



## Victoria

By CHARLES MASTERS,  
Secretary, Shipping Australia's Victoria Committee

The year began with Ports Victoria announcing the appointment of a Harbour Master from the United Kingdom effective March 2025. The position had been vacant for some time with most functions fulfilled by deputy staff. Shortly after the announcement it became apparent the appointment would not materialise and was to be filled by a local having the required experience.

The committee met on four occasions, staged the annual Phil Kelly OAM Golf Challenge, won by "Engage Towage," and held at picturesque LaTrobe Golf Club. Two lunches were organised for members and their clients the first at Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club with guest speaker the then Shadow Minister for Ports and Freight Ms Roma Britnell MP. The content of her presentation was compelling, highlighting many unfinished projects the current Government had failed to complete or deliver on. The subsequent luncheon was an end of year event held at the Royal Automobile Club in Melbourne. Both events were pleasingly sold out.

In last year's report we touched on the financial stress of the State of Victoria's finances. The budget is projected to have a 200 billion deficit propelled by large infrastructure projects, all said to run well over planned budgets. A change of Premier and finance minister has not done much for the optics of good governance, and we are beginning to see evidence of pressure being applied by Government to increase revenues from all sectors.

The port community will not be immune from increases and ultimately will on pass those costs across the trading community. Staying on politics the

opposition party have for the most part been internally focused also changing its leadership. The shadow minister for Ports and Freight, Roma Britnell MP, was replaced by Sam Groth MP a former Olympic-level tennis player who has already announced he will quit politics. The State faces an election in November 2026 and the opposition have to convince the public that they can deliver a responsible government.

The local committee has been vocal in calling for guidance with respect to increased numbers of ro-ro ships loaded with volumes of electrically powered vehicles. The concern aired was about a vessel reporting an onboard fire on approach to Port Phillip. We could not imagine the EPA allowing a vessel into the port, putting at risk the surrounding community and marine life. It was noted in a sub-committee that a discussion on issue was arranged by Ports Australia without result and was referred to IMO for advice. More recently Ports Victoria confirmed discussions were occurring between Fire Victoria and themselves with one member offering an inspection of a ro-ro for Fire Victoria to familiarise themselves with the layout and systems.

Another subject of the committee over the past year with oversight from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority has been GVM compliance and pleasingly the evidence over the past year has seen a greater compliance and less penalties being imposed when 1 tonne exceeded declared weights. Exporters have the message whilst importers are reliant on deciding whether to on pass the penalties to their supplier/s.

The Port of Melbourne having been privatised in 2016 remain charged with

future capacity planning and a 4th container terminal at North Webb Dock is presently being studied, and the operator seeks input from stakeholders. On this front, the Port reports into both the Essential Services Commission and Department of Transport and Finance. We understand the data, which drives the demand for capacity increases, is driven from expectations of population increase and also input from terminal operators. Meanwhile, the phenomenon of so-called "dark factories" is on the rise, which could result in more locally-produced products reducing demand for transportation.

Looking ahead, and automation could be an issue. Tesla is reportedly expected to begin produce vehicles in 2026 without steering wheels, which ought to give drivers all over the world pause for thought. The Samsung vessel which successfully self-navigated between Long Beach and Kaohsiung is a potential game changer. The pace of change ahead could be disturbing; more considered thinking about what the port community needs may be in order. ▲



Port by Port and Ship by Ship, we provide full port agency services through our unique network. Our geographical coverage spans over 1500 different port locations, supporting over 2500 diverse clients. Our local knowledge enables us to deliver quality services where they are needed most, enabling our customers to ship smoothly and trade successfully.

**Our services include:**

- Port Agency
- Liner Agency
- Husbandry Services
- Marine Survey and Inspection
- Bio-Fouling and Underwater Inspection
- Offshore Support Services
- Bunker Coordination
- Ship Maintenance
- Spares and Supplies
- Provisions and Stores
- Cash to Master
- Marine Survey and Inspection
- Medical Assistance
- Crew Movements and Logistics
- Disbursement Accounting
- Bunker Duty and Freight Tax
- Coastal License



**Australia**

Inchcape Shipping Services  
Level 5, 657 Pacific Hwy,  
St Leonards,  
NSW 2065  
Tel : +61 2 9410 8888  
Email : australia@iss-shipping.com

**New Zealand**

ISS-Mackay Ltd  
The Shipping Exchange  
2 Akaroa Street, Parnell,  
Auckland 1052  
Tel : +64 9 3094 266  
Email : auckland@iss-mckay.co.nz

**Papua New Guinea**

Inchcape Shipping Services Pty Ltd  
Level 2 & 3 Monian Tower,  
Douglas Street, Port Moresby 121  
Tel: +675 321 2599  
Email: port.moresby@iss-shipping.com

**CONNECT TO A SMOOTHER, SMARTER OCEAN**

[www.iss-shipping.com](http://www.iss-shipping.com)