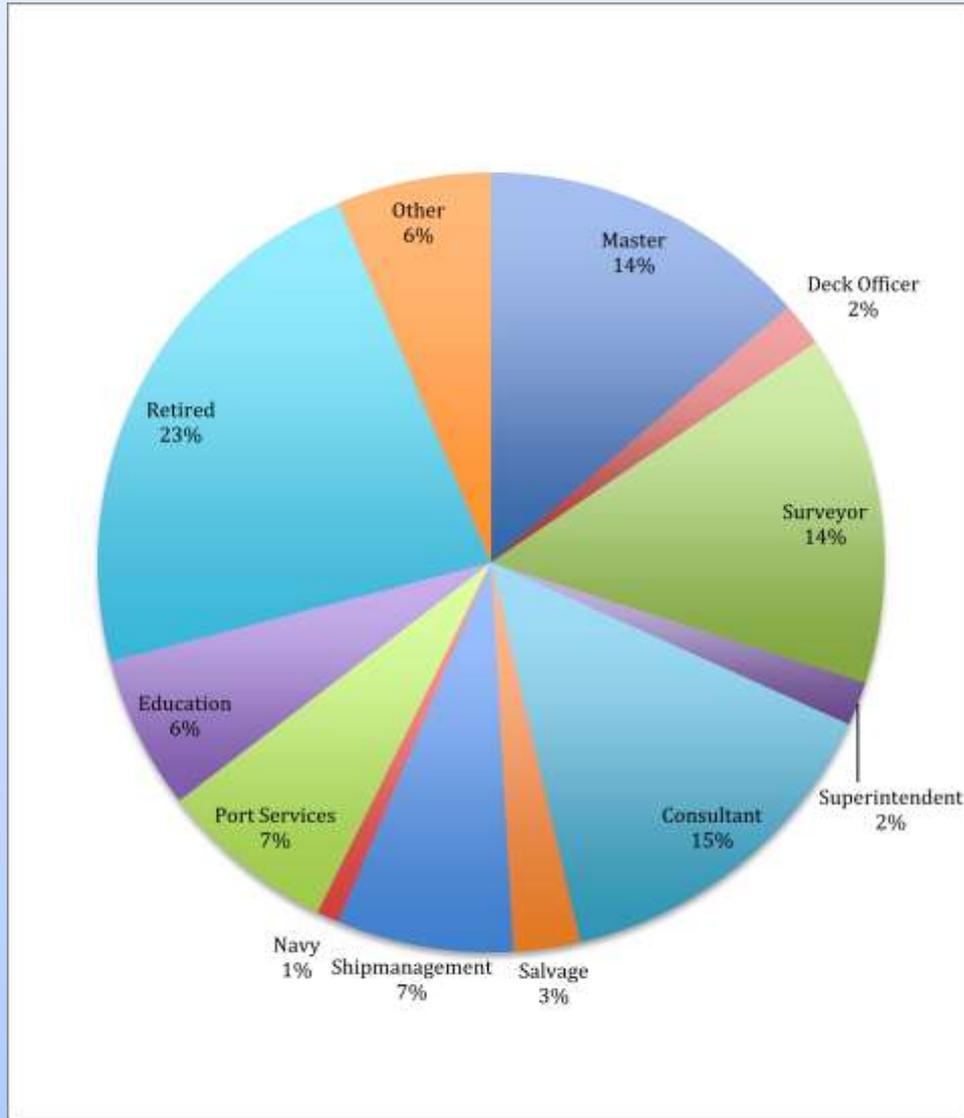
I am concerned about sailing with multi-cultural, international officers and crew.



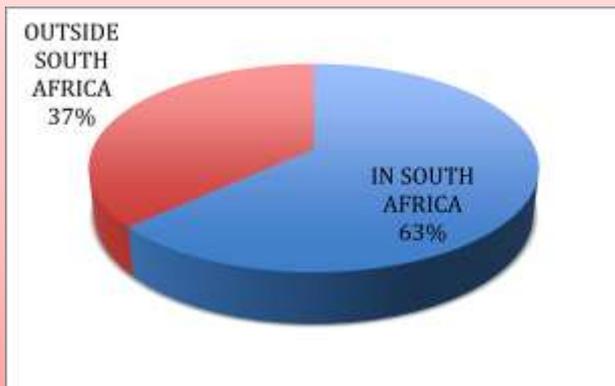
I am concerned that my RSA CoC is not properly recognised within the National Education Qualifications Framework (NEQF).



