

# MAI I TE WĀPU

From the Wharf | Community Newsletter



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## CHANGING GEARS

Tēnā koutou katoa,

The announcement by the New Zealand Aluminium Smelter (NZAS) on Friday, 31 May 2024 of an energy supply agreement from three generators (Meridian Energy, Contact Energy and Mercury) until at least 2044 was welcomed news.

There has been a fair amount of conjecture as to the long-term viability of NZAS; however, the Company was always positive that there was a good business case for the smelter to keep operating into the future at Tiwai Point. So, our congratulations go out to Chris and his Team at NZAS for reaching this milestone.

The benefits are significant for the Port, and this story will be mirrored throughout many businesses within the Southland region.

As readers will be aware, NZAS is an important part of South Port's operation and has been for the past 53 years.

Looking at the numbers NZAS represents:

- 30% of our total cargo throughput
- 20%, approximately, of our Net Profit After Tax
- 20% of our bulk vessel calls into the Port
- 27% of containers handled through the Port (majority of which are packed on the wharf)

There is also a 35-year licence agreement for the Tiwai wharf between NZAS and South Port, which currently ends in 2043.

Reviewing the numbers, it is obvious that this activity helps to secure jobs in the marine, container packing and container terminal operations.

The volume is also an important part of the package for Mediterranean Shipping Line's Capricorn Service that calls at the Port on a regular basis to collect export containers for worldwide destinations.

There will also be flow-on benefits to the Port and the region from this decision.

Importantly, it will provide the confidence for generators to invest in additional renewable electricity generation in the Southland province, most likely wind farms.

Mercury recently confirmed this when announcing their agreement with NZAS to the New Zealand Stock Exchange (NZX), stating: *“This agreement gives us confidence to continue to move fast on our commitment to bringing more renewables to New Zealand. We can now turn our attention to the expansion of the Kaiwera Downs wind farm and expect to confirm this in the near future.”*

Readers will be aware that stage one of Kaiwera Downs, representing 10 turbines or the equivalent of 40 MW of generation, was imported through Bluff in April 2023 (total consented generation for the site is 240 MW).

On other topics, there are several good articles within this edition for readers, with my favourite being focused on our people. Look out for the articles on Karl Frahm and Gerald McLeod, and our latest scholarship recipients.

Ngā mihi nui,  
Nigel Gear  
Chief Executive Officer



# 2024 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

We would like to congratulate this year's successful scholarship recipients:

## COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP: Sian Tarrant

Local Bluff resident Sian Tarrant (nee Topi) is married with two children and previously had a leadership role at South Port. Her passion for people and a supportive environment for professional development led her to study psychology.

Sian was born and raised in Bluff and her tūpuna whakapapa to Rakiura (Stewart Island), Ruapuke Island and Motupōhue (Bluff) on her father's side and Ngāti Mutanga o Wharekauri (Chatham Islands) on her mother's side. Sian will be the first of her line to complete a bachelor's degree.

This year is Sian's final year of study for a Bachelor of Applied Science majoring in Psychology. Next year, she will complete her Honours degree.

Her long term goal is to obtain a Master's degree and then a postgraduate diploma to gain the accreditation required to become a registered psychologist. Sian is yet to decide what she will specialise in for registration; however, she is committed to making a real difference and enhancing the health and wellness of people.

Recently Sian was given the opportunity to work at Southland Help Rape and Abuse Support Centre where she provides court support, micro-counselling and social services support to survivors of sexual harm. Sian feels very privileged to share and hold space for people who have had a traumatic experience and walk alongside them on their healing journey.



Ryder Mikkelsen, right, with John Schol, South Port Board Member



## STAFF SCHOLARSHIP: Ryder Mikkelsen

Ryder is the son of Hayden Mikkelsen, South Port's Container Operations Manager, and will be commencing his academic journey with the University of Canterbury to study a Bachelor of Engineering.

Ryder excelled academically, as well as in the sporting and cultural domain, during his time at James Hargest College. He held the role of Deputy Head Boy last year, which enabled him to develop leadership skills that will be invaluable for his future endeavours. Ryder was awarded the 2023 Youthmark Young Achiever Award, which recognises Year 13 students from all Southland secondary schools who have excelled in their chosen field.

