

# PORTAL

APRIL 2025



## UP FRONT



Kia ora, and welcome to the first Portal of 2025.

The first few months of any year seem to fly by and 2025 has been no exception, including for our port, as a busy start to the year has seen our berths regularly near capacity with a mix of bulk liquids, dry bulk, forestry and general cargo vessels.

We've also welcomed our annual handful of cruise ships to port, as we continue to grow and develop this business to the benefit of the region, and dredge Albatros has been a constant in the harbour for the past six weeks as we maintain the depth of our shipping channel and berth pockets.

The start of the year also means the completion of the first half of our financial year.

As readers will be aware, last winter was dominated by an energy crisis, with the combination of a dry year for electricity generation and the decline in gas reserves causing electricity prices to spike, and some industry to reduce or halt production, and even close permanently.

Port Taranaki also felt the bite, with our first-half trade impacted significantly as Methanex, our largest customer, ceased methanol production for a period and then moved to a one-plant operation to enable gas to be used to produce electricity and prop up New Zealand's constrained energy market. We fully supported their decision, which was born of necessity.

For the six months to 31 December 2024, total trade through Port Taranaki was 1.48 million tonnes – a 565,000 tonne, or 28%, decrease on the corresponding six months in 2023. Central to this was a 500,000 tonne, or 42%, drop in overall liquid bulk volumes, including methanol, to 692,000 tonnes.

First-half export log volumes were down 49,000 JAS (Japanese Agricultural Standard tonnes), or 11%, to 410,000 JAS, while dry bulk trade was up 7,000 tonnes to 368,000 tonnes.

For the half-year, Port Taranaki recorded a net profit after tax of \$3.87 million, which was 9.4% down on the \$4.27m for the corresponding period in 2023.

It was a difficult six months, but our Port Taranaki team worked extremely hard to produce an interim result that was commendable considering the tough market, trade and business conditions.

A final dividend of \$3.00m for the 2023-24 financial year was paid to our sole shareholder, Taranaki Regional Council, in October, and an interim dividend of \$4.00m has been approved for the 2024-25 financial year.

As we have experienced so far in 2025, trading in the second half is forecast to be higher.

However, supply challenges remain in the energy industry, and the situation highlights the need to find a solution.

As such, we believe Port Taranaki has the location, enabling infrastructure, and skills, to support LNG imports, and, in the longer term, can be a base for offshore wind energy production. We'll also continue to support oil and gas production, which remains vital to ongoing energy security and resilience as we transition to a low-emissions environment.

Central to achieving these goals is speaking to key stakeholders and telling our story.

In February, we hosted a Taranaki Chamber of Commerce Business Connections event, where we reiterated our commitment to Taranaki's energy future, and recently general manager commercial Ross Dingle spoke to industry leaders, government officials, iwi representatives and global experts at the Taranaki Economic Update and the 2025 Offshore Renewable Energy Forum, where he highlighted Port Taranaki's strengths and abilities.

We look forward to playing our part and being part of the solution.

Ngā mihi nui

Simon Craddock  
Chief Executive

# COMMUNITY

## Young sailors and anglers flock to Taranaki

*The waters off New Plymouth are the field of dreams for hundreds of school students this month.*

Following a busy summer of recreational fun, Ngāmotu Beach and the sea off the city are hosting two national events – the New Zealand Secondary Schools Teams Sailing National Championship, and the New Zealand Sport Fishing Youth Nationals.

For the second year in a row, the New Plymouth Yacht Club will host more than 350 sailors, team managers, helpers and umpires at the NZSS Teams Sailing National Championship from 22-26 April.

Sailed in two-person 420 dinghies, the short and tactical races pit three boats from a school against another school's three boats in a head-to-head.

Last year, 400 races were held during the regatta, and a similar number are expected this year as 36 schools stretching from Dunedin in the south to Kerikeri in the north sail for glory. Taranaki will be



represented by New Plymouth Boys' High School, Francis Douglas Memorial College, and Spotswood College.

Port Taranaki is the proud principal sponsor of the New Plymouth Yacht Club.

The New Zealand Sport Fishing Youth Nationals are held simultaneously out of fishing clubs up and down the country from 12-27 April, and are a great opportunity for young anglers to experience the thrill of fishing in a competitive environment.