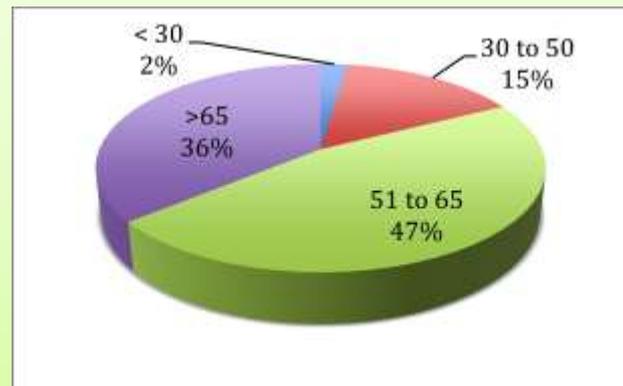
BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENT'S EMPLOYMENT



BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENT'S EMPLOYMENT BASE



AGE PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS



EXECUTIVE AND BRANCH CONTACT DETAILS

Executive Committee

P.O. Box 1956, Cape Town 8000

Email: mastermariners@icon.co.za

President & Honorary General Treasurer: Rob Whitehead

([email](mailto:mastermariners@icon.co.za): mastermariners@icon.co.za)

Vice President & Honorary General Secretary: Keith Burchell

([email](mailto:k.h.burchell@yebo.co.za): k.h.burchell@yebo.co.za)

Branch Masters: Rob Farren-Handford (Richard's Bay); Siegfried Duwe (Port Elizabeth); Roy Martin (Durban - acting).

Member: Colin Flockhart

Cape Town Branch – meets first Tuesday of each month at 16h30 at the Survival Centre, Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Master & Honorary Treasurer:

Rob Whitehead

([email](mailto:mastermariners@icon.co.za): mastermariners@icon.co.za)

Deputy Master & Honorary Secretary:

Colin Flockhart

([email](mailto:coljanf@telkomsa.net): coljanf@telkomsa.net)

Port Elizabeth Branch – for information about meetings, contact the Branch Master below.

Master: Siegfried Duwe

([email](mailto:duwe@lantic.net): duwe@lantic.net)

Durban Branch – no formal Branch structure is active in Durban but contact the Branch Acting Master below.

Master: Roy Martin

([email](mailto:roy@admiralty.co.za): roy@admiralty.co.za)

Richard's Bay Branch – for information about meetings, contact the Branch Master below.

Master:

Rob Farren-Handford

([email](mailto:acmemar@iafrica.com): acmemar@iafrica.com)

NEW MEMBERS

The following new Associate members have been welcomed into the Cape Town Branch:

Malan Le Roux – Deck Officer with Smit Amandla Marine

Miguel Antonio – Deck Officer with Sonatide Marine Services

Rory Clampett – Chief Engineer with Swire Pacific Offshore

Membership application forms are available from our website:

www.mastermarinersa.co.za

The Society 70 years ago

Extract from the Society's 1942 "Log Book" editorial.

"In our first issue of the Journal we commented on the necessity for the foundation of a Society of Master Mariners and furnished detailed progress of that body to date. World-wide interest has been aroused and has resulted in the Society being presently in direct contact with the Honorable Company in Great Britain, who have notified us of their interest through Captain W.H. Coombs. They have also advised us of a newly-formed Company of Master Mariners, Australia, who in their turn wish to contact the South African body.

The question arises whether, in order to make proper co-ordination, the name of our Society should not be altered to conform, and that henceforth steps be taken to name ourselves the "Company of Master Mariners, South Africa". The Executive would be pleased to hear the views on this subject of all members.

It is gratifying to the Society to think that since its inception, the profession and the Merchant Navy is now represented in South Africa by a body who are prepared to render all assistance they can to advance their interests. Tribute should also be paid to the Hon. Field-Marshal J. C. Smuts, the patron of the Society, for his very encouraging remarks in this direction, made in the course of a speech delivered in Cape Town in praise of the Merchant Navy.

The work of the Society is just commencing, but it will never reach consolidation if members themselves are apathetic. No symptoms thereof exist as yet and it is to be hoped that none will appear, but apathy has ever been a failing of the Cloth and one which it is hoped to eradicate."

(It's amazing how history repeats itself. Ed)