

## **Indian seafarer labelled a hero after working with MUA members to save wharfie's life at West Swanson Dock.**

The MUA and ITF have delivered an award to an Indian seafarer who helped save the life of an MUA wharfie who fell unconscious into the water at West Swanson Dock.

DP World wharfie Darren Blackman fell around 17 metres, striking mooring lines on his descent and landing in the water unconscious while working on the Liberian-flagged FOC container ship *Folegandros* around 3.20pm Wednesday.

National Union of Seafarers of India (NUSI) member Paul Vijay, the bosun on board the *Folegandros*, immediately came to the rescue, sprinting down the gangway and jumping fully-clothed into the water in between the ship and the wharf.

Meanwhile fellow DPWA worker Ross Hubbarb saw what was happening and also jumped into the water to help.

"Both Ross and International Seafarer Paul Vijay turned Darren over and kept his head above water. Ross then started slapping Darren on the back to hopefully bring him around it worked," MUA Victorian Branch Assistant Secretary Bob Patchett said.

"The crew had a plastic stretcher which was absolutely vital. Our members then got a heavy forklift and used slings and the stretcher to hoist him out of the water.

"At that stage the ambulance arrived."

A spokesman for Ambulance Victoria told Lloyd's List DCN their paramedics treated a man for injuries to his leg and pelvis before taking him to Royal Melbourne Hospital in a serious condition.

The MUA has since raised \$5,000 for Paul, which the hero was initially reluctant to accept.

"This money will provide him with the resources to buy many pairs of runners to replace the pair ruined in the rescue," Patchett said.

"Vijay gave a wonderful speech to our comrades in Melbourne today.

"Darren has had an operation this morning to straighten his leg. He is still heavily sedated and both of his parents have arrived.

"I will keep you all updated. The Vic Branch and Darren's family appreciate all of the support given."

ITF Australian co-ordinator Dean Summers said three shifts at DPW joined in to congratulate Paul on his selfless act.

"This is international solidarity at its best," Summer said.

"It shows the fundamental instinct from one worker to help another regardless of circumstances.

"Paul is a hero and worked alongside MUA members to undoubtedly save our wharfie's life."