



ILA DOCKWORKERS GATHERED IN SAN ANTONIO FOR LANDMARK 2026 EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE



The ILA South Atlantic and Gulf Coast District (ILA SAGCD) held its 2026 Educational Conference in San Antonio, Texas, bringing together hundreds of delegates and local leaders from ports across the East and Gulf Coasts. The multi-day event provided an opportunity for education, strategic discussion, and renewed soli-

darity at a pivotal moment for the union and the maritime industry. The opening session featured ILA South Atlantic and Gulf Coast District President Alan Robb, who addressed delegates and underscored the importance of unity and preparedness in the face of industry challenges. Texas AFL-CIO President Leonard Aguilar also

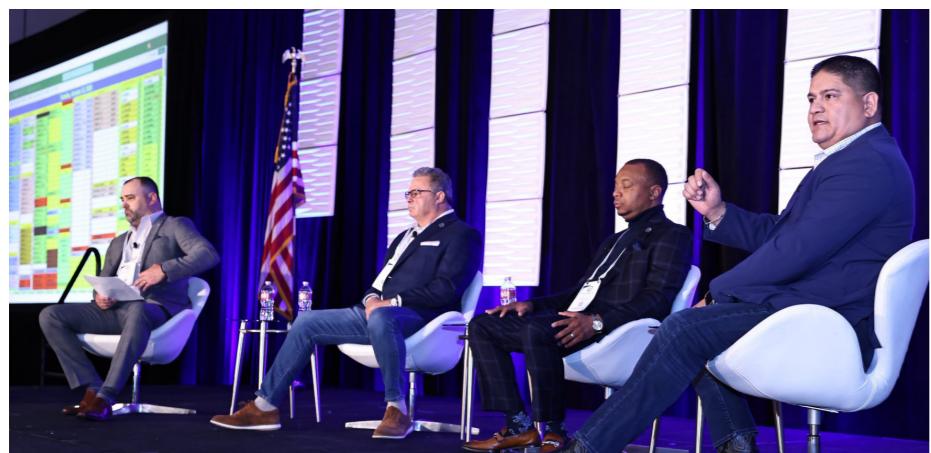
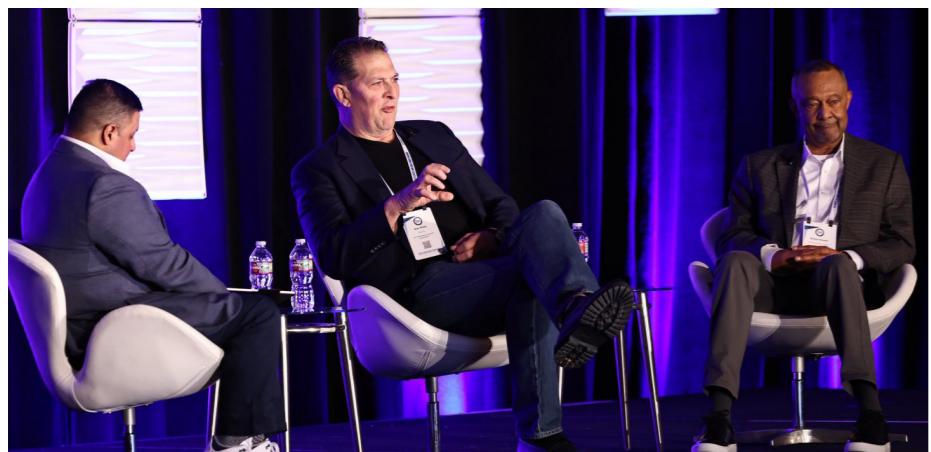
welcomed attendees and joined Eloy Cortez on a panel focused on strengthening solidarity across the broader labor movement. Founded in 1910, the SAGCD represented 30,000 dockworkers in 38 ports and continued to play a vital role in U.S. national security, economic stability, and global trade.



