

PacMA fact file

THE PACIFIC ISLANDS MARITIME ASSOCIATION (PacMA)

(formerly Association of Pacific Island Maritime Training Institutions and Maritime Administrations (APIMTIMA))

CURRENT ROLE AND MANDATE

The Association of Pacific Islands Maritime Training Institutions and Maritime Administrations (APIMTIMA) was founded in 1995 with assistance from RMP. Membership of APIMTIMA was open exclusively to PICTs. The Association's activities had primarily been concentrated on an annual two-day meeting conducted in Fiji. The heads of each national maritime training institution and maritime administration normally attended this meeting. Observers from the New Zealand and Australian maritime administrations and training institutions attended meetings and additionally presented briefings on current maritime issues and Australasian responses to these. Up to 2005, RMP acted as a secretariat for the Association and in this role organised meetings and sourced support funding for the Association. The Association was primarily a forum for information exchange between member countries and amongst the regional institutions and external observers. This particular function was perceived to have been of great benefit in ensuring cooperation between training institutions and maritime administrations, in particular during the implementation of STCW-95. APIMTIMA also formally discussed and endorsed generic model certification structures, earlier RMP strategic plans and some of the generic model legislation developed for and by RMP. Both the formal activities, including information exchange, and informal networking associated with the meetings were believed by members to have been effective in promoting improved harmonisation of standards and initiatives in the region.

STRUCTURE

Members perceived that APIMTIMA had been very beneficial and supported the continuation of the Association but noted that the Association had effectively always been led by RMP. At the 2003 meeting, RMP suggested that, although it should continue to provide support as a permanent secretariat, the collective knowledge of regular meeting attendees and the maturing of the Association itself had now made it possible for members to take greater responsibility in establishing the direction and activities of APIMTIMA. The Association had no executive committee and agendas/activities were effectively planned by RMP. The depth and breadth of experience within the membership had developed adequately to support an expanded role. The capacity of individual members to personally engage in significant work activities on behalf of the Association was said by several respondents to be limited by work commitments and tight resourcing within training institutes and administrations. However, it was felt that there was now the capacity and the desire for the membership to assume greater responsibility in direction-setting and decision-making. In the short and medium terms, it was felt that significant assistance from RMP would probably continue to be required, both in advising the decision-making function and in coordinating and conducting the activities identified by the Association.

MEMBERSHIP AND NAME CHANGE TO PacMA

The 2003 APIMTIMA meeting approved a proposal that the Association become the key regional advisory body for maritime issues and that the membership be broadened to include ship and port operators to support this function. It was also decided that the expanded association should have a new name to reflect the Association's broadened scope and membership, and 'Pacific Islands Maritime Association' (PacMA) was chosen as the new name. There was benefit in strengthening cross-sector collaboration and responses across the various sectors of the maritime industry within the Pacific; however, there were concerns that increasing total participation as well as the breadth of participation might detract from what is seen by many as a reasonably focused mandate for training, certification and governmental regulation of the maritime industry. In the medium term, it might be possible for PacMA to develop structures and methods of working that would allow expanded membership without compromising the current mandate. At this time, however, there is some danger that moving too quickly to adopt this proposal would diminish the effectiveness of the Association. RMP is, however, encouraging maritime training institutes and administrations in strengthening their relationships with industry and the port sector so that PacMA members are able to validly convey industry viewpoints.

FUTURE ROLE

In the shorter term, PacMA will take some time to effectively evolve to manage the increased decision-making and direction-setting role. In the longer term, an expanded role involving the provision of technical assistance, capacity supplementation and a number of transboundary functions would provide increased autonomy and greater ownership of initiatives in the maritime sector. For example, the establishment of subcommittees under PacMA for setting examination standards and reviewing the current maritime syllabi, for developing regional surveying standards and for establishing regional auditing standards have all succeeded with the set of tasks now completed. The capacity implications for PacMA in the devolution of functions from RMP are also being considered.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Many people in the maritime sector in the region have had extensive overseas training, and experience. In addition,

some countries have been through restructuring, attained White List status, set up STCW quality systems, are maintaining seafarer databases, have ship registration systems in place and operate offshore registries. RMP has tapped into that experience and uses regional expertise to assist in its work programme whenever possible.

PACMA SUBCOMMITTEES

Auditing Subcommittee

This was established in early 2004. This subcommittee comprises six members from PacMA. It is a scheme whereby suitably qualified auditors in the region carry out audits in other PICTs. The region has a pool of over 50 qualified auditors who conduct STCW-95 compliance audits, ISM audits and more recently ISPS Code audits. The use of people in this pool is dependent on their obtaining prior auditing experience in their own countries. The experience gained will ensure the region has a well-qualified pool of people. The move to more audit-based systems in the maritime industry is already happening.

Moderators/Examiners and Lecturers Subcommittee

To date over 40 examiners from 10 countries in the region have attended courses on examining and assessing seafarers based on IMO Model Course 3.12, Examination and Certification of Seafarers. Subjects covered included STCW-95, flag-state responsibilities, assessment, assessment principles, testing methods and evaluation. The moderators/examiners and lecturers subcommittee formed in 2003 comprises six members from PacMA who are currently reviewing the SPC regional certificate structure and monitoring the regional examination database set up by RMP. This database is available to examiners from the region. The more examination papers put into the database, the more standardised the assessment process in the region will become. Further examiners/assessors training courses are planned.

Port State Control, Flag State Inspection and Survey Subcommittee

This subcommittee was established late in 2004 and comprises six members from PacMA. They are currently working on a regional surveying standard and are looking at encouraging membership of the Tokyo MOU amongst PacMA members. The survey subcommittee is also investigating the establishing of a regional pool of survey inspectors to supplement national capacity during busy periods and to mentor and exchange information on issues that affect each country. There is already an agreement in principle with New Zealand to assist with this task. This would also be the forum for approaching the Tokyo Port State Control secretariat for assistance with training and secondments.

COLLABORATION

Apart from working closely with RMP, PacMA collaborates with Maritime New Zealand, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, New Zealand Maritime School, Australian Maritime College, United States Coast Guard, Australia's Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) and the Executive Committees of other regional associations such as the Pacific International Maritime Law Association (PIMLA), the Pacific Women in Maritime Association (PacWIMA) and the Association of Pacific Ports (APP).