

# Brisbane Mission Matters



News from MTS Brisbane Inc



## December 2019

Merry Christmas and welcome to the Mission to Seafarers Brisbane newsletter *Brisbane Mission Matters*. We hope you enjoy it and find it informative. We welcome your feedback and your continued support of the work of the Mission [www.mts.org.au/brisbane](http://www.mts.org.au/brisbane)

## President's Christmas message



Welcome to the final edition of Brisbane Mission Matters, or as we call it in BMM, for 2019.

### Our people

We look back in this edition to all the exciting things that have been happening in and around our seafarers centre and, not unexpectedly, it all revolves around people. Our Supervisors, Jacque and Heather, supported by our wonderful band of volunteers and our Committee have striven to make our seafarers centre and the Port of Brisbane a memorable stopover for the thousands of seafarers that transit our centre each year.

### One of the best

This exceptional effort extends beyond the walls of our seafarers centre out to our many supporters, followers and key stakeholders who are forever keeping our charter in their thoughts. While we are often caught up with the details of providing our services, the feedback that we receive directly from our seafarers is that the Brisbane Mission to Seafarers is one of the best in the world.

### Lifted spirits

Without the support of the Port of Brisbane, our key stakeholder, through to the many financial donors, beanie knitters and associated church and non-church groups, their friends and relatives for providing whatever assistance they can, this outcome would be difficult to achieve and maintain. We are truly grateful for your support, and most importantly our seafarers are truly grateful for our positive input into their health and well-being, which assists them to retain their spirits over their lengthy contracts on board. This uplift in spirits is never required more than at this time approaching Christmas. While our seafarers are from a broad cross section of cultures, religions, languages and genders, they are all truly aware of the impact that this time of year has on their work colleagues and their families.

### Christmas cheer

Our Christmas Bag appeal has reached new records in the number of bags we have packed and are distributing before Christmas and our Volunteers Christmas Party at the seafarer's centre was brighter and more engaging for all those who attended, including our seafarers.

On behalf of all of us at the seafarers centre and our seafarers, please enjoy this final edition of the Brisbane Mission Matters for 2019, thank you for your support and have a safe and joyous festive season with your loved ones. Until next year.

Captain Ross Nicholls  
President

## Christmas Gift Bag record

The famous Brisbane Mission's Christmas gift bags, packed with all sorts of treats and useful items, continues to be a big favourite of international seafarers who visit Brisbane over the Christmas period. Already this year we have packed 700 bags, which is around 200 more than previous years.

Thanks to all those who have already donated gifts for inclusion. Bags have already started to be distributed to provide seafarers with something special from us on Christmas day.

### Christmas bags



We still need more items to put in the bags meet the growing demand. The bags are a small token of Christmas cheer and support that we can give seafarers who are especially lonely and missing their family and loved ones who are many thousands of kilometres away while they are working across the world's oceans. Thank you to the Christmas bag team.

## Mission to Seafarers Australia Council and Global Conference

This important conference was held in September at the Brisbane Airport Corporation Centre where Brisbane Mission greeted fifty-three Mission to Seafarers delegates from all nine Mission regions around the world, plus Stella Maris. The regions are Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia, Canada, US, South America, NZ and Aust

The conference was a great event and the hard work of staff and volunteers in making it a success is very much appreciated. Special thanks to Jacque and her team of volunteers for many hours of hard work assisting in the organisation of the conference.

The nine Regional Directors attending the conference visited the Brisbane seafarers centre during their stay. On visiting Mission to Seafarers Sec Gen Andrew Wright commented on "Now he understands how we won the International Seafarers Centre of the Year"!



Conference highlights included the Sponsors' Evening, the coinciding of the annual Seafarers Memorial Service at St John's Cathedral in Brisbane which was led by our Chaplain The Rev'd Stephen Briggs. The service was attended by global MTS Secretary General Andrew Wright who also led parts of the service.

The conference dinner was another success. Big thanks to the Royal Australian Navy for hosting the dinner at HMAS Moreton on the banks of the Brisbane River. It is believed to be the first non-naval event to be held there.



### **Marcia still spreading the Mission news**

An important focus of the Mission is to promote its great work and service to the broader community. This way we recruit volunteers and seek more support so that we can be of even better service to seafarers from all over the world and a long way from their homes and families.

MTS life member Marcia Scholes may have stepped down from regular volunteering but is still active promoting the mission and recently helped raise \$500 by organising a garden party at her retirement village in Fitzgibbon. Speakers were President Ross Nicholls and centre supervisor Heather Turner.

