

NEWS RELEASE



NP077

24 November 2017

growth - 1

Northport marks 15th anniversary with vision for growth

Northport Ltd is celebrating its 15th anniversary. Cargo volumes at Marsden Point have more than doubled since the port opened in 2002 to a record 3.64 million tonnes last financial year. Ship calls have increased from 93 a year to 250 a year over that period, with berth occupancy now at a record 66.4 percent, up from 52.9 percent just five years ago.

The company, a 50/50 joint venture between Marsden Maritime Holdings Ltd and Port of Tauranga, is marking these milestones by launching a public discussion about the potential future size and shape of the port.

It has published its 'vision for growth' online at www.vision4growth.co.nz and is inviting people to ask questions or make their views known to its management team via the website.

Chief executive Jon Moore stressed that the vision was not a confirmed plan, or even a formal proposal. No decision has yet been made by Northport's Board to grow the port.

"It's a conversation-starter; a vision based on what we believe is possible here," he said. "At this early stage all we're doing is prompting a discussion among tangata whenua, other Northlanders, our neighbours, customers, port users, suppliers and other stakeholder groups with an interest in what happens here, about what role they see Northport playing in the future of our region."

Mr Moore said that in recent years, and particularly in the run-up to the recent general election, there had been much discussion about what should happen at Northport. Although Northport Ltd had no firm growth plans at this stage, its management team wanted to make public their vision for future growth.

"Some of the most frustrating narrative we've listened to over recent months has been around the perception that it's not possible to grow Northport beyond its existing size," Mr Moore said. "Our vision for growth demonstrates clearly that this is not the case. It introduces some reality to the discussion and shows that we are, in fact, well positioned to support economic growth both in Northland and in Auckland."

Mr Moore said Northport would need to grow if it was going to play a key role in the future growth of the upper North Island.

"Importantly, we don't need to expand northwards into the harbour. Instead, we can extend our existing linear wharf east and west," he said.

more

Northport Ltd's vision for growth at Marsden Point includes 1,390m of linear berth, more than twice its current length, and involves growing its overall footprint from 48ha to 75ha.

Mr Moore said his team felt this was necessary if Northport was to play a meaningful role in developing Northland's economy and supporting Auckland's growth.

“Growing a port is an expensive and complex undertaking. To support economic growth and meet the forecast demand for shipping across the upper North Island we need to plan and build for the future, not just today.”

The vision Northport Ltd is making public today is based on many years of research, technical planning and engineering input from a raft of experts in this field. The company now has a good idea about what is physically and technically possible at Northport, and what isn't.

It has not put any dates to its decision-making process around possible growth.

“We know full well that what we look like in the future will be shaped to some extent by our communities and our customers,” Mr Moore said. “So first we want to hear from these groups about what role they see us playing in Northland's and the upper North Island's growth.”

This initial discussion period will be followed by further technical and environmental studies and modelling, and if there are no surprises the company will then embark on a detailed stakeholder consultation exercise.

- ends -

About Northport

[Northport](#), situated at Marsden Point at the mouth of Whangarei Harbour, is New Zealand's northernmost port. It is a flexible facility catering for large, multi-purpose vessels and full cargo handling facilities are available from its 570 metre linear berth.

Logs, woodchip and processed timber for export comprise the bulk of cargo processed by the port. Other export items include kiwifruit, dairy products and manufactured goods. Imports are an important part of Northport's business and include fertiliser, gypsum, coal and palm kernel. Northport has full container handling capability, including a mobile harbour crane. Containers are being imported and exported, as well as shipped around the coast.

A weekly coastal container service links Northport with other ports around the country.

The company has published its 'vision for growth' online at www.vision4growth.co.nz and is inviting people to ask questions or make their views known to its management team via the website.

The port is owned and operated by Northport Ltd, itself owned jointly and equally by [Marsden Maritime Holdings Ltd](#) and the [Port of Tauranga Ltd](#).

For more information please contact:
Peter Heath, Due North Public Relations
peter@duenorthpr.co.nz / 021-456089