



AUSTRALASIAN INSTITUTE
OF MARINE SURVEYORS

Shipshape

June 2026



**AIMS HEADS WEST
SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE
IN FREMANTLE**

AIMS training update

I HAVE just returned from the AIMS biennial conference in Fremantle, which was a fantastic event at a stunning location and always a wonderful opportunity to catch up with colleagues, exchange knowledge and learn from industry leaders and each other.

It was great to see several overseas and home-grown students there, all talented individuals excited about their future in the industry.

Congratulations to our Student of The Year, Sean Byrne. Sean recently completed the International Diploma of Marine Surveying (Working Boats) and performed exceptionally well, going on to successfully gain accreditation in all of his elected categories with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA).

Sean heads up Catalpa Marine at Port Hedland, where he has established himself as a surveyor providing an important service in the geographically isolated north-west of WA.

Congratulations also to the other nominees: Trent De Villiers (Sedgwick), Fredrik Andreason and Chris Bielicki. Choosing a winner was a difficult decision.

I was excited to finally meet face-to-face Krzysztof (Chris) Bielicki, who had travelled from Poland, where he is a navy diver, with his family for the event. Chris recently completed the Advanced Diploma of Commercial Marine Surveying and subsequently left a -25 C degree Polish winter to come to an Australian summer in December to take part in our Work Experience Program.

Chris was lucky enough to obtain a one-week placement with Hunter Marine in Newcastle and had this to say

about his experience: “During my internship with Hunter Marine in Newcastle, Australia, I participated in an intensive week-long program that provided an exceptional introduction to professional marine surveying. Spanning just seven days, the internship involved conducting five diverse surveys, each delivering invaluable real world exposure.

“The surveys covered critical areas, including draft surveys, bunker assessments, and cargo hold condition inspections on vessels at one of the world’s largest coal terminals in the Port of Newcastle.

“Each day presented new scenarios – from verifying draught calculations under tight deadlines to documenting cargo stowage for departure. What elevated this experience was the mentorship from seasoned surveyors, coupled with hands-on access to the advanced Cargo Max app, which significantly accelerated survey times.

“Amid the port’s dynamic environment, this work transformed my theoretical knowledge into practical expertise.

“Coordinating with HMS surveyors, vessel crew members and port authorities sharpened my communication skills, while handling five surveys in such a short time honed my efficiency and attention to detail. Despite the demanding pace – following a long trip from Europe – the supportive atmosphere at Hunter Marine made every moment enjoyable and motivating.

Overall, this internship exceeded my expectations and was a fantastic experience.

“I am deeply grateful for the opportunity and eager to apply



AIMS Student of the Year, Sean Byrne.

these insights in future roles. I extend my heartfelt thanks to AIMS and Training Coordinator Ms Sue Brown for making this possible, despite numerous challenges.

“Before selecting the right institution, I researched major marine surveying institutes in Europe, including the Maritime Training Academy, Lloyds Maritime Academy and the International Institute of Marine Surveying. After reviewing their offerings and sending enquiries, most responses conveyed a typical sales-focused attitude.

“In contrast, your Institute demonstrated a genuine student-centred approach from the start until today, prioritising knowledge transfer and understanding in every module.”

“Special appreciation goes to the Director of HMS, Capt. Louis Koutelas, for the finest mentorship of my professional career and for delivering an internship that was rigorously professional and filled with positive experiences.”



Krzysztof (Chris) Bielicki from Poland recently completed the Advanced Diploma of Commercial Marine Surveying with AIMS.



Chris enjoyed a week-long mentorship with Capt. Louis Koutelas at Hunter Marine in Newcastle.

Other established surveyors currently assisting students in this program include Mick McCauliffe (Green Sea Survey WA), Bill La Vars (BTB Marine Surveys SA) and, recently, Mark McIlwain (Ocean Reef Marine

Surveys Vic), to whom we are very grateful.

If you are interested in being involved in this program and willing to share a small amount of your time and knowledge,

please contact me on 0493 546 380 for more information.

Sue Brown
Professional Development and
Training Coordinator