

CHANNEL 19


Northport
LIMITED



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Northport launches coastal link

Containers were shipped on a coastal service from Northport to the Port of Tauranga for the first time in October. The inaugural run operated by Pacifica Shipping on a Swire Shipping vessel carried 12 Maersk 40-foot containers loaded with Northland export products destined for markets in Asia.

Northport has worked closely with Pacifica and Swire Shipping to deliver the new coastal service, which it believes gives Northland exporters a viable alternative to moving their containerised products by road or rail to Auckland or Tauranga.

This involves Swire Shipping services delivering empty containers to Northport. These are then packed and loaded onto any one of the three regular Swire services that pass through the port on the way to the Port of Tauranga, where they connect with ships bound for destinations worldwide.

ONE STOP SERVICE

As part of this capability Northport now offers a comprehensive container service. It can receive and store cargo, pack containers where required, provide VGM compliance certification, and then load onto ships for transport to the Port of Tauranga.

"We offer an all-in rate to provide this one-stop shop for exporters," said Northport commercial manager David Finchett.

"The exporter simply has to deliver its cargo to the port and book the international voyage from Tauranga."

The first coastal service for containers left Northport on 12 October on board the mv Island Chief. The 12 Maersk containers were packed with cargo that had not previously been loaded there, demonstrating the value to Northland businesses of the new capability.

David said there had been strong interest in the coastal shipping option from several Northland exporters and the inaugural customer had been complementary about the cost and convenience.

Northport estimates that there are potentially 70,000 TEU movements in and out of Northland a year and David says the port is well placed to handle many of these through the new link via Tauranga.

He emphasised that the coastal service for containers was not exclusive to Maersk.

RECOGNISED

"Maersk recognised the opportunities available in Northland and have worked with Northport and Pacifica to provide this service, but that doesn't prevent other container lines from also offering a service to Northland exporters. We'd be happy to engage with them to offer our customers other choices," he said.

Northport has invested heavily in container handling infrastructure recently, including the development of 1.3 hectares of additional container storage space. Its facilities include reefer storage points so it is able to manage refrigerated container cargoes. This gives it the ability also to move Northland's horticultural and dairy exports to Tauranga by sea.

David said one of the most satisfying aspects of having introduced this service was the knowledge that Northport had been able to bring a number of global shipping and logistics providers together on a collaborative basis to help other Northland businesses realise efficiencies and compete effectively in international markets.

"As far as objectives go, that's a pretty cool thing to be doing."

with Tauranga

SHIP TO SHORE

There's a clear theme running through this issue of Channel 19; collaboration, co-operation and our role in bringing people and services together for the greater good and the benefit of Northland and Northlanders.

Our primary role is clear. We are New Zealand's natural deep-water gateway to the world. We take immense pride in doing that job really well. But we take equal pride in our role as a facilitator of economic growth in our own region, Northland, and as a catalyst for regional change, investment and development.

We're fully aware that we wouldn't be able to achieve any of this without the terrific amounts of goodwill, co-operation and support we enjoy from a legion of customers, partners, suppliers, community organisations and officials at both regional and national level.

Jon Moore
Northport

Jon Moore
CEO

TEREX | GOTTWALD





FLEXIBILITY HELPS LODESTAR LESSEN RISK

Logistics, transport and shipping services operator Lodestar runs an interesting operation through Northport. It moves between 60,000 and 70,000 cubic metres of laminated veneer lumber (LVL) over the wharf at Marsden Point each year - without ever actually touching a single piece of the product.

Lodestar is the freight and logistics division of Oji Fibre Solutions, one of Australasia's largest pulp and paper and packaging businesses.

As the lead logistics provider Lodestar coordinates and manages an end-to-end service for Oji Fibre Solutions and other customers by working with secondary logistics service providers, transport operators and shipping companies to move goods from source to destination.

In Northport's case Lodestar oversees the transportation from the LVL mill in Ruakaka, and then the storage, handling, marshalling and stevedoring involved in getting that valuable break-bulk cargo onto a trans-Tasman Swire Shipping service to Australia.

Northport receives the product by truck and then provides all storage, materials handling and master packing services, including marshalling of the LVL to the ship's side. Stevedoring is taken care of by the shipping company.