The event is open to any youngsters up to the age of 18, including those who aren't members of fishing clubs. Those interested can register at their nearest fishing club, such as the New Plymouth Sportfishing and Underwater Club, which has 252 members under 18.

The measure-and-release tournament offers a variety of fishing sections catering to kids with handlines all the way up to those with access to boats.

# MARINE

## Perfect weather lets Albatros spread wings

*The warm, settled autumn weather provided the perfect conditions for the port's 'avian' visitor to flit freely back and forth in the harbour.*

Dredge Albatros began her latest biennial maintenance dredging campaign in the first week of March and, thanks to all-but no delays, the project was on track to be completed on time as it headed into the final two weeks in April.

"It's been a really successful campaign," says Port Taranaki general manager infrastructure John Maxwell.

"The weather has been great. There's been only one day – or 11 hours – to date that the Albatros hasn't been able to operate, which was because of strong winds, otherwise she's had a clear run. She's done a great job of removing a lot of sand and sediment that's been driven into the port by the current and wave

action that hits the Main Breakwater."

Regularly dredging the port's shipping channel and berth pockets is critical to port operations as it ensures a depth of 12.5 metres, making the harbour clear and safe for trade.

Trailing suction hopper dredge Albatros, which is owned and operated by Dutch Dredging, has been clearly visible in the harbour during the campaign, working near the breakwaters, in the channel, and among the berths.



Heading into the final stretch of the project, 212,000m<sup>3</sup> of material had been removed and taken to either of the port's consented drop zones – the offshore area, about 2km offshore from the port, where fine sand and sediment is deposited, and the inshore area, about 900m off the Todd Energy Aquatic Centre, where clean coarse sand is dropped.

Port Taranaki is using the 2025 dredging campaign to gather up-to-date data on the volume of material removed, and the condition of the drop zones, to help form its application for renewal of the maintenance dredging consents it holds with the Taranaki Regional Council.

Detailed scientific studies, assessments and modelling have already been carried out, with the newest data to be assessed ahead of the mid-2025 application.

# INFRASTRUCTURE

## Crane helps to lift breakwater resilience

*It's likely anyone who gazed across to Port Taranaki from the Coastal Walkway in early March would have noticed a lofty addition to the port skyline.*

At the extreme end of the Main Breakwater, a large crane was lifting and carefully placing forty, 12-tonne akmons on the outer end of the breakwater to strengthen it against the strong and unrelenting West Coast sea conditions.

"Over time, the constant pounding deteriorates the akmons or they are dragged to the sea floor, so they need to be replaced to ensure the breakwater does its job of helping to protect the harbour and the visiting vessels," explains Port Taranaki civil supervisor Rob Wilson.

The akmons are all made by the Port Taranaki maintenance team and six-monthly checks of the breakwaters are carried out to ascertain whether replacements are needed. Four-tonne



akmons are made for the Lee Breakwater, but the heavier and larger versions are needed for the Main Breakwater.

Even then, such is the power of the sea, that Rob says he's seen akmons picked up and tossed across to the other side of the breakwater.

A calm period of autumn weather and sea conditions were necessary for the latest bolstering work, and with that in place, a well-oiled production line was established

to get the job completed safely and efficiently – forklifts shuffled back and forth along the breakwater carrying akmons, which the Ian Roebuck Crane Hire crane then lifted into place.

The akmons are shaped so that the power of the sea moves them into positions where they interlock, while at the same time allowing enough space between each for the water to move freely.

This helps break down the energy of the sea.

The latest work follows a project earlier this year to significantly strengthen the wave wall on the Main Breakwater. Seven, 15-tonne replacement steel reinforced concrete panels were installed, and further strengthening work was carried out along the 5m tall and 170m long wave wall to ensure protection of the vessels and people on the breakwater berths and nearby Moturoa Wharf.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE



**Dougal Morris**

Summer in Baghdad was so hot that when Dougal Morris and his British navy engineering colleagues worked on helicopters carrying out military operations, they wore gloves to prevent their hands from burning on the searing metal tools.

"Even the glue that held the pages in books melted, so if you weren't careful the pages would fly away while you were reading," he recalls of his time in Iraq in 2003.

Dougal, who these days is a Port Taranaki project manager, was born and bred in England and joined the navy at 16 as an apprentice helicopter engineer. Once

qualified, he "followed wherever the navy helicopters went", having stints in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, France, and, ultimately, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Leaving the navy, he moved to Aberdeen, first working in the oil and gas industry, then as a project engineer in the offshore wind sector.