LONGSHOREMEN NEWSLETTER

No 21, February 2026

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BUILDING LEADERSHIP FOR THE FUTURE IN SAN ANTONIO



In January, the ILA South Atlantic and Gulf Coast District convened its 2026 Educational Conference at the JW Marriott in San Antonio, Texas, bringing together district officers, local presidents, and union leaders for a comprehensive week of strategic development and institutional reflection. Designed as an internal leadership forum, the conference emphasized preparation, continuity, and long-term strength across the District's 38 ports. Structured around four guiding pillars—Strengthening Our Foundation; Strong Leadership, Strong Locals; Future Focus; and Safety First—the program addressed both the responsibilities of today's officers and the challenges confronting the next generation of leaders. Sessions examined contract negotiations, compliance and governance standards, officer accountability, succession planning, retirement education, and the evolving regulatory landscape. Particular attention was given to technology, operational efficiency, and political engagement through PAC and COPE initiatives. Interactive panels encouraged dialogue among peers, reinforcing the District's commitment to shared experience and collective problem-solving. A featured discussion on "Leading Into the Future: Technology, Tools and Efficiency," moderated by Houston Local 1351 President Bill Williams, Jr., brought together Local Presidents Lance McLaughlin (Charleston), Paul Mosley (Savannah), and Gabriel Garza (Houston), highlighting practical approaches to modernization while safeguarding union standards. The conference also provided an opportunity to reflect on the ILA's historic momentum. Kenny Oelkers, Director of ILA Education/History, revisited the milestones of 2025, including the signing of the USMX-ILA Master Contract, the 25th Anniversary of the Charleston Five, commemorations marking the founding of the International Dockworkers Council, and the landmark Global Maritime Agreement signed in Lisbon. The week concluded with a renewed emphasis on safety—underscoring that leadership, progress, and solidarity remain inseparable from the protection of the men and women who power the industry.



IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM ILA INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DENNIS A. DAGGETT: INVEST IN PEOPLE OVER ROBOTICS

Around the globe, ocean carriers and terminal operators are aggressively pushing automation and artificial intelligence into ports and logistics hubs. These investments are often sold to the public as progress, faster cargo, cleaner terminals, higher productivity. But beneath the glossy presentations and consultant reports lies a far more troubling reality. Job killing technologies are hollowing out our communities, distorting productivity metrics, and threatening the economic foundation of future generations.

This is not an anti technology argument. Dockworkers, logistics workers, and transport workers have always adapted to change. Containerization itself was a massive technological leap, and labor evolved with it. The difference today is intent. Much of the current push for automation is not about safety, resilience, or efficiency. It is about removing people from the equation altogether.

The Productivity Myth

One of the most misleading claims used to justify full or semi automation is higher productivity. But productivity compared to what, and under what conditions.

Automated terminals are frequently benchmarked against pure transhipment hubs, where cargo is discharged from one vessel and loaded directly onto another. These terminals do not deal with truck gates. They do not manage local logistics. They do not handle chassis pools, rail interfaces, or appointment systems. They do not face the same regulatory, cus-

toms, or labor environments. Comparing those terminals to gateway ports that serve domestic economies is fundamentally dishonest.

A gateway terminal must process tens of thousands of truck moves per day. Rail intermodal connections. Local distribution networks.

cyber vulnerability, weather disruptions, and system overrides required in automated environments.

Until that happens, claims of superior productivity remain selective statistics designed to justify labor elimination.

The Astronomical Cost of Automation



Real time human problem solving when systems fail.

When productivity is measured purely as moves per crane hour or boxes per acre, the human complexity of these operations is ignored. You are not comparing like with like. You are comparing two completely different business models. There has never been a comprehensive, independent global study measuring productivity that accounts for truck gate congestion, labor reliability, equipment downtime,

Fully automated terminals require billions of dollars in capital expenditure. Automated stacking cranes. Automated guided vehicles. Complex software ecosystems. Redundant power and data infrastructure. Cybersecurity systems to defend against constant threats. This is not cheap, and those costs do not disappear.