"It's a highly efficient way of working, particularly when we're able to work with trusted operators like Northport with whom we have excellent, long-standing relationships", said Murray Horne, Lodestar's general manager.

Lodestar provides a diverse range of transport, logistics and shipping services nationally and internationally, including road, rail, coastal shipping, intermodal storage and handling, and both container and break bulk shipping options. The relationship with Northport is overseen by Murray but managed on an operational basis by Lodestar's warehouse and port logistics manager, Ben Metcalfe, who also manages port operational relationships in Auckland, Tauranga and Nelson.

Murray said Oji Fibre Solutions regards Northport as a key business partner.

"Lodestar's role is to manage logistics risk and Northport help us do that," he said. "The team at Marsden Point provide a proactive and responsive service. It's an extremely open and frank relationship and we value that transparency. We also like the fact that if a disruptive issue ever does arise, Jon and his team are extremely proactive in coming up with solutions."

Oji Fibre Solutions

Cranes lift tests teamwork

Collaboration between local Northland businesses was the name of the game in October when Northport helped engineering contractors get a vital construction crane onto a barge so they could build a new loading system and terminal for Golden Bay Cement at Portland.

The 60 tonne lift was the heaviest commercial job yet undertaken by the port's mobile harbour crane and a true piece of teamwork involving Northport, Whangarei company Culhams Engineering, Refinery Rigging, and Brian Perry Civil, part of Fletcher Building's infrastructure group.

BARGE

Brian Perry Civil had secured the contract to build the terminal at Portland in time for the arrival of Golden Bay Cement's new, purpose-built coastal freighter, mv Aotearoa Chief. To do the work the company needed a crawler crane and this had to be brought in on a barge as there was no suitable access to the construction site from the land.

The barge could not be jacked up to the height required to receive the crawler crane so Brian Perry Civil approached Culhams Engineering for a solution. Garry Turton at Culhams suggested using the crane at Northport to lift the crawler crane onto the barge.

Teams from all three companies worked under tight time frames to develop a plan for the lift. This was developed, reviewed for safety and implemented within three days.

Culhams' lead crane operator undertook the role of dogman and rigger and the port's crane was driven by Northport crane operator Wayne Anderson. Together they worked through the lift plan and ensured that it was implemented accurately.

"I was impressed by the rigour and quality of the planning and coordination I saw from Northport," said Tom Stewart, Brian Perry Civil's piling superintendent. "It helped ensure that the job got done carefully, safely and efficiently."

PARTNERS

Northport terminal facilities manager Greg Blomfield said the lift was well within the capacity of the port's crane.

"Even so, I was breathing a whole lot easier when the Brian Perry Civil crane was safely on board their barge," Greg said. "It was brand-new and we were all quite keen to ensure the lift went perfectly."

He said the job had demonstrated Northport's ability to undertake larger lifts and to work in a flexible way with multiple partners, within tight time frames and at competitive rates.



TECHNOLOGY MEASURES CHANGE

Marusumi Whangarei Company Ltd's woodchip pile, heaped high on the hard-standing at Northport, has become one of the visual signatures of the port's operation. But how much of it is there?

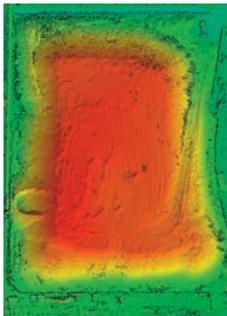
Answering this question is an important part of Marusumi's inventory and stockpile management. And until now that has depended largely on manual calculation.

Enter a new and considerably more accurate solution: a computerised eye-in-the-sky. Marusumi is now using drone technology operated by Asset Insight, an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) asset inspection service.

The drone takes many hundreds of aerial images of the woodchip pile and plots its area using extremely accurate GPS data. Proprietary software is then used to measure the surface of the pile and, from this, the volume.



The aerial measurement technology is also used to check on the progress of Northport's earthworks projects. It provides a detailed elevation plan which helps review progress against design. Data from the drone is combined with information from a system called Loadscan, which quantifies the volume of material delivered to a construction site, to help ensure earthworks accuracy.