At the beginning of 2023, Ryder was awarded a scholarship to attend the Rotary Science and Technology Forum in Auckland and felt privileged to have the opportunity to learn from leaders in their fields. This experience enhanced Ryder's interest in engineering and the endless possibilities for innovation and development that come with it. Ryder was invited back by the Rotary Science and Technology Forum this year in the capacity of an advisor. As an advisor, Ryder was responsible for 28 students, which involved overseeing the smooth running of the group, ensuring all the students attended workshops, lectures, day trips, organising entertainment and managing the guidance and general wellbeing of every student.

We wish Ryder all the best in his exciting journey ahead and look forward to his progress.



## TEAM Q + A WITH: KARL FRAHM

Karl Frahm has been a member of South Port's Marine Services Team since 2020. In his role, he coordinates with pilots, tug masters, shipping agents, and lines handlers to ensure the efficient tying up, releasing, and servicing of vessels, including freshwater provision and garbage disposal. Karl's training enables him to cover various positions, including crewing our tug fleet and pilot launch and supporting syncrolift operations.

Additionally, Karl is a trained St John emergency medical technician and volunteers with the Bluff ambulance station. He and his wife, Roxanne, have lived in Bluff for 17 years, where they have raised their two children, who attend Verdon College.

**What are three words to describe you?**

Reliable, compassionate, team player.

**What do you enjoy most about working for South Port?**

I like the variety of the job; one day, you're working in the office, and the next day, you're out on the wharf, tying up a vessel or out in Foveaux Strait, putting a pilot on a ship. The team in the Marine Department that we work with and the greater port team that we call on to do lines – we get to interact with a lot of staff outside our own area.

**What do you view as your greatest work achievement?**

The amount of training I have led in the last couple of years getting the team back up to full strength and initiating the process of getting a first response pack for emergencies. Over time getting trained up on everything, the pilot boat, the tugs, and the syncrolift, providing the Marine Department with that added flexibility.

**What's the most difficult part of your job?**

Last-minute changes are caused by the weather or ships not being finished on time. Sometimes, you've just spent a couple of hours calling around and organising the weekend's shipping, and then it all changes at 4 o'clock on a Friday afternoon.

**What's the best part about living in Bluff?**

The community and everyone looking out for each other, and the number of people who work at South Port who live in Bluff that you get to see.

**What do you do outside of work?**

St John Ambulance, church on Sundays, and the rest of my life seems to be taken up with family at the moment, supporting my children with all their extracurricular activities. I like keeping the garden tidy and tramping. Really enjoyed the last time I was at Stewart Island and tramped across to Mason's Bay – I saw a kiwi too, which was cool.



Karl Frahm, Coordinator - Shipping and Mooring Services

## PETROLEUM BERTH NOTICE

South Port will be undertaking a small drill and blast project at the Petroleum Berth, in order to remove a small outcrop of rock which is restricting the vessel draft arriving at the berth.

Maintaining a safe environment is our priority, so navigation within 100m of the Petroleum Berth will be restricted for 30 minutes, both before and after each blast. Advanced notice of each blast event, which is estimated to be seven

blast events in total, will go out to all vessel owners - including recreational user groups and the general public through various communication channels, including Social Media and the VHF Marine channel.



Drilling will begin early June and is expected to take two to three months in total, with drilling and blasting taking place intermittently during this period. Work is restricted to inside the red boundary in the diagram to the left.



## CHANNEL OPEN FOR BUSINESS

On 22 April, the woodchip carrier “Flora Pioneer” departed Bluff, laden with 39,000 tonnes of woodchips. This was a record shipment of woodchips for South Port. The Company is taking a staged approach to the new draft available in the channel by declaring an interim operating draft of 10.3m at high tide. This is to assess the handling of deeper draft vessels before moving to the full 10.7m available. “Flora Pioneer,” pictured below during loading, left the Port at 10.3m, using the additional draft obtained as part of the recently completed Kia Whakaū dredging project. This highlights the project’s benefits for export out of the region.



