

# Media Release

**The Hon Melissa Horne MP**

Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Local Government

Minister for Ports and Freight

Minister for Roads and Road Safety



Tuesday, 25 June 2024

## SUPPORTING OUR MARITIME WORKERS

The Allan Labor Government is helping seafarers stay connected with their loved ones and helping them access mental health support services for free while working at Victorian ports.

Minister for Ports and Freight Melissa Horne today announced a \$500,000 investment in the Melbourne Seafarers Centre to support seafarers stationed at the ports of Melbourne, Geelong, Hastings, and Portland.

Mental health is increasingly recognised as a concern in the maritime sector, with seafarers spending long periods isolated at sea – between 14 days to six weeks.

The Labor Government's investment will allow workers to access free Wi-Fi, counselling (face-to-face, telephone, and video link), a 24/7 helpline and text messaging service, translation services, critical incident onsite support, and specialised support for diverse cultural needs.

This will ensure seafarers can get the support they need at ports across Victoria after spending weeks at sea.

This initiative builds on the Labor Government's \$2.5 million investment to establish the Melbourne Seafarers Centre, supporting the diverse seafaring community.

The International Day of the Seafarer marked this year on 25 June, celebrates the significant contributions of seafarers to worldwide trade, the economies, and societies.

Victoria's commercial ports are vital to the state's economy, handling 98 per cent of exports by volume. In 2023, more than \$85 billion worth of goods were imported into Victoria via maritime routes.

To find out more about Victoria's ports and support for seafarers visit: [vic.gov.au/about-victorias-commercial-ports](https://vic.gov.au/about-victorias-commercial-ports).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Ports and Freight Melissa Horne

*"Seafarers are the lifeblood of our maritime sector, connecting Victorian producers to the rest of the world and we're proud to support today on Day of the Seafarer and every day."*

*"Long stretches away from home means these workers are more likely to experience mental health issues – that's why we're making sure they can stay connected to their loved ones and access the support they need."*

### Quotes attributable to International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) Coordinator Australia Ian Bray

*"The ITF welcomes the Allan Labor Government's investment to help improve the mental health of seafarers – workers who are often among the most isolated and exploited in the world."*

*"With the vast majority of goods entering and exiting Victoria by ship, it's important we back our seafarers and recognise the significant contribution they make to our economy and community."*