

Flag Vanuatu

Quarterly Newsletter from the Vanuatu Shipping Register



Autumn 2021

Welcome to the Autumn edition of our quarterly newsletter 'Flag Vanuatu', intended for our vessel Owners, Operators, Managers, Seafarers, friends of the Register and colleagues; as a means of updating our readers on newsworthy/interesting items, important new legislation, policy, safety, and pertinent regulations. Brief snippets of news also from our home country, Vanuatu, and from the shipping community worldwide.

We hope that you will find this edition interesting and informative.

Your feedback, comments and suggestions are always welcome, along with your contributions, news items and photos etc. Please get in touch:

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Headlines

New Commissioner of Maritime Affairs

We are very pleased and honoured to announce, with immediate effect, the appointment of our new Commissioner of Maritime Affairs (CoMA) **Mr. Less John Napuati**.

Commissioner Napuati, along with other distinctions, is a graduate of the Masters (LLM) program at the World Maritime University in Malta.

With the appointment of Commissioner Napuati in Port Vila, we can expect confirmations of a number of new Deputy Commissioners of Maritime Affairs (DCMAs) worldwide which can only be beneficial to our operational efficiency and to Vanuatu flagged vessels.

New York Head Office (Operations) Passes Interim ISO Audit

Further good news, although anticipated, was the successful ISO Interim Audit of the Vanuatu Maritime operational headquarters in New York, this carried out by DNV on the 16th of July with no non-conformances. A pass then, with flying colours, for Capt. Michael DeCharles and the very capable registration team in NY.

The Worldwide Pandemic

The ghastly covid-19 pandemic drags on around the world, and while comprehensive vaccination progresses, there seems to be fear that yet new variants will set things back. There is still much to be done to bring the disease under control.

It appears, though, that there is now at least some light at the end of the tunnel, and we look forward to the time, which must surely come, when we have covid under control and all our lives can return to normal. We shall be stronger and wiser when that time comes.

The Vanuatu shipping registry is sympathetic to the difficulties facing Shipowners and Managers, in particular ensuring the safety of all seafarers, while recognizing their rights to leave periods as close as possible to the due date.

It is our policy and directive that: 'All efforts should be made where practical to make the appropriate crew changes as the conditions allow'.

Our latest policies and directives to Masters, Ship-Owners and parties concerned regarding the pandemic can be found under FLEET SAFETY LETTERS on our web site.



Impressive entry of the Vanuatu Olympic athletes at the opening ceremony. Well received by all and a salute for the determination and bravery in sending a sporting delegation to Japan during these difficult times. Vanuatu competed at Judo, rowing, and table-tennis.

Local News from Vanuatu

The Vanuatu government has put in place a State of Emergency until 31st December 2021 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We shall update our readers on travel and pandemic emergency levels in subsequent issues, and we look forward to the time we can once more welcome international travellers without restrictions.

Staying with sport, an extract from an earlier article about traditional Island cricket, and an important message on gender equality, of which we are strong supporters.



Rachel Andrew playing at Vanuatu's main ground in Port Vila, which has recently been upgraded with turf from the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG)

Rachel Andrew is one of the leading cricketers in an island nation famous for its stunning beaches. She has scored more runs for the women's national team than anyone else and averages an impressive 11.50 with the ball.

Cricket is her passion, as it is for many women in Vanuatu - an archipelago across the Coral Sea from Australia, with a population of 307,000.

Its women's T20 team ranks 28th in the world, making it probably the country's most successful sporting side.

Despite that, traditional values have created barriers that have prevented many of Vanuatu's 'mamas' from playing sport - but the Vanuatu Cricket Association (VCA) is trying to change that.

"I heard some people saying 'mamas, they belong in the kitchen, clean the house, looking after the kids', but no - it's wrong," said Andrew.

"We've got to help each other and promote gender equality. Let them know they have the right to enjoy themselves out there in sports or any activities."



The Women's Island Cricket Programme was started in 2012 to change attitudes and improve health education and access. It now involves nine communities around the capital city of Port Vila and includes women of all ages, from 15 to 90.!

Played in full island dress, using banyan bats and balls made from the tree's sap, island cricket is a little different from the version played at Lord's - teams have two batters and two runners, often younger daughters asked to do the more athletic work while their mothers rack up the runs.

The programme has been a sporting success - several of the younger players have gone on to play for the national team - and has improved its participants' health outcomes.

Part of the programme's success has been down to including the participants' husbands, who are often invited to join classes and get involved in the women's discussions.

"I saw a lot of husbands coming out and supporting their wives while they're playing island cricket. That's a good thing for the mamas, seeing their husbands come out and support them."

On the pitch, the women's team have laid strong foundations for success - they finished third in the 2019 Pacific Games, the last international cricket they played before the pandemic, and have won six of the 12 matches they have played.