## WORLD EARTH DAY PLANTING

World Earth Day 2024 was held on Monday, 22 April, which the Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust used as an ideal opportunity to plant native bush and trees along the new Mountain Bike track on Bluff Hill, all the way down to Flagstaff Road.

As always, South Port was happy to send a team to assist, particularly given that such planting efforts help restore and protect the natural environment on and around Bluff Hill.

Approximately 2,000 plants went into the ground throughout the day.



## RECORDS COME TUMBLING DOWN

The arrival of the container ship “MSC Eleni” at Bluff on Wednesday, 7 February, shattered a number of records at the Port. Gross tonnage is a convenient starting point, and with the “MSC Eleni” measuring 54,881 tonnes, she is some 6,500 tonnes bigger than any other ship of any type that has called here. Her cargo capacity is 5,059 TEU – 20-foot equivalent units for the uninitiated – 100 more than any other container ship and moving Bluff into the post-5,000 TEU era. Her overall length of 294 metres is 26 metres more than the nearest contender.





# AN “ESPRESSO MARTINI” TO GO

When the Portsider Editor heard about a yachtsman arriving in Bluff who had been floating adrift while attempting a solo sail around the world, not to mention had also been attacked by orcas, she wasn't going to pass up the opportunity to meet him.

And so, off she went to find the solo sailor - Pavlin Nadvorni.

Pavlin is a friendly, adventurous Bulgarian, passionate about all things yachting. Having fallen in love with the sea and sailing at the tender age of eight, Pavlin's life has revolved around the water, and in the 47 years since the passion was ignited, he has sailed well over 200,000 nautical miles. “Circumnavigation (of the globe) was on my bucket list, and when the Global Solo Challenge (GSC) was first announced, I jumped in, being the seventh entry. The GSC 23/24 is the first time this event has been organised” Pavlin explained.

Pavlin's weapon of choice for completing the GSC was fondly named the “Espresso Martini,” a boat he was introduced to via eBay in 2018. Even though he already had three boats, the thought of salvaging a boat stranded on rocks after storm ‘Emma’ had devastated the United Kingdom, compelled him to jump into action. Miraculously, the boat had escaped significant damage, and with a combined team effort, he sailed it back to Bulgaria. The rest is history.



The “Espresso Martini” at South Port on 21 January, 2024

The GSC lasted 146 days, with participants setting sail from 26 August 2023. Pavlin set off on 21 October 2023; unfortunately, he encountered some difficulty from the onset.

While en route to the start line, travelling down the coast of Portugal, his boat was attacked by a pod of orcas, who successfully destroyed 1/3 of the rudder. After quite a battle to keep on course and ride out the persistent orcas, he was able to have the damage repaired and set sail.

Fast-forward 88 days, and two further incidents saw him moored in Bluff for over two weeks. The rigging on the main sail was damaged and needed to be repaired, but that was not the last of the bad luck.

Pavlin said he “reached the very north-eastern tip of Stewart Island on 16 January; issues arose upon trying to anchor, with the rope wrapping around the keel, and the vessel was drifting. I had to dive down and free it. Long story short, I had the same problem the following day; without an engine, my only option this time was to cut the line free, sail near the Bluff Harbour entrance, and ask for a tow.”

He was ever so grateful for the assistance he received while anchored off Stewart Island from his friend Murray Lord, a fellow Kiwi he met while working on superyachts 30 years ago. “Suddenly, a small inflatable was coming to me from Stewart Island to help, and as fate would have it, we were randomly reunited,” he said. I couldn't believe it!”

He has appreciated the considerable support from people on both islands, particularly from Customs, Immigration, MPI, South Port Management, and the Bluff locals, who helped get him on his way.

Pavlin departed Bluff on 6 February; however, finishing the journey was not to be. On 13 February, he called into Lyttelton Port and made the extremely difficult decision to retire from the competition due to several medical issues that needed urgent attention. Upon announcing his retirement, he said, “a regatta and a dream cannot be more precious and significant than life. As well as the future of family and friends. In this sense, the desire to make it through should not outweigh common sense and experience when they dictate otherwise, however hard that may be.”