PORT USERS PLEASSED

Results of a stakeholder survey conducted by Northport recently indicate that port users are generally pleased with the quality and consistency of the services and facilities offered by the business.

The survey formed part of a team optimisation programme undertaken by Northport to help ensure that the business has the right people in place, doing the right things. It looked at many aspects of doing business at and with Northport, from the company's problem-solving abilities and adaptability through to approachability and the ease of systems and processes.

When asked whether they felt the quality of services that Northport provides had improved markedly over the past two years, 70 percent of respondents said they had. The rest said they were similar to two years ago. No-one said service had deteriorated in any way.

"We were delighted with the findings," said Northport CEO, Jon Moore. He thanked all the organisations who took part in the survey.

The winner of the six bottles of wine for completing the survey was Murray Cole of Greenfingers Growing Mixes Ltd, of Whangarei.



Nice guys grow in leaps and bounds

A little bit of luck, a truck-load of guts and hard work has seen local company Hansen Drainage and Earthworks grow from three brothers and a digger in just ten years to a multi-million dollar business employing more than 20 people.

Today the Whangarei company is the go-to for any work needed in the Bream Bay area.

Back in 2008 Karl Hansen, a certifying drainlayer, and his brothers Richard and Scott were approached by Northport to clean the port's canal system. They jumped at the opportunity.

The relationship between the brothers and the port developed to the point where they became the preferred contractor for all small to medium-scale earthworks on Northport's site.

CONTRACT

Then, last year, the relationship took a gigantic leap forward. Hansen Drainage and Earthworks landed a multi-year, multi-million dollar contract to undertake enabling works on 10ha of Northport land, levelling the area and preparing it for paving and development as future storage area for cargo.

"It is of great significance to our company to have earned this contract. We can now provide ongoing, secure work for ourselves and our local employees," said Karl Hansen, managing director.

"Honesty, hard work and having a great team of guys around has made it possible."

In addition to Northport, the company does work for building, construction and stevedoring companies as well as their much-valued home owner customers.

OPPORTUNITY

Despite this, Karl remains modest .

"The reality is, we're still a young company with lots to learn. Having the opportunity to grow and learn with a foundation customer like Northport has been brilliant," he said. "Northport's people are great to work for and with, their work environment is excellent and, as a bonus, it's an interesting place to work. We are grateful that they recognised our commitment to our profession and helped us grow the company to the point where we're now able to pay some of that investment forward."

Northport terminal facilities manager Greg Blomfield says it couldn't have happened to three nicer guys.

"They're always willing and able and always go above and beyond our expectations to do what needs to be done," Greg said. "They price fairly and they work hard. They've got a great team who they look after well. And they have an excellent health and safety culture, which is important to us."

'DOZER PACKS IT IN

Japanese-owned woodchip exporter Marusumi Whangarei Company Ltd is squeezing an extra 8.5 percent into some of its shipments from Northport thanks to some bulldozers and a proactive piece of collaborative thinking.

Marusumi exports 10 shipments from Northport annually, with four of those shipments utilising gearless ships. Northport's team saw an opportunity to potentially add some value to each of Marusumi's gearless shipments by using the port's mobile harbour crane to lift bulldozers on board to help compact the woodchip.

They were unsure exactly how much additional volume would be loaded so they asked port user Adair Craigie-Lucas, of marine survey specialist Lucas Marine Services, to assist by providing a conservative estimate. Adair has been working with Marusumi since the operation began in July 1996 and has helped load 4.5 million metric tonnes of woodchip during this time.

"Adair calculated that we could obtain an extra 7.9 percent so we took this number to Marusumi and, after discussions with head office in Japan, they came back really liking the idea," said Jae Staite, Northport's marine and operations manager.

"When the next ship arrived we were able to load an additional 8.5 percent of woodchip and Marusumi were delighted."

In addition to increased cargo uplift the bulldozers make the woodchip loading process much simpler for Northport operators by spreading the load evenly across the hold throughout the loading process and ensuring a good stow into the ships' wings and underruns.

The result means that bulldozers will be used on all Marusumi ships loading at Northport in the future.

"We know that maximising cargo uplift is a priority for exporters the world over, so we were delighted to be able to prove our theory that we could boost the value we offer this long-standing customer," Jae said.

