



Quah Ley Hoon

Chief Executive, Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore



What role do you play in the gas-fuelled shipping sector?

MPA develops and promotes Singapore as a premier global hub port and an international maritime centre, and advances Singapore's strategic maritime interests. MPA is committed to the development of Singapore as a sustainable global hub port. It is guided by the targets of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to reduce total annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from global shipping by at least 50% from 2008 levels by 2050. MPA spearheads the decarbonisation efforts of Singapore's maritime industry.

As the world's top bunkering hub, the Port of Singapore is well-positioned to expand its provision of marine fuel solutions. It aims to become Asia's leading LNG bunkering hub. MPA champions LNG as a viable and clean transitional marine fuel to reduce carbon emissions from ships. Singapore had safely conducted more than 330 truck-to-ship LNG bunkering operations by 2020. From 2021, Singapore will have an LNG bunker supply capacity of up to 1 million tonnes per year. This quantity translates to about 300 ship-to-ship LNG bunkering operations annually. An MPA co-funded LNG bunker vessel, FuelNG Bellina, was delivered in 2020 to facilitate regular ship-to-ship LNG bunkering in the Port of Singapore.

MPA also works closely with international partners in the Future Fuels Port Network to drive the development of clean marine fuels across participating ports. Besides the research and development of clean marine fuels, members cooperate on possible joint bunkering pilot runs with identified shipping lines to drive the decarbonisation of shipping.

How did you arrive at this role? Was it your intention to join this industry?

In my public sector career spanning 12 years, I have worked on economic,

environmental and social policies, including the US-Singapore Free Trade Agreement, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and population and talent development at the National Population Secretariat. I also had a five-year stint with the media.

This role was an opportunity that came my way, as part of my career progression within the public sector. As a maritime nation, Singapore's *raison d'être* is its port. I am proud to be a part of the country's maritime story to develop Singapore into a maritime hub for connectivity, innovation and talent.

What value do you see in the WiGS initiative? What would you like to see from the WiGS initiative to help progress females in the industry? What do you think can we do to help?

WiGS champions gender diversity in gas-fuelled shipping and celebrates the achievements of female role models in driving the sustainable transition of the sector towards a low-carbon future.

This transition is complex and multi-dimensional, requiring diverse perspectives and partnerships, as well as concerted global action. WiGS can create gender-diverse platforms to foster information exchange on decarbonisation initiatives amongst industry stakeholders and academia, and develop networks for collaborations and partnerships.

How have you or your organisation worked with SGMF concerning the safe and sustainable use of gas as a marine fuel?

MPA engages SGMF regularly to exchange views on the safe and sustainable use of gas as a marine fuel across the world. For instance, SGMF's LNG Bunkering Safety Guidelines provided a useful

reference for Singapore's Technical Reference 56 (TR 56), which is a provisional standard developed to guide stakeholders in the LNG bunker supply chain on the delivery of LNG from bunkering facilities to receiving ships. MPA appreciates SGMF's technical support and advice in the marine fuel domain.

How do you feel this sector has embraced the talent and value of women?

The talent needed by the maritime industry has been redefined as the sector evolves. The industry requires people who can adapt to rapid transformations in technology and business models. It needs cross-disciplinary talent that is digitally agile, regardless of gender. As such, the maritime industry transformation has opened up more opportunities for women.

I was appointed the first female Chief Executive of MPA in 2019. That same year, Caroline Yang, Chief Executive of homegrown bunker craft operator Hong Lam Marine, was elected as the first female President of the Singapore Shipping Association since its inception in 1985. Additionally, Mary Liew heads the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union as its General Secretary.

In MPA, women make up more than half of the senior management team today and are increasingly taking up roles in a traditionally male-dominated industry. For instance, female engineers have joined the ranks in port planning and reclamation works associated with the development of Singapore's next-generation Tuas Port. Female seafarers have also joined MPA as a second career and applied their seafaring experience in policymaking. I hope that these developments encourage women to challenge gender stereotypes and forge successful careers in the maritime industry. *Continued*



Quah Ley Hoon – *Continued*

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What excites you or interests you most about this industry and how does this motivate you?

The maritime industry is rapidly transforming along the 3 'D's – digitalisation, decarbonisation and disruption.

- a) **Digitalisation** – A digitally enabled and technology-driven maritime sector enhances connectivity, supports collaborations and helps enterprises improve productivity and competitiveness. Maritime companies are developing digital solutions, adopting technology and equipping employees with digital skills to streamline processes, add revenue streams and transform businesses.
- b) **Decarbonisation** – The maritime industry is striving towards the targets of the IMO in reducing total annual GHG emissions for shipping by at least 50% from 2008 levels by 2050. Maritime companies are leading decarbonisation efforts in their domains, developing sustainable business models and practices, and embarking on the research, development and adoption and clean marine fuels and technologies.
- c) **Disruption** – The maritime industry has immense opportunities for innovative disruption. Maritime companies are cooperating with stakeholders including technology developers and start-ups in areas such as Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships and additive manufacturing of marine parts, constructively disrupting the industry.

Please share something personal about you / your personal experience / achievements / challenges overcome that the reader may find interesting or inspire the future generation coming into the industry.

The maritime industry is the backbone of global trade. Without shipping, goods cannot flow from country to country. This mission

has been accentuated during the current pandemic, where any disruptions in shipping would disrupt the global supply chain. It is a very meaningful sector that underpins our survival.

Was there a significant moment when you felt that being a woman put you at a disadvantage during your career? If so, can you share this?

The values of equality and meritocracy are deeply embedded in Singapore's society. As a country, we believe in equal opportunities for men and women. Personally, I have not encountered corporate glass ceilings arising from gender discrimination. I would encourage all women to transcend the binary labels of man and woman in building strong partnerships based on teamwork and respect.

The industry is making an effort overall to be more diverse but do you feel that being a female in the industry has offered you any advantages?

In my role as Chief Executive of MPA, I have not experienced advantages that are unique to females in the industry. Instead, gender diversity brings advantages to the maritime industry. It widens the talent pool in the maritime sector, attracts talent to the industry and promotes creativity and innovation that arise from diverse perspectives.

Any words of wisdom and advice for anyone looking to pursue a career in the sector?

It is a sector that is meaningful and critical for the global supply chain. On top of that, joining the maritime sector comes with limitless possibilities and opportunities. In a rapidly evolving industry towards digitalisation and decarbonisation, I

encourage anyone who pursues a maritime career to embrace these opportunities, adapt swiftly to changes and collaborate innovatively with diverse stakeholders to co-create win-win solutions for the industry.

What would be your top three reasons/selling points to encourage other women to join the maritime world?

1. Maritime careers are diverse, spanning ship financing, maritime law and arbitration, shipbroking, data engineering, marine insurance, ship operations and more. As such, they are suitable for individuals from diverse professional and academic backgrounds.
2. The maritime industry is rapidly transforming. It invites individuals from non-maritime domains to disrupt the industry through digitalisation and innovation.
3. There are boundless opportunities for green growth in the sector. Maritime enterprises are pursuing decarbonisation initiatives and making a business case for sustainability. Shipping welcomes individuals with a passion for environmentalism and climate change to join the industry on its sustainable development journey.

What would you like to see the industry do more of to encourage females to seek careers in the marine gas?

Automation and digitalisation in the maritime industry, including the marine gas sector, have levelled the playing field for men and women to participate in the maritime workforce. The industry can actively promote the wide range of opportunities in the sector and the diverse kinds of jobs available for both genders. In this way, the industry will not appeal exclusively to men, but reflect the diversity and vibrance of the maritime workforce.