To learn more about the race, or check out the GPS maps for competitors, visit: [www.globalsolochallenge.com](http://www.globalsolochallenge.com)



## SPIRITS HIGH AFTER ANNUAL VISIT

On Saturday, 27 January, over 800 people made their way to Bluff to visit the Sprit of New Zealand, as she descended upon the town. Celebrating 50 years since its first voyage, the vessel was visiting Bluff as part of its nationwide tour. Visitors were treated to a look into the galley, bunk rooms, cabins, and the inner workings.



PHOTO CREDIT: TAMMI TOPI, SOUTH DRONE NZ

## NEW FISHING LINE + TACKLE BINS FOR BLUFF

Shark Experience, a local Bluff business, is committed to promoting an environmentally safe approach to clean seas. To achieve this, the company collaborated with South Port to purchase and install fishing line bins on the Town Wharf and the old wharf near the ferry wharf.

These bins are in use in many places throughout New Zealand and the world, where communities and coastal landowners have committed to reducing fishing litter. The bins also provide an opportunity for the education of local and tourist fisherpersons to see Bluff's commitment to keeping our special place and marine animals safer.

Nikki Lad, from Shark Experience, said, "when we do our rubbish collection, we find a significant amount of used line at the fishing areas, along with a heap of sinkers, hooks, and bait—more often found on the Town Wharf. This is also where we have found two dead gulls with lines in them."

The bins, which South Port installed in May, are designed to be a disposal place for just that—fishing lines, hooks, sinkers, or any recreational fishing items no longer needed. They will help prevent injury to wildlife and people, as well as reduce litter that would otherwise end up in the ocean.

The bins will be emptied and cleaned by the team at Shark Experience, where waste will be sorted and, where possible, recycled. If you are interested in volunteering to assist with this, reach out to Nikki on (03) 212 7112.





# KŌHANGA MOANA - SEA NESTS PROJECT

South Port NZ and e3Scientific Limited are working together to deliver the first artificial reef in Aotearoa, New Zealand, constructed for ecological restoration. The project aims to restore the rocky reef habitat in Bluff Harbour in order to:

- Regenerate and enhance important habitats for marine species
- Restore, enhance, and protect the capacity for harvesting mahinga kai
- Trial kelp restoration in Bluff Harbour
- Build an evidence base to support future deployment of Kōhanga Moana - Sea Nest artificial reef modules in Aotearoa

Kōhanga Moana - Sea Nests are artificial reef modules designed and manufactured in Southland Murihiku to restore local rocky reef habitats and support the growth of mahinga kai. They are constructed with sustainable materials, have a low carbon footprint, are robust and long-lasting, and are designed to provide and enhance existing habitats for local marine species. They provide suitable surfaces for the growth of species like kelp, pāua, mussels, and oysters, as well as shelter and a nursery habitat for fish, octopus, and crayfish. The modules will be placed in areas of Bluff Harbour where natural habitat has been depleted or degraded.

Modules are currently being installed, and key species are being propagated by e3Scientific. From the end of June, the modules will be monitored by additional partners, such as Southern Institute of Technology and community members.



Two Kōhanga Moana - Sea Nests, ready for installation

## TALKING MOZZIES WITH MATTY

When the Editor spotted Matthew Costar, Compliance Coordinator, peeking out from around the side of a building, she naturally pressed him for more information. As it turned out, he was performing a frequent ritual that is vitally important — not only to protect our border but also to protect the community from any potential exposure to exotic mosquitoes spreading various illnesses, such as Ross River Virus and Dengue Fever.

New Zealand is an appealing environment for exotic mosquitoes, and it is possible that they could become established in the South Island and even Bluff, despite the cooler temperatures. Introduced species are challenging and expensive to get rid

of once established; however, it has been achieved twice before; the eradication of the exotic Southern Saltmarsh mosquito took place between 1998 and 2010, with the eradication programme costing around \$70 million, followed by the eradication of the Saltmarsh Cultex mosquito between 2018 and 2020, at a cost unknown.

Ports are busy spaces that receive tonnes of high-risk cargo from many foreign destinations, such as Asia, and shipping containers make for a perfect container-breeding ground when paired with tires, machinery, or cars. And, as the Editor learned, the process taken to protect the border with a proactive approach is rather interesting, involving Te Whatu Ora | Community and Public Health New Zealand.

