

WA Labor IAPC - LNG MFI Write-Up

“LNG MFI Speaks to the WA Labor International Affairs Policy Committee”

In late August, LNG Marine Fuels Institute (‘LNG MFI’) CEO Captain Walter Purio was hosted by the WA Labor International Affairs Policy Committee. Captain Purio addressed Committee members on *The Opportunities for Clean Global Marine Transportation* and how Australian state and federal policy could help drive LNG’s uptake as a marine fuel in the southern hemisphere.

Captain Purio detailed his extensive experience in the global marine industry, based in the US and Australia. This included many ventures on traditional heavy diesel-fuelled vessels, in which the world’s 15 largest alone emit more nitrogen and sulphur oxides than all of the world’s cars combined. The public health consequences of these emissions are significant, with a recent European study finding at least 50,000 premature deaths per year occurred as a result of shipping air pollution.

On LNG as a marine fuel, Captain Purio outlined the landmark International Maritime Organisation (IMO) decision to cap marine vessel sulphur emissions to 0.5% from 2020. With diesel vessels non-compliant, Captain Purio advocated that the uptake of LNG as a marine fuel is the only viable and sustainable mid-term option for compliance (pending future technology). This is in contrast to other options, such as the industry-wide installation of high-cost vessel exhaust cleaning systems (‘scrubbers’). On top of sulphur and nitrous oxide emission reductions, the increased use of LNG as a marine fuel would dramatically reduce CO2 emissions.

Turning to the work of LNG MFI, Captain Purio advanced that the institute is the only independent not-for-profit LNG marine fuels body in the southern hemisphere. Working with industry, civil society and across all sides of the political aisle, LNG MFI’s purpose is to advocate for the transition to cleaner marine fuel through the use of LNG. Australia is more than 90% reliant on imported transport fuels, despite extensive gas reserves in Australia, and could lead the southern hemisphere in adoption. Captain Purio acknowledged that the major challenges for industrial uptake of this cleaner marine technology is ensuring the plentiful the supply of gas for marine transportation use, and meeting the investment costs for LNG bunkering and modified engine technology. State-level policy options that were raised during the meeting included emissions zones around ports, reforms to port fees for low-emission ships and marine vessel gas supply measures.

The International Affairs Policy Committee is one of eight WA Labor policy committees. The purpose of the policy committees is to develop and review policy and, when Labor is in government, deliberate on new policy options for consideration by the Party. Given WA’s status as a leading energy state and its strong trade figures, the sustainability of marine lines of communication from and into WA is critical. With the ongoing complexity of the national debate about energy use and the environment, Captain Purio’s advocacy before the International Affairs Policy Committee was timely, relevant and well received.

Hugo Seymour

Convenor

WA Labor International Affairs Policy Committee