With a friend in New Plymouth enticing him abroad, Dougal, wife Claire, and their two boys moved to Taranaki in 2011, where he took project engineering and operations maintenance roles, before studying to become a project manager.

"Having worked mainly in oil and gas, I hadn't really considered where I could transfer my skills easily, but a friend mentioned the port.

"I applied for a job and have worked here a year now. I really enjoy it. In terms of activity, it's interesting and there's a real variety – I've worked on the likes of the wave wall strengthening on the Main Breakwater, stormwater upgrades on Blyde Wharf, and the latest dredging campaign."

Beyond work and family life, Dougal has a passion for biking, has run marathons in

the past, played bass in a band, and is also into creating digital music.

"I call them musical ideas, rather than songs at this point. I've got lots of ideas, but I'm stuck on the vocals – I don't sing!"

### **What does your role involve?**

Really, it's about managing the various stakeholders involved in a project and helping keep it on track and budget. So, reporting to the financial and operations teams, and being the connection between the office and those on-site, which can include external contractors.

### **What do you like about it?**

It's broad – it covers a lot of things. You don't have to be an expert in one particular area, but need to know enough when something crops up on a project to be able to understand the implications and communicate these with stakeholders.

### **What are the challenges?**

I think it's understanding what information people need throughout a project to get the project done without bombarding them with emails and irrelevant information.

# CUSTOMERS

## Dual benefits to wharf upgrade

*Port Taranaki prides itself on being flexible and adaptable to customers' needs, and the latest infrastructural upgrade on Blyde Wharf achieves that while also helping protect the marine environment.*

Since late 2018, when the coolstore on Blyde Wharf was removed, Port Taranaki has transformed the site from a container terminal to an important bulk storage wharf, in particular a key export log space.

The wharf can store 44,000 JAS tonnes, the log yards are close to the vessel berths, and there is on-wharf rail access that enables log wagons to move alongside the berths.

Necessary to the transformation has been a long-running programme of work to upgrade the storm water system to help prevent log particles from entering the harbour.

"As part of our operations, the log yards are regularly swept and cleaned, particularly after a log vessel has been in port and loaded. This picks up a lot of the debris, including bark, but not all of it. During rain, residual particles get washed into the storm water system, so it's important that we remove as much of this debris as is practicable before the water is released into the harbour," says Port Taranaki environment manager Kevin Lehrke.

Over time, Port Taranaki has installed five vortex separator systems, or continuous deflective separation (CDS) units, along Blyde Wharf for water run-off. The units work by using a swirling, or vortex-like flow, to separate the heavier particles from the water. The solids are pushed to the bottom and captured before the water is screened and discharged into the harbour.

In recent months, Port Taranaki has been carrying out a project to install the sixth CDS unit – a project that aims to provide extra flexibility for forestry exporters while also helping protect the harbour.

"Previously, the log storage area where the new CDS unit is being installed, could only take debarked logs, which are cleaner than bark-on logs," explains Kevin.

"This caused storage issues for exporters, who wanted to be able to store both bark-on logs and debarked logs in the affected area on Blyde Wharf."

Port Taranaki, along with contractor Whitaker Civil Engineering, have carried out the upgrade, which has included the excavation of a 50m long strip of Blyde Wharf, the installation of the separator system and accompanying slot drain for water run-off, and the upgrade and relining of the connecting outfall pipe.

"As the worksite is close to the berths on one side and the log yards on the other, there have been some logistical difficulties while a vessel has been in for loading. But the stevedores, log marshallers and exporters have been accommodating, and the project has gone well," says Port Taranaki project manager Dougal Morris.

Port Taranaki also took the opportunity to upgrade and future-proof other services in the excavated area.

"It's a massive inconvenience to dig up areas of the wharf, so we decided to make the most of it and do other work at the same time," says Dougal.

"We replaced the sewer line, replaced the water line, and put the power cables and the fibre optics that go to the light towers into new conduit, so they're better protected.

"We also installed a new water point for use on the wharf.

"It's a great result for the port, the harbour, and the exporters," he says.

"It will enable the area to be utilised all the time. This is 4,000 JAS of storage that is now flexible for debarked and bark-on logs. It's fantastic, and we thank all those involved."