South Port has 11 mosquito traps around the Port. All but two are simply made from tires; when the tyres have water in them, they make a perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes as they are warm and sheltered. Every time a trap is checked, the water is poured into a white tray, and visual observations are made.

The Southern District has four Health Protection Officers (HPO) who take turns checking these traps, with Matthew in tow. These checks are vital so that foreign mosquitoes that make it to New Zealand are detected early and eradicated before they can spread. Traps get checked weekly for most of the year and every two weeks in winter. Every year, an average of 14 foreign mosquitoes make it to New Zealand, and 10 are found at ports. Unlike Port Otago, South Port has not had a foreign mosquito found to date; Bluff is considered low risk, mainly because of the cooler climate.

Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) also has requirements for ships and cargo to prevent mosquitos from making it to New Zealand in the first place, but we are the last line of defense should one make it through.



Two HPO's checking the contents of a trap



One of the mosquito traps on the Port



# FAREWELL TO AN OLD HAND

**Gerald McLeod, South Port's Data Analyst, was born and raised in Levin but spent time in Whangarei, Palmerston North, and Auckland. After relocating from the big smoke in 1993, he first started working at South Port in 1997 as a casual employee in the Cold Stores. This led to regular work in Shed 5, processing MDF under the supervision of Clive Westwood.**

Back in 1999, this operation, along with the Cold Stores, which was, at the time, overseen by Nigel Gear, resulted in Gerald being awarded a contract alongside Paul Taylor as a permanent part-time South Port team member.

Things were quite different in those days, as there was no Gate House to stop and check vehicles and personnel coming onto the Port; in fact, the Watch House was located near the start of the Island Harbour bridge where the vessel "Monica" is now located, beside the Bluff Maritime Museum.

There were also no such things as ID access cards, security fences, or speed limits, and Gerald would zip to work on his scooter across the bridge, through No.6 Berth, then on to Shed 5, unimpeded at a top speed of 60kph.

It is safe to say that health and safety has improved considerably over the years.

In 2001, South Port began receiving dairy products such as cheese, AMF (anhydrous milk fat such as Ghee), and milk powder from Fonterra's Edendale plant. While the cheese went to the Cold Stores, the other dairy products were handled by the MDF team. The products were stored in Sheds 2, 5, and 6, and the MDF was stored in Shed 3.

In 2006, when Fonterra decided to ship much of its product via the Maersk shipping line, Gerald moved to the R&D office to help in the day-to-day running of the container pad, utilising the Jade container handling system.

At that time, because the container vessel run by Tasman Orient Line only called into the Port once a fortnight, the container facility had not yet been split into the two identities of Terminal and Depot. There was only one forklift and operator assigned to the daily container handling requirements. Port Maintenance was responsible for surveying containers — unlike today, where there are two separate departments for container operations and over eight operators and machines. How things have changed!

When MSC began its service through Bluff in 2008, thanks to an increase in containerised cargo volume, container operations were split between the Terminal, which dealt with the receipt and delivery of containers, and the Depot, which concentrated on processing empty containers. In 2018, Gerald transferred from the terminal side of container operations to assume the role of Depot Administrator, also assisting with surveying and MPI inspections of containers.

There he remained, until retiring in August 2020.

That is, until South Port's Business Development Manager, Jamie May, called him three months later, asking if he could return to help in the Business Development Department until a vacancy was filled. That 'return to work' lasted another three years. Gerald rendered assistance in the health and safety space and returned to the Container Depot administrator role to cover a maternity leave stint.

He also initiated the collation of several KPIs and wrote several articles for the Portsider throughout the years.

As one has just read, Gerald has had many roles during his time with South Port. "In passing, a career in the Port industry is a worthwhile pursuit, with many different avenues available, especially with the many technology advancements now occurring," he said. "These days, there is much more to the Port industry than driving a forklift."

**Thank you for all you have contributed over the past 27 years, Gerald. We wish you the best for your retirement; you'll undoubtedly have plenty of projects and gardening to keep you busy!**