To recoup these investments, companies inevitably look for one thing. Cutting labor costs. Jobs are eliminated. Headcounts shrink. Skills are



lies, not dependency. Commerce may continue to move, but who will be buying the products if millions can no longer earn a living wage. What happens to local tax bases, public schools, small businesses, housing markets, and generational skills passed down through families.

A society where people are consumers but not contributors is not progress. It is managed decline.

Invest in People Not Replacement There is a better path forward.

Technology should assist workers, not replace them. Improve safety, not eliminate jobs. Enhance efficiency without destroying livelihoods. Keep human decision making at the center of operations. Automation that removes workers entirely increases cyber risk, system fragility, national security vulnerabilities, and operational failures during crises.

Human workers provide adaptability, judgment, and resilience that no algorithm can replicate.

A Call to Action

We cannot stick our heads in the sand and pretend this problem will solve itself. It will not.

Workers everywhere must unite across borders and industries. Demand transparency in how productivity is measured. Push for independent studies on the economic and social impact of job killing technologies. Hold legislators and port authorities accountable for protecting jobs, communities, and regional competitiveness.

Ports are not just industrial assets. They are economic lifelines. The decisions being made today will determine what kind of society we leave to future generations. This moment demands courage. This moment demands unity.

Our time is now!

Submitted by:
Dennis A. Daggett



devalued. Communities that once supported middle class families are left with fewer pathways to economic stability.

Meanwhile, these same companies report record profits, quarter after quarter, year after year.

At some point, a serious question must be asked. When is it enough.

The Role of Port Authorities and the Cost of Doing Business

Port Authorities also play a major role in hurting our industry and our communities.

Take the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, as an example. This agency is supposed to function as a landlord port authority. Instead, through recent terminal lease agreements, it has positioned itself as a financial burden that directly threatens volume growth and competitiveness in the region. Today, the price of operating in the Port of New Jersey is now approaching two billion dollars. On top of that, Marine Terminal Operators are responsible for berth repairs, purchasing all cargo handling equipment, and funding every capital improvement necessary to expand or modernize a terminal.

These costs are not absorbed in a

vacuum.

They do not just hurt the hardworking men and women of the ILA. They hurt the citizens and consumers who live in our state and our region.

This is a highly competitive global business. When the cost of doing business in the Port of New York and New Jersey becomes a major disadvantage compared to other ports, freight does not disappear. It simply moves elsewhere.

That cargo is then railed or trucked back into our state and region. And who absorbs that cost.

The citizens. The daily consumers. Families already struggling with inflation, rising housing costs, and higher prices for basic goods.

Poor port policy does not punish corporations. It punishes people.

The Social Consequences No One Wants to Talk About

Some tech leaders, including Elon Musk, openly talk about a future built on Universal Basic Income, suggesting that mass automation will require governments to support displaced workers indefinitely.

But this vision ignores a basic truth. People want dignity, purpose, and the ability to provide for their fami-



ILA ADVANCES NATIONAL COORDINATION THROUGH CRUISE STRATEGY MEETINGS IN FLORIDA

The International Longshoremen's Association strengthened its national coordination within the cruise sector through a series of meetings and leadership engagements held in Florida, highlighted by the National Cruise Strategy Meetings in Delray Beach.

International President Harold J. Daggett convened presidents and delegates from ILA cruise ports along the East and Gulf Coasts at the Opal Grand Oceanfront Resort for focused discussions on the future of the industry. The meetings addressed the structural changes that followed the COVID-19 pandemic, which had forced a prolonged shutdown of cruise operations and left hundreds of ILA members without work for more than two years.

