



NEWS

Australia: Seafarer Eligibility for a Special Purpose Visa.

The Club's correspondents in Melbourne have drawn the Managers' attention to amendments to the Australian Migration Regulations which will affect ships' crew as well as superintendents, supercargoes and technical teams visiting vessels at Australian ports.

On 1 November 2003 the Australian Government's Department of Immigration and Multicultural Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) passed an amendment, which came into force on 1 July 2004, to Part 1 of Schedule 9 to the Migration Regulations. It requires crew members of non-military vessels to have a valid passport and a seafarer's identity document in order to obtain a Special Purpose Visa which allows the holder to remain in Australia for as long as the vessel is in port. The seafarer's identity document can be in the form of a Sea Service Record Book or Discharge Book which identifies the holder and confirms that he or she is employed on the vessel as a crew member.

Without the Special Purpose Visa the seafarer will be required to remain on board the vessel. For breach of this regulation DIMIA have power to fine the owners, master, charterers or agents of a vessel up to Aus\$5,000 which must be paid within 28 days. . If not paid within this period the fine increases to Aus\$10,000 and the authorities are entitled to enforce it against the vessel's Agents. Members are therefore advised to ensure that crew members are in possession of a valid passports and a seafarer's identity documents

The legislation applies to seafarers employed on a vessel and not to superintendents, supercargoes, technical teams or others who are not so employed and who are consequently not entitled to the Special Purpose Visa. They should obtain a business visa prior to travelling to Australia.

For further information please contact the Managers or either of the Club's correspondents in Melbourne

P E Spendlove
Managing Director