



## Shipping underpins the economic recovery

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2021 was another challenging year for Australian shipping. These challenges were tackled head on, with government and industry working together to keep supply chains operating, while maintaining safe and reliable transport networks.

In 2022, we will shift our emphasis to supporting businesses and communities to recover and rebuild, as Australia learns to live with COVID.

Given that shipping underpins the Australian economy – including our international trade and domestic transport, tourism and fishing industries – it will continue to be an important focus for my Department in supporting Australia's Economic Recovery Plan.

Industry, ports, maritime unions, Australian Government agencies and states and territories, are collaborating closely to manage the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic through the Maritime Response Group. Throughout the pandemic, this group has worked through a range of issues including shipping disruption and vaccination for maritime personnel and international seafarers. It is now working on arrangements for the maritime sector after Australia's reopening under the four phase National Plan.

While there remain issues to resolve, I am pleased with our progress. Thanks in large part to the cooperative engagement of this group, we are now continuing to see crew changes taking place.

Despite the border lockdowns and the other impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we continue to see increases in the demand for maritime freight. The Department's core business activities have been important in supporting freight operators and ensuring goods are being

delivered to Australia's remote and coastal communities.

The Department continues to administer Part X of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 which supports container shipping operators to maintain frequent and reliable services to and from Australia. These services are critical for Australian shippers who need to import their business inputs and get their exports to other markets.

The Department also administers the Shipping Reform (Tax Incentives) Act 2012, which encourages investment in the Australian shipping industry and the development of sustainable employment and skills opportunities for Australian seafarers through tax incentives. Over 30 certificates have been issued in the last 18 months to eligible vessels engaged in domestic and international shipping. This will help companies with Australian flagged and crewed vessels to increase the number of training berths for future Australian seafarers, thus strengthening Australia's ongoing maritime capability.

The Australian Government is finding opportunities to better engage with industry by simplifying interactions and obligations imposed on importers and exporters. It is a current priority of the Government to strengthen the digital economy, deliver digital services and streamline border regulation through a simplified trade system.

This provides the Department an opportunity to work with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority on enhancing electronic engagement with industry and exploring the development of a maritime single window. This aims to support increased trade through faster and more efficient information exchange in connection with the arrival, stay and

departure of ships. It will limit the data required from ships upon their arrival into Australia by removing duplicate requests, and allowing greater electronic submissions. This should also increase the efficiency of the supply chain as it will facilitate quicker and more targeted compliance actions.

Australia continues to actively engage with the International Maritime Organization (IMO). My Department leads engagement at IMO on trade facilitation, and the reduction of greenhouse gas shipping emissions, as well as supporting the work of other IMO committees.

On shipping emissions, we have demonstrated we are a constructive broker to ensure that global emissions reduction measures are practical, effective and apply equally to all ships. We have been strongly advocating for technology-driven emission reduction solutions, including the accelerated uptake of low and zero carbon fuels.

Looking forward, my Department will continue to support the IMO setting clear standards for future fuels and technologies that provide certainty for the shipping industry to invest in the development and deployment of the most climate-friendly and sustainable marine fuels.

In 2022 there will be a number of important reviews and reforms to progress. This includes the maritime safety review, coastal trading reform and the work of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission in developing a liner shipping class exemption.

I look forward to continuing working closely with Shipping Australia and other stakeholders across the maritime and transport sectors in 2022. ▲