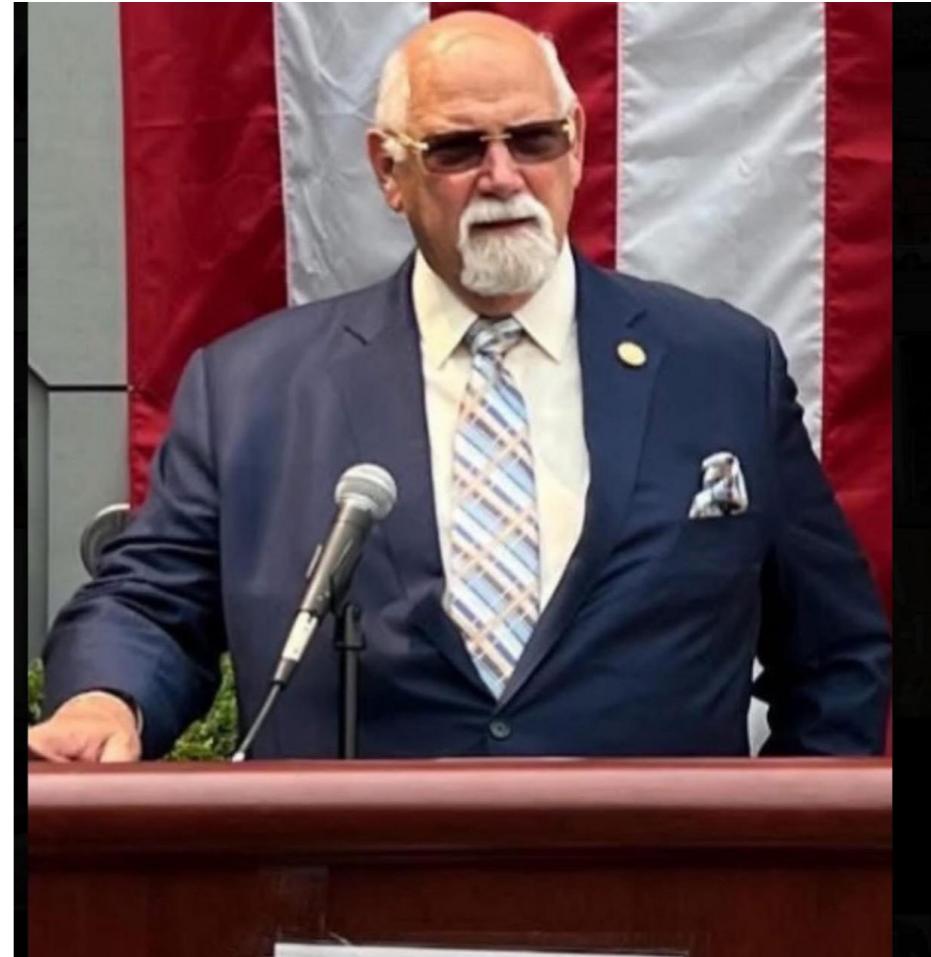
Delegates reviewed the industry's recovery, evolving operational models, passenger growth trends, and employer expectations. A central theme of the meetings was the need for greater consistency in wages, benefits, and working conditions across cruise terminals. President Daggett encouraged leaders to work toward stronger national alignment and opened discussions regarding the framework for a potential National Cruise Contract designed to promote uniform standards and enhance collective bargaining leverage.

Senior International officers and District leadership participated in structured strategy sessions alongside representatives from major cruise gateways, including Port Everglades, Port Miami, Charleston, and Boston. The meetings emphasized coordination, long-



term planning, and the importance of presenting a unified approach in future negotiations. Prior to the Delray Beach sessions, President Daggett visited ILA Local 1526 in Fort Lauderdale, where he met with Local President Johnnie Dixon and members at Port Everglades. He received updates on the port's continued recovery and

on safety and training programs supporting the workforce. Together, the Florida meetings underscored the ILA's commitment to safeguarding cruise jobs, strengthening standards across ports, and ensuring that the industry's continued growth translated into stable and equitable conditions for its members.