In September they will play in the regional qualifier for the 2023 Women's T20 World Cup and are serious contenders to progress ahead of more established teams. Win that tournament and they will be just one step away from the World Cup itself.

Former Ireland opener Jeremy Bray has recently been appointed as high performance manager - working with both the men's and women's teams - with the ambition of making that prospect a reality.

"The future is looking very bright for us."

We can only hope that our readers will still be up for a good game of Island Cricket at age 90!

Recent Items from the Register



Items appearing in this section are summarized for general information only and for specific information and policy please always refer to our website and official circulars. Your inquiries are always welcome. These may be directed to Vanuatu Maritime Services, Limited New York

Clearly, the Covid-19 Pandemic has dominated most of our thoughts and considerations for much of the last two years and, at the outset of the pandemic, VMSL as Administrator of the Vanuatu International Ship Registry, prepared policies designed to assist Shipowners through the difficult period.

VMSL has review statements by the IMO and other administrations to ensure alignment with respect to extension of endorsements issued in accordance with STCW conventions, and VMSL is taking a pragmatic approach in line with the IMO Secretary General's circular letter No. 420/Add5/Rev.1 dated 2nd April 2020

We would draw attention to revision 3 of our Covid-19 policy and associated Fleet Safety Letter (FSL) 063021.GEN regarding Seafarer Employment Agreement.

The Register's 'Letter of Comfort', dated 30th June 2021, relating to extensions for Seafarer's Documentation, Certification, and ISM/ISPS/MLC verifications, can be found on our web site.

Owners, Operators, Managers, please stay updated on all latest Safety Circulars and Maritime Bulletins.

Currently, when onboard seafarer service extensions due to unavoidable pandemic travel restrictions apply, these are automatically extended up to 31st December 2021, although we stipulate that all efforts should be made where practical, to make appropriate crew changes upon completion of contracts.

Global Shipping News

(Extracted from the Shipping Press, dedicated to the wellbeing of the worldwide shipping community, and all those 'who go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters')

The shape of things to come

AUTONOMOUS SHIPS

[By: ClassNK]

Leading Classification Society ClassNK has released "ClassNK Technical Journal".

The purpose of this publication is contributing to the development of the maritime industry by publishing the outcome of R&D and technical activities.

The latest issue "Class NK Technical Journal No.3 2021 (I)" focuses on "Autonomous Ship" as special articles including trends and issues for practical use of autonomous ship, development of automatic manoeuvring by utilizing AI, and some projects concerning automatic operation.

In addition, technical articles describe the development of wave load formulas for hull structural design, climate change initiatives for greenhouse gas reduction, ClassNK's new certification service "Innovation Endorsement", and recent topics at IMO.

[And from South Korea]

South Korean shipbuilder Hyundai Heavy Industries is getting ready to test the autonomous navigation of a large LNG carrier on a trans-oceanic voyage.

The test is expected to take place later this year using a 300-meter-long LNG carrier currently under construction at a Korea Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering shipyard, the parent holding company of HHI.

The ship will use the Hyundai Intelligent Navigation Assistant System (HiNAS) 2.0, developed by KSME subsidiary Avicus, to navigate autonomously with oversight from a full crew on board.

The specific route for the voyage is still to be determined but it is expected to take place in either the Pacific or Indian Ocean.

Based on the results of the test voyage, Hyundai Heavy Industries plans to evaluate the commercial potential of the technology.

Our Comments

The way things are we doubt traditional seafaring will be comprehensively replaced by AI in the foreseeable future, although we shall work closely with owners introducing new generation technology onboard.

We welcome the news that more and more Governments around the world are offering free covid-19 vaccinations to seafarers, which we believe will assist toward timely crew changes, and we salute all those Nations, Port States and organizations involved.

Clearly Seafarer's Covid vaccinations need to be prioritized.

Following the intriguing (but unfortunate and very costly) incident of blockage of the Suez Canal for 6 days by the vessel EVER GIVEN back in March, it is difficult, when reading the shipping press just now, to avoid reports of incidents in the Middle East and ongoing tensions in the South China Sea and elsewhere. Not to mention the ever-present risk of piracy in some parts of the world.

More than ever there is need for restraint, goodwill and understanding on a global scale, albeit not an easy task, but a task that must be undertaken.

Our long experience has shown that virtually all seafarers are, by nature, the most tolerant and diplomatic persons on the planet, honest, hardworking, providing for their families and their home nations.

We despair at the prospect today of seafarer's wellbeing and even lives being placed at risk due to events beyond their control because of geopolitical hubris, hegemony, extremism, and greed.

'That's it for now. We Shall be back soon'



We have come a long way, but there is still no substitute for regular onboard Safety Meetings and good Risk Assessment!

Greetings from all of us in Vanuatu, VMSL and our Shipping Register. Stay Safe and Well.

Looking forward to your feedback, suggestions, comments, and contributions.