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Committee Secretary
Transport and Public Works Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Sir or Madam

Submission to the Inquiry into a sustainable Queensland intrastate shipping industry

I am writing to the inquiry to explain how difficult it is to get work in the shipping industry in the present climate, whether intrastate or other types of shipping.

My name is Michael Horsley. I am a 54-year-old seafarer. I have worked as a seafarer ever since 1988. Before that, I was a ship repair tradesman, a boilermaker and welder, working as a civilian employee of the Navy at the Garden Island dockyards.

In 30 years as a seafarer, I have acquired virtually every industry qualification it is possible to have, including my Chief Integrated Rating ticket, and tickets for firefighting (including fire team leader), working at heights, confined spaces, rescue tickets, rigger and dogman, and more besides.

I have sailed on many, many ships of every different type – coastal, international, bulk carriers, and others.

Until about three years ago, I had not had any significant period of unemployment. Quite the opposite, in fact. I would often get headhunted for jobs on ships, companies would get in touch with me to ask me to come work on their ships. It would be fair to say I got pretty much any job I applied for.

The last three years have been a very different story. Three years ago, the ship I was working on was decommissioned. Since that time I have struggled to find even occasional work in the industry. In that time, I have done a total of three trips (or “swings”) on a coal/iron ore bulk carrier. In January 2018 I worked for two and a half weeks on a dredge, and I have not had any seafaring work since then. I have tried to find other work that I can do, but this has also been temporary. For example, I recently got a couple of months work helping to build a solar farm.

I have applied for all available work in the industry, and sent my resume to shipping companies. I applied for work on the Gladstone-Weipa route. I have applied for numerous jobs operating out of Queensland on ships, tugs, anything. Of all the seafaring jobs I have applied for, I don't think I received feedback from any company except one. The one piece of feedback I did receive was that I was “overqualified” for the position.

In the last twelve months or so, I think there have been perhaps three jobs I could apply for.

I hope that my letter gives the Committee some indication of the shocking state of the industry at present.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Horsley', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Horsley