LONGSHOREMEN NEWSLETTER

No 21, February 2026



ILA LOCAL 20 HOLDS UNION MEETING IN GALVESTON



ILA Local 20 convened a union meeting this week at their hall in Galveston, Texas. Members discussed local updates and ongoing initiatives to support workers at the Port of Galveston.

ILA SETS RECORD AT PORT MIAMI WITH 75,712 PASSENGERS IN A DAY



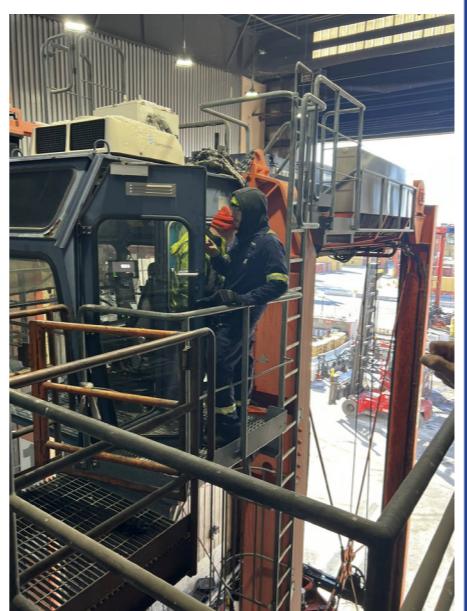
ILA LOCAL 1804-1 MEMBERS COLLABORATE ON STATE-OF-THE-ART MAINTENANCE SHOPS AT PNCT

ILA Local 1804-1 members at Port Newark Container Terminal celebrated the opening of new Straddle and Terminal Maintenance Shops, designed through close collaboration between management and labor. The project addressed longstanding issues in space, workflow, and employee facilities, providing mechanics with modern workspaces, upgraded break and locker rooms, and improved areas for servicing the terminal's growing fleet of equipment.

ILA LEADERS MEET WITH MARYLAND GOVERNOR TO DISCUSS PORT OF BALTIMORE'S FUTURE



ILA Local 333 President and International Vice President Scott Cowan, along with Atlantic Coast District Vice President Michael Coe, met with Maryland Governor Wes Moore at the State House in Annapolis to discuss the ongoing development and modernization of the Port of Baltimore. The meeting focused on the infrastructure investments necessary to ensure the port remains a key gateway for U.S. commerce and continues to support regional economic growth.



ILA Local 1804-1 President Dennis A. Daggett highlighted PNCT President Jim Pelliccio's role in engaging workers throughout the planning process, ensuring the shops reflected the needs of those who know the job best. The new facilities demonstrate the benefits of labor-management cooperation and strengthen both workplace conditions and operational efficiency at PNCT. The project is being hailed as a model for future collaboration at other ports and terminals.



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ILA LOCAL 273 WELCOMES 17 NEW MEMBERS AT PORT OF SAINT JOHN



ILA Local 273 in Saint John, New Brunswick, welcomed 17 new members earlier this year, including three longshore sisters. The new members were formally introduced during the Local's "full house" February monthly union meeting, highlighting the ongoing growth and active participation of the workforce.

ILA CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH



The International Longshoremen's Association, founded in 1892, proudly celebrates Black History Month in February 2026. With a diverse workforce of 85,000 members, the ILA honors the contributions of Black workers who have shaped the union's history and strength. In a historical photograph, Local 1422 members from the Port of Charleston are shown outside their union hall in the fall of 1967.

ILA LOCAL 1588 PRESIDENT VIRGIL MALDONADO RECOGNIZED AS TOP LABOR LEADER

ILA Local 1588 President Virgil Maldonado was recently honored as one of New Jersey's top labor leaders by Insider.com, ranking 29th on the 2025 Top 50 Labor Power List. Maldonado began his career on the waterfront as a crane operator and steadily advanced through the ranks, demonstrating exceptional dedication, leadership, and commitment to the International Longshoremen's Association. His perseverance and service earned him the respect of union delegates and members alike, culminating in his election as ILA International Vice President at the 2015 ILA convention.