Marcia described the garden party:

*On a beautiful Sunday morning in Spring, a Garden Party was held at Golden Downs, Fitzgibbon. One of the Residents has a most beautiful Garden (hard to imagine in a Complex) filled with flowering Bromeliad's, ferns, Orchids, a Bougainvillea umbrella & much more. After a delicious Morning Tea the group listened to Ross Nicholls talk about the Mission – where it is and WHY it's there, and we were lucky enough to have the company of Heather Turner who told of what SHE and her compatriot do, and after, she spoke to ladies of getting to the Mission and what it entails to become a Volunteer. We collected \$350, but mostly it was a time of Fellowship. So many out there don't know of the Mission let alone the work we do, so why don't you have a Morning Tea & invite the Mission down. A lot of eyes were opened that day - & now they want to go down to SEE!!*



Photo: Garden party special. Marcia with Supervisor Heather in beautifully kept garden

### **Volunteer Dave meets the Murray challenge**



Photo: Dave (centre) with President Ross and Supervisor Jacquie

Our volunteers come from all walks of life and it's great to see retiree Dave Beckinsale is keeping super active when he's not busy volunteering at centre HQ.

Having run the Manly to Gold Coast Marathon in July, Dave backed up by participating in the Mighty Murray Paddle. The Mission financially supported Dave and the MTS paddle team on the 440 kilometre river journey. Dave says the temperatures were so high tipping into the 40s, the Police and fire fighters wouldn't allow the race to proceed, not because of the paddlers but the massive support and fan teams that shadowed them on their voyage. Well done Dave and team!

## Everyone had a Ball

The Queensland Branch of Shipping Australia Ltd (SAL), the peak body for non-Australian ship owners and agents, recently held their annual Ball in Brisbane and the mission was there.

Many thanks to SAL for sharing the ball proceeds with the Mission and Stella Maris, and to P&O Cruises for donating the first prize cruise for a raffle that helped raise \$2,500 for MTS. President Ross Nicholls had the honour of awarding the prize to the winner, and he was accompanied at the event by our centre supervisor Jacque Secretary, Lisa Davis and Treasurer Rick Doman.



Photo left: Cpt Ross presents first prize to Sash Holdsworth of Smit Lamnalco



## Fr Bill in Redlands City Bulletin 6th November

18 REDLAND CITY BULLETIN Wednesday November 06, 2019  
**NEWS**  
**Bill a help to seafarers**  
 BY STACEY WHITLOCK

**PROUD:** Father Bill Pearson with wife Lorna. He has been honoured for his many years work with sailors.

A RABY Bay priest has been honoured by the highest figure in the Brisbane Anglican church for 45 years of service to the Mission to Seafarers, including his work helping to honour fallen sailors.

Father Bill Pearson was presented with a certificate by Brisbane archbishop Phillip Aspinall at the annual seafarers' memorial service last month, which also marked his retirement from the Seafarers' Day committee.

It came as he prepares to celebrate 60 years in the church, having been ordained as a deacon in Townsville on December 6, 1959.

"That happened to be the feast day of Saint Nicholas, patron saint of sailors (who was) the dedication saint of the Mission to Seafarers chapel that I was to be in charge of for the next three years," he said.

He said he had always had a connection to the sea, having been born in the great British seafaring city of Liverpool.

After serving with the navy and in various Queensland parishes for nearly three decades, he was recalled to Mission to Seafarers as a senior chaplain and head of the Mission to Seafarers Brisbane.

"The great shock for me when I returned to the MTS was containers," he said.

"In Townsville it was common for general cargo vessels to be in port for at least two weeks, not the few hours of today."

In his job, Father Bill provided spiritual support for seafarers who often spent long periods away from home.

"The mission in Townsville was open from 10am to 10pm ... 365 days," he said.

"The weekly program was three nights dances, partners provided by the Ladies' Harbour Lights Guild, with the other four nights movies."

The mission consisted of a hall, lounge, chapel, canteen and library and Father Bill and his family lived in the flat within the complex.

Wife Lorna kept the mission opening during the day while Father Bill was out fulfilling his other chaplaincy duties.

He also visited about 300 ships per year, as well as hospitals, jails and watch houses.

He was appointed Chaplain Emeritus by The Mission to Seafarers president Captain Dave Ellis in 2016.

Caring for seafarers has long been a role for churches of all denominations.

Mission's Chaplain Emeritus Father Bill Pearson has been honoured by the Anglican Church for his 45 years of service to the Mission to Seafarers and 60 years' service to the church.

As you can read in the newspaper article below, Father Bill was presented with a certificate of recognition by Archbishop Dr Phillip Aspinall at the annual Seafarers' Memorial Service held in Brisbane's St John's Cathedral.

Father Bill told the newspaper he has a long-time connection with the sea having been born in Liverpool in the UK, serving with the Navy as well as work with the MTS in Townsville and in Brisbane.

Congratulations Father Bill.

## Heather back on deck

A big welcome back to work at the MTS Centre to Heather Turner, one of our centre supervisors. Heather needed to take some time out over recent months to get on top of some health issues. It's great to have you back Heather and that you are beginning to again fire on all cylinders.



## Volunteers needed for 2020

This year more than 15000 seafarers visited the Brisbane Seafarers Centre. While we have welcomed some new faces this year, sadly we have also farewelled some of our long-term stalwarts.

We would welcome talking to you about joining our volunteers who carry out a wide variety of tasks to make our seafarers' visits a memorable one. Whether you can drive a minibus, operate a till or computer, do some gardening, or like to clean, or simply want to come and play table tennis or talk with a group of seafarers – then please contact Volunteers Supervisor Heather soon.

