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## Tireless campaigner for maritime health and safety wins top award at unions' night of nights

A seafarer who spends his spare time mentoring young workers in the shipping industry was last night named the ACTU's union delegate of the year.

John "Madge" McGartland, a Wollongong-based seafarer and member of the Maritime Union of Australia, was recognised on a night when his union scooped the pool at the annual ACTU National Union Awards.

The MUA won four awards, including both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander awards, while the long-serving National Secretary of the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union, Peter Tighe, was awarded Occupational Health and Safety Campaigner of the year.

Other winners included the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association for its Unions for Transfusions program for community outreach, and the Swinburne University branch of the National Tertiary Education Union for the best workplace campaign.

ACTU President Ged Kearney said John McGartland epitomised the spirit of Australian unionism by tirelessly working for the betterment of his colleagues. Mr McGartland began his seafaring career in Port Kembla, and now works in the offshore oil and gas industry.

"Madge's work is particularly dangerous and he has witnessed the loss of colleagues at work," Ms Kearney said. "He has fought tirelessly to improve the health and safety and other working conditions for his fellow workers. He has proven to be there for members assisting them with industrial issues and encouraging them to become active delegates themselves.

"He is well respected by his fellow members and employers alike for his knowledge of the seafaring industry.

"Madge is also passionate about encouraging and mentoring younger members and while onshore he runs free seafaring courses to help train young seafarers in important skills"

The MUA took out four awards in total, including the best OH&S Campaign for its work on a national stevedoring code of practice.

The Jennie George Award for contributions to women's advancement in unions was shared by Luba Grigorovitch of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union in Victoria and Lorraine Usher of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, while Darius Altman of the New South Wales Nurses and Midwives' Association was named Organiser of the Year.

Ms Kearney said Peter Tighe, who has been National Secretary of the CEPU for almost two decades, had made an enormous contribution to improving workplace health and safety standards in Australia.

"Peter has always taken a keen interest in the health and safety of all workers, especially young workers and apprentices," she said.

*The full list of ACTU National Union Awards winners and photos are available at [www.actu.org.au](http://www.actu.org.au)*

**Media Contact: Ben Ruse 0409 510 879**