Throughout his career, Maldonado has prioritized both the welfare of his members and the broader community. Under his leadership, Local 1588 has engaged in numerous fundraising initiatives and community programs across New Jersey. Maldonado himself has remained actively involved in mentoring and supporting union members, emphasizing teamwork, solidarity, and professional development on the waterfront.

Reflecting on the recognition, Mal-



donado shared: "Thank you to all Local 1588 members for the incredible support, trust, and belief. Insider Top 50 Labor Power List of 2025 we closed out at number 29. Because of you, I've had the honor of helping bring 1588 to the top of its prime. This milestone belongs to all of us."

Maldonado is also a devoted father of three daughters—Madison, Ava, and Skylar, who was pictured with him accepting the award—demonstrating the balance he maintains between leadership, community service, and family life.

ILA SUPPORTS PORT HOUSTON AS NATION'S LARGEST BREAKBULK AND PROJECT CARGO HUB

Port Houston, with the support of the International Longshoremen's Association workforce, is the largest breakbulk and project cargo port complex in the United States. The public terminals and ILA labor force handle millions of tons of cargo annually, sustaining industries nationwide and keeping supply chains strong.





THE INTERNATIONAL DOCKWORKERS COUNCIL MOURNS THE LOSS OF TWO HISTORIC LEADERS



The International Dockworkers Council (IDC) mourns the passing of two remarkable figures of the international dockworker movement: Glen Wood and Antonio Mariano.

Glen Wood, a veteran militant of the MUA, dedicated his life to the IDC and to preserving the history and struggles of dockworkers worldwide. A constant presence at assemblies and international conferences, he traveled tirelessly to share his experiences and in-

spire future generations. Known for his memory, dignity, and commitment, Glen left an enduring mark on all who had the privilege to work alongside him.

Antonio Mariano, longtime president of SEAL in Portugal, was a pivotal leader in the fight to restore the Port of Lisbon to its workers. Even while facing serious illness, he led with courage and conviction, ensuring the union's victories and supporting the broader international labor movement. His dedica-

tion, strategic vision, and humanity earned him the respect and admiration of dockworkers across Europe and beyond.

The IDC extends heartfelt condolences to the families, friends, and comrades of both leaders. Glen Wood and Antonio Mariano exemplified solidarity, leadership, and the enduring spirit of dockworker unity. Their legacies will continue to guide and inspire the international labor movement for generations to come.

IDC SUSPENDS PARTICIPATION IN EU SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE FOR PORTS

The International Dockworkers' Council (IDC) has announced the suspension of its participation in the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Ports (SSDC Ports) under current conditions. After a thorough review, the IDC and its social partners concluded that meaningful dialogue cannot occur when workers' concerns and recommendations on employment, safety, and working conditions are not genuinely addressed.

While the Council continues to support the principle of social dialogue, it stressed that discussions

must go beyond formal exchanges to produce tangible results and political follow-up. Decisions impacting port workers—including the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS), FuelEU Maritime, and EU Ports Strategy—cannot proceed without full consideration of workers' perspectives.

The suspension is not considered permanent. IDC representatives confirmed that re-engagement will be possible if conditions for authentic dialogue are restored, ensuring that workers' voices are listened to, respected, and acted upon.



IDC ANNOUNCES 10TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL



The International Dockworkers Council (IDC) is pleased to announce that its 10th General Assembly will take place next November in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, following the previous assembly held in New Orleans, USA, four years ago. Exact dates will be confirmed in the coming months.

This milestone event will be co-organized by the IDC and Brazil's three major port federations: FNP – Federação Nacional dos Portuários, FENCCOVIB – Federação Nacional dos Conferentes e Consultadores de Carga e Descarga, Vigias Portuários, Trabalhadores de Bloco, Arrumadores de Navios nas Atividades Portuárias, and FNE – Federação Nacional dos Estivadores. The assembly will provide a crucial platform for dockworker leaders from across the Americas and beyond to come together, exchange experiences, and discuss strategies for strengthening labor organization, safety, and solidarity in ports worldwide. Delegates will review the achievements of the past four years and set the agenda for the IDC's work moving forward.

