

Queensland

By GEOFF DALGLIESH,
Secretary, Shipping Australia's Queensland Committee

Firstly, I must mention or give a big thank you to Michael Travers from MSC who has stepped down from Chairman of SAL Qld and for his help and support over the last two years.

The new Chairman taking Michael's place will be Ajaz Mir from OOCL and we welcome Ajaz to this position from the beginning of next year.

Sometimes it's difficult to know where to start on issues affecting our ports in Queensland and their importance when you're looking at a full year of events.

So, I will start with an overview of the industry as in shipping volumes which seems to have affected most ports in one way or another.

Firstly, the liner trade has now gone full circle with reduced freight rates and with space availability.

Exports are up in most ports due to volumes of agricultural such as grains and cotton whilst imports are down due mainly to our cost-of-living issues over the last eighteen months and the drop in the value of the Australian dollar.

Although container imports are down, the reverse is happening in the motor vehicle trade which is up more than 10% in both Brisbane and Townsville, which are the main ports for this commodity.

Coal exports are either level with or up across all ports in the State that are involved in this commodity along with other bulk commodities such as building products, iron and steel etc.

There are also a number of solar windfarm projects being either in the building phase or planned stage for the future which will see continued growth over the next twelve months.

Moving on from these very generalised review comments to our 2023 Annual Golf Day which was held in April. We had 84 players on the day and raised \$1,600 for Mission to Seafarer's marine

charity. The winning teams were BBC Chartering for the SAL CUP, Qube Logistics Group 1 for the OOCL Martin Bryant Cup and MCC Marine Group for the Chairmans Trophy.

All had a great day although some players might dispute that seeing some of the golf play was at unspectacular levels. A huge thank you goes to all the sponsors involved from all parts of our industry.

Other issues affecting some of our ports if not all over the year at some stage were the rise in various ship defects. MSQ is monitoring this area in relation to allowing entry to the ports of vessels in particular those that have had previous same or similar defects on calling into those ports. Whilst I mention MSQ I must thank them for their advice and support to the industry over the past year.

The building of the Brisbane Cross River Rail Project has from time to time caused some havoc for the transport industry. by this I mean that it can affect the hours available for moving freight by rail and over Christmas rail freight movements will be closed for up to 15 days, meaning all transport will only be by road over this period. This will happen again next Easter for possibly an even longer period. As the Cross River Rail Project will not be completed until 2026, we expect to see this happen till then.

Whilst on rail another important event occurring this year on rail freight company, Aurizon has started stevedoring containers in Gladstone with ANL and now are looking at connectivity of the rail in the port to enhance the total service.

The Port of Brisbane are in a lengthy process of getting their channel development program for the Port to enable a straighter, deeper and wider channel. This program is expected to have a lifetime of 20-25 years and will attempt a 17.3 metre minimum depth and a 600-metre-wide channel.

The Port of Townsville Channel Widening Project is progressing well and is on track to be completed next year. this will enable vessels up to 300 metres long and with beams of at least 40 metres to enter the port safely. as shipping operators are always looking for bigger, longer and wider vessels in today's trends, then Ports and Governments both State and Federal need to have the foresight to recognise that.

The Port of Mackay is upgrading Wharf 1 which will improve infrastructure capability to handle longer (85 – 95 metres) cargos. Wharf 5 upgrade will involve the demolition and replacement of the western approach deck and building a new Tub Berth facility which will cater for the current fleet requirements and support future expansion.

The subject of coastal shipping is still ongoing from a State Government perspective but from a Shipping Industry view it seems to have stalled. Having said that we have been advised that they are working on three elements within the Grants. Namely an Employments one, a Training one and a Coastal Shipping one. It is a slow-moving issue, but we think Government need to get it right in the first instance rather than try and mend it at a later stage. Then we would need a player with money and know how to come into this venture with open eyes.

Whilst there were many more issues and events over the year there is limited space to mention those in this report. I hope it gives you a general idea on things going on in our huge State.

I want to end this report by thanking everyone who helped me out over the past years with both advice and pain old help. I addition I would like to thank all sponsors to whatever they helped out with over this period. Without that help nothing happens.

Finally wishing you all a safe and happy festive season including new year. 🚢