Heather's Mobile: 0402 127 965  
Email: [volsupmtsbrisbane@gmail.com](mailto:volsupmtsbrisbane@gmail.com)

Do you have friends or family who could join you to make a team on a regular or irregular basis?

The Centre is currently able to open 10am – 10 pm, 365 days a year, but we would like more volunteers to ensure we can meet these targets in 2020.

## MTS Management Committee seeks specialist members

As 2019 draws to a close and we all start to make our New Year resolutions please consider if you have the right skills, experience and enthusiasm to be a part of our management team.



We are looking for people with skills in management, accounting, secretarial, information technology, public relations, grant applications etc.

Our Committee meets every second month following the March Annual General Meeting at the Seafarers Centre at the Port of Brisbane.

If you want to know more please contact President Ross Nicholls:  
Mobile: 0408 189 519  
Email: [presmtsbrisbane@gmail.com](mailto:presmtsbrisbane@gmail.com)

## President addresses maritime leaders

Ship owners and chief players in Australia's maritime industry have a better understanding of the challenging lives that international seafarers lead on the world's oceans and of the great support they receive by the Mission to Seafarers.

President Ross Nicholls spoke to them at the Pacific 2019 Conference in Sydney in early October about the life of a seafarers and the increased pressure they are under as aspects of their work become automated and the industry looks to cut costs even further.

Ross said seafarers were under pressure to work even harder to keep their jobs, which poses greater physical and mental challenges. Technology enables seafarers to easily talk to and see their families from remote places but it has been found that the downside to this can be greater depression and even suicide when they have to say good bye and not see them or hear their voices, again and again.

## Memorial Service donation

The Annual Seafarers Memorial Service held at St John's Anglican Cathedral in Brisbane afforded a solemn yet cheerful opportunity to remember the thousands of seafarers who sail the world's oceans and those who went before them. A link to the service can be found on facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/NAASandgateSubSection/videos/1408653419284910/>



\$4000 was donated to the Brisbane Mission from funds raised by the Seafarers' Day Committee including donations from the Company of Master Mariners, the Naval Association, the Navy League, the Submariners Association, Fleet Air Arm and proceeds from a Bunnings sausage sizzle. The money will go towards refurbishing the Brisbane centre's aging kitchen.

Presentation of the cheques to Ross Nicholls, President of the MTS by Peter Marchbank, Hon Treasurer and Patrick Ringold, Hon Secretary of the Seafarers' Day Committee.

On behalf of the Seafarers' Day Committee we wish to thank all of you for your generosity in supporting our fund toward the running of the Annual Seafarers Service for 2019. As a result , and including donations from the Company of Master Mariners, the Naval Assn, the Navy League, Submariners Assn, Fleet Air Arm and the proceeds from a Bunnings Sausage Sizzle we are pleased to announce that the committee will be making a donation of \$4000.00 to the Mission to Seafarers at Fisherman Island.

The Mission thanks God for supporting these men and women and their families through the challenges they face, and for supporting the Mission to Seafarers around the world so that it can best serve seafarers out of kindness and love in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

### **New cruise ship initiative**

Thanks to the hard work of our staff and volunteers we have been able to expand our service to seafarers visiting Brisbane to include crews from cruise ships.

As you know each year cruise ships dock near our centre at the Grain Terminal.

Supervisor Jacque and volunteer Maureen initiated the move to greet cruise ship crews and transport them to the centre for some R and R.

The centre has been overwhelmed by the positive response from cruise ship seafarers, often left with very little time and services during their short stay port calls. The cruise ship season in Brisbane commences during the end of November and runs through to early April.



### **First CPE graduate celebrated**



Brisbane MTS has played a big role in growing the pastoral care education of trainee Anglican Priest, Gary Tognola. Gary is the first recipient of the Milford Eyres Bursary. The bursary was set up a few years ago following a bequest from mission supporter, ship's Captain and Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait Pilot, Captain Milford Eyres to enable trainee priests to assist the development and training of people to work in the maritime sector and to also benefit the mission.

It was recognised that sponsoring a CPE student with work experience gained at the seafarers centre would likely address both of these requirements.

Gary was the first recipient and has developed his CPE knowledge around the maritime industry and

will hopefully continue to volunteer at the Brisbane seafarers centre. He is continuing his studies and after completing 100 hours assisting our volunteers and staff and working with seafarers he now has unique understanding of a very special community of global workers.

### **Christmas party fun**

The recent Brisbane Mission Christmas party was a fun event with seafarers joining with staff and volunteers to celebrate the festive season. It can be a testing time for seafarers and it was great to see so many let their hair down (and grow and turn colour!).

Below is a selection of some of the best photos.

From all of us here a Brisbane MTS may you have a happy and meaningful Christmas and New Year. We thank you for your support in 2019 and look forward to catching up with you again in 2020.



### **AGM date claimer**

Put this one in your diary!

The MTS Brisbane 2020 Annual General Meeting will be held on 14th March.

Come along and bring friends to hear the AGM reports and our future plans for the seafarers centre. There will be refreshments at the end of the meeting.