The IDC looks forward to welcoming representatives from all member organizations to Rio de Janeiro for what promises to be a week of collaboration, dialogue, and planning that will shape the future of the global dockworker movement.

CHILEAN DOCKWORKERS SECURE SUCCESSFUL COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT



Sindicato N°1 de Trabajadores de DP World San Antonio (S1DPWSAI), Chile, has successfully concluded its collective bargaining process. Reached through an assembly mandate and a signed agreement, the outcome reflects the strength of worker unity, democratic decision-making, and collective action in improving working conditions. This achievement highlights the determination of Chilean dockworkers and reinforces the importance of organized labor in advancing fair and safe workplaces.



YOUNG DOCKWORKERS TAKE A STEP FORWARD IN BELGIUM

The International Dockworkers Council (IDC) welcomed the first 2026 meeting of young dockworkers from Antwerp, Ghent, and Zeebrugge, marking a key moment for strengthening youth organization and generational succession in Belgian ports. Discussions focused on the ongoing struggle in the screenings dossier, the objectives and planned actions of young dockworkers for 2026, and exchanges with other transport sectors.



MARITIME UNION MARKS 75 YEARS SINCE 1951 WATERFRONT LOCKOUT

The Maritime Union of New Zealand (MUNZ) is set to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the 1951 Waterfront Lockout.

Maritime Union of New Zealand National Secretary Carl Findlay says "51" remains the most significant industrial confrontation in our country's history.

He says it was a time when civil liberties and free speech were suspended, it was made illegal to provide food to workers' families, and police violence was used against peaceful workers and their supporters.

The waterfront lockout lasted 151 days, from 15 February to 15 July 1951. It involved 22,000 workers at its height.

"Seventy-five years on, we are honouring the courage of the men and women who refused to be broken. They stood firm for their rights and the rights of future generations, often at great personal cost."

The Maritime Union will be holding a special event in Lyttelton on Friday 1 May 2026 (May Day) to remember those who "stood loyal." The Maritime Union acknowledges the vital support provided by other groups of New Zealand workers, including seafarers, miners, freezing workers, drivers, rail workers, hydro workers, and cooks and stewards. Mr Findlay says it is impossible to reflect on 1951 without acknowledging the solidarity of the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia and the Seamen's Union of Australia, among others.

"That trans-Tasman bond is as strong today as it was 75 years ago, as both MUNZ and the MUA are now part of the Trans-Tasman



Federation."

Historical Background

The 1951 dispute was not a strike, but a lockout forced upon workers who were simply demanding a fair share of post-war economic prosperity. After the Arbitration Court awarded a 15% general wage increase to help families cope with the rising cost of living, shipping owners refused to pass this on to watersiders.

When members of the New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union responded by limiting their work to a standard 40-hour week – refusing only overtime – employers retaliated by locking the gates on anyone who would not accept their terms.

For the union, this was a premeditated attack by foreign shipping interests and a hostile government, designed to smash the country's strongest union and roll back hard-won safety and working conditions.

The state's response turned an industrial dispute into a siege on civil liberties. Under the draconian Waterfront Strike Emergency Regulations, free speech was suspended, union funds were seized, and it became a crime for the public to even provide food to the families of locked-out workers.

Despite facing police violence, the use of the military as strike-breakers, and a hostile media, workers and their families stood loyal for 151 days. Today, the Maritime Union honours this legacy as a defining moment of courage where working people refused to be broken by state and big business power, standing firm for the rights of future generations.

The New Zealand Waterfront Workers' Union (as it became) and the New Zealand Seafarers' Union amalgamated in 2002 to become the Maritime Union of New Zealand.



Special thanks for this Newsletter to Jim McNamara, ILA Chief of Staff and Dani Molero, IDC.