



MAI I TE WĀPU

From the Wharf

Community Newsletter | December 2025 | Vol. 4 | Issue 2

CHANGING GEARS

Tēnā koutou katoa,

Christmas is fast approaching and as usual for this time of the year, it's a good opportunity to look back on what has been a very busy time at the Port.

It would have been quite noticeable for port watchers that the berths in the Island Harbour have been fully occupied over recent months, with a number of vessels also sitting at anchor waiting to gain access to the port.

This has led to bulk vessels, on occasion, discharging their loads at the container berth at night to help with the congestion.

This pattern has been influenced by a number of factors such as the agricultural sector performing well, leading to increased imports of stock feed and fertiliser; the deeper channel has led to more cargo being imported on vessels than was previously possible, and a number of vessels have arrived at the Port to discharge components for stage 2 of the Kaiwera Downs wind farm. Add a couple of cruise vessels into the picture and it has definitely been a busy period.

Though it is good that we are busy, the weather over the spring months hasn't been helpful with wet and windy conditions slowing down the discharge of weather sensitive cargoes. It would be nice to see a little more sun and less wind to help the cargo discharge/loading process, to keep ships moving in and out of the Port!

We were also fortunate that the Port was not too badly affected following the severe weather event in October. We have a number of processes in place to prepare for weather events such as these.

The 3rd of December was officially 65 years since the opening of the Island Harbour in 1960 (the Port has been in operation officially for 148 years).

It has taken a while, however, the last piece of undeveloped land on the Island Harbour, the western tip, was sealed with asphalt for the storage of project cargo such as wind turbine components. Although we have used up the majority of the space on the Island Harbour, we will look to maximise all the areas now before looking at any future expansion onto the foreshore.

We held the 37th Annual Shareholders' Meeting (ASM) on the Island Harbour at Bluff in October. At the meeting we farewelled Clare Kearney who has served as a Director on the Board for the past 9 years. During this time Clare has led the Health and Safety Panel, which is an extremely important aspect of port operation. We also had the opportunity to welcome Derek Nind as our new Director. Derek has extensive experience in the port and logistics sector, working in senior leadership roles at a number of ports (including South Port), and recently as CEO of CentrePort for seven years until moving into the Managing Director role at 360 Logistics.

I also took the opportunity to announce that I would be stepping down as Chief Executive in the 2nd quarter of 2026. The Board will now undertake the recruitment process to find a suitable replacement.

At this time of year, it is also an opportunity to reflect on family and friends, both past and present. On Saturday I was fortunate to be invited to an event to recognise past Chief Executive Neil Cantrick at the Bluff RSA. It was a great occasion and a chance to catch up and share stories with both current, and retired colleagues, Noreen and the family.

Finally, we are a port town, and the business would not be as successful without the support of the community, iwi and our staff. The team at South Port would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and hopefully some quality time with your family and friends.

Ngā mihi nui

Nigel Gear
Chief Executive



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MEET THE TEAM: PAIGE GILBERT, DEPOT OPERATOR

Paige Gilbert is a Depot Operator in the Container Operations team. Her role is to keep cargo moving efficiently through the Port, from loading and unloading containers to ensuring smooth vessel turnaround.

Beyond her operational expertise, Paige brings creativity to the workplace, where she recently helped transform the company gym with a striking mural featuring iconic athletes: Mike Tyson, Michael B. Jordan, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Jonah Lomu.

Inspired by her lifelong passion for art, where she was encouraged by her Nana as a child, Paige sees art as a way to express herself.

What are three words to describe you?

☺ Determined, optimistic and go-getter.

What do you enjoy most about working for South Port?

☺ There's so much to enjoy, but operating machinery is definitely at the top of the list for me. It's exciting and feels almost like playing a game, except the stakes are real and precision matters. Every time I'm in the driver's seat I feel a sense of control and accomplishment.

After moving to Bluff, I love waking up to beautiful sunrises and feel it's a privilege to be working by the ocean, a setting that makes my job even more rewarding.

What do you view as your greatest work achievement?

☺ Operating on MSC vessels has been a huge milestone for me. This job requires a high level of skill and confidence, and being trusted to

handle that responsibility is something I'm really proud of. It shows how far I have come since starting back in April 2024.

What's the most difficult part of your job?

☺ The role can be fast paced, dynamic and engaging especially during continuous container vessel exchanges. The work can be both physically and mentally demanding, so I've learned to focus and built resilience so I can maintain a high level of performance throughout these busy times.

What's the best part about working at the Port?

☺ For me, it's the teamwork. There's a real sense of pride when our small team accomplishes big tasks together. We work hard, support each other, and at the end of the day we know we've achieved something important. That feeling of collective success is unbeatable.

What hobbies do you have outside of work?

☺ Art is my biggest passion outside of work. I've completed several projects that I'm really proud of including a mural in the wellness space called The Growth Project. Creating large-scale pieces gives me a sense of accomplishment and allows me to express myself in a completely different way from my day job.

Looking ahead, I'd love to create another mural for the company, something that inspires women, ideally in the gym. My ultimate goal is to paint a mural on a large wall somewhere at South Port, turning a blank space into something vibrant and motivational.



Paige with the mural featuring iconic athletes she created in the South Port gym.

CRUISE CONFERENCE

The New Zealand Cruise Association (NZCA) annual conference was held in Napier during August with over 200 attendees from a range of businesses that are associated with the cruise industry, including leaders from many cruise lines and ports across New Zealand.

The South Port contingency consisted of Geoff Finnerty, Port General Manager, Jamie May, Commercial Manager, and Katie Eaton, Marine Operations Supervisor.

This was the first year Katie attended and she made the most of the opportunity arriving the day prior to the conference to spend time engaging with people in similar roles, with open discussions around what works well, and what doesn't.

