

# JAPAN P&I NEWS

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Dear Sirs and Madams,

## **Australian Maritime Crew Visa is here**

We have been advised of new crew visa from Australian government through the Secretariat of the International Group of P&I Clubs as follows:-

- Quote -

The Australian Government now requires foreign sea crew to obtain a Maritime Crew Visa (MCV) to come to Australia.

This means the 130 000 foreign sea crew who typically travel to Australia annually on commercial ships, such as cargo and cruise ships, and other non-military ships, now need to apply for a visa before they arrive.

The MCV aims to strengthen Australia's border security while continuing to enable the entry of genuine foreign seafarers. It will replace the current Special Purpose Visa that is granted to foreign sea crew on arrival, provided they meet entry requirements.

There is a six-month transitional period until 31 December 2007 to allow the maritime industry to adapt to the new requirement and apply for MCVs. From 1 January 2008, the MCV will be mandatory and crew not holding an MCV are likely to be restricted on board and fines imposed.

### **Key features**

The MCV:

- is required by all foreign sea crew (except New Zealanders)
- requires a formal visa application to be made outside of Australia
- needs to be granted before arrival
- is free of charge
- is valid for three years
- allows multiple entries to Australia
- is valid for travel to Australia by sea (not by air).

### **Applying for an MCV**

Individual seafarers, along with authorised third parties such as shipping agents or crew manning agents, may apply for the MCV. Third parties may also be able to receive communications on behalf of crew. For example, when an MCV is approved the third party is notified by letter or email. It is also possible to check online whether a crew member holds an MCV.

MCV applications can be lodged over the internet or by completing a paper application and posting it to Brisbane, Australia. Applications cannot be lodged at an Australian embassy, consulate or high commission.

Internet applications may be finalised within days, while paper applications may take some weeks to finalise. Only one application may be lodged at a time and it should only take a few minutes to submit an application for each crew member, provided the required information is available.

The MCV is a change for the shipping industry however it seeks to strikes a balance between the need for stronger border security and the demands of shipping operations.

**Further information**

For more information on the Maritime Crew Visa visit: [www.immi.gov.au/sea](http://www.immi.gov.au/sea)

- Unquote -

We hope this information will be some assistance to the Members.

Yours faithfully,

**The Japan Ship Owners' Mutual Protection & Indemnity Association**

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