"It's interesting to find out how others work through similar challenges," said Katie.

"It was also really nice to be able to meet face to face with people I have dealt with for years," she said.

South Port has been involved with the cruise industry providing pilotage services since cruise ships started going to Fiordland.

The numbers of cruise ships heading to Bluff has not changed significantly this year, with the Port continuing to be used as a base for Heritage Expeditions that offer small-ship expedition cruises travelling the Southern Ocean.

"Conferences such as these are a good opportunity to stay connected with the cruise industry, the cruise companies, ports, and to learn what's happening in the industry," said Geoff.

"We, as a port, are constantly working with the cruise ship industry and partners to ensure they know Bluff is a viable option," he said.

You can find the cruise ships heading to Bluff for the upcoming season on our website: southport.co.nz/shipping.



One of the many discussion panels held at the NZCA conference.

PROTESTORS ON PORT



The 'pretend protestors' negotiate a deal with Police and Port Security as part of the live exercise.

The South Port Security Team conducted their annual Maritime Security (MARSEC) live exercise in October, based on the scenario: "Maritime New Zealand has issued a security advisory following the receipt of credible intelligence indicating a planned protest event targeting port infrastructure. While the specific facility remains unidentified, the threat is believed to involve maritime assets located in the lower South Island."

With the assistance of South Port staff playing the role of protestors objecting to the impending arrival of a shipment of wind turbine equipment, the small group of demonstrators braved the blustery conditions to help test and validate South Port's security operations under MARSEC Level 2 conditions.

In addition to the protestors being controlled, the Port had enhanced access control measures, more detailed vehicle searches, and increased roving security patrols across the Island Harbour.

"These live exercises are an important part of evaluating South Port's capability to operate effectively under MARSEC Level 2 conditions," said Mark Egginton, Port Facility Security Officer.

This also provided an opportunity to check our staff's knowledge and understanding of roles and responsibilities under MARSEC Level 2, help us to identify opportunities for training, and test the adequacy of facilities and equipment.

Other exercises included a staged bomb threat phone call, and a vehicle breaching the barrier at the Gatehouse, making its way across the Port to join the demonstrators.

Also in attendance were personnel from First Security, Maritime NZ Security, Police, and NZ Customs providing an opportunity to assess the level of coordination and cooperation between South Port and relevant Government agencies during MARSEC Level 2 operations.

"Despite the adverse weather significantly impacting the exercise, with persistent rain, drizzle, and wind (ranging from 30 knots to over 50 knots), it was a very successful day," said Mark.



DREDGING COMPLETED AT TOWN WHARF

The fuel that is offloaded at Town Wharf supplies communities from Bluff and Invercargill through to the Wakatipu Basin and as far north as Dunedin.

To increase the capacity and efficiency for the vessels that call at the Petroleum Berth, we needed to deepen the berth pocket.

This was carried out in two phases. Phase 1 involved deepening it by 0.75 metres to provide the fuel company with access to a greater draft. Phase 2 followed with an additional 0.75 metres of deepening, resulting in a total increase of 1.5 metres.

“Although the volume of material to be removed was relatively small, the area’s geological conditions added complexity to the dredging process”, said Frank O’Boyle, Infrastructure and Environmental Manager.

The material consisted of granite rock which required a drill-and-blast operation prior to mechanical dredging with a backhoe dredge. Given the limited volume, the drilling was carried out by divers rather than deploying a barge-mounted drilling rig.

Ocean & Coastal Engineering Ltd (OCEL) carried out the blast design, Bay Underwater services handled the drilling and Johnson Brothers Limited performed the dredging.

Comprehensive safety and environmental protocols were implemented as an integral part of the project, including limited access to Town Wharf, a 100-metre exclusion zone for all vessels, use of Marine radio channels to deliver clear instructions and updates to harbour users, overseen by South Port pilot vessel and harbour master, and Marine Mammal Observers were onshore and offshore during the operation.

“We extend our sincere thanks to the Bluff community for their support throughout the dredging campaign, especially for their commitment to following the safety and environmental protocols established for the project,” said Frank.



Phase 1: The initial rock blast.



Phase 2: Removal of the excess material.

PORT STREET’S GET NAMES

As part of our continuous improvement process we encourage submissions of ‘opportunities for improvement’ (OFI) from staff on Port. These are reviewed by the OFI Committee quarterly and those that are thought to have benefit to the efficiency of the Port are actioned.

Naming of the roads on the Island Harbour, is one that had been raised previously and which the Committee felt would be beneficial particularly for new employees.

The team got together and came up with the following 6 street names: Port Main Street, Oyster Ave, Woodchip Lane, Dairy Lane, Bulk Lane, Syncro Ave and with the help of the infrastructure team the signs were put in place, and can even be found on google maps.



The team that made it happen; from left, John Breet, Monique Ackerman, Mark Egginton, Jenny Phillips, Scott Faithfull.



MOVEMBER - CHANGING THE FACE OF MEN'S HEALTH

With a focus on Men's Health for the month of November, instead of the traditional 'grow a mo', the admin team came up with the concept: 'butties & burgers, with buddies' because stopping to enjoy something to eat together provides a great opportunity to check in on your mates.

The team then organised, cooked, and delivered bacon and beef patties, along with bread and all the accompaniments needed to assemble one very good buttie and burger, to all departments on Port!

As well as raising awareness, they combined this with a raffle to raise over \$700 for Movember NZ that use funds raised for game-changing men's health projects, and to take on mental health, suicide, prostate cancer, and testicular cancer.

Thank you to **Prime Range Meats**, **Fern Energy** and the **Bluff 4 Square** for their generosity in donating prizes so we were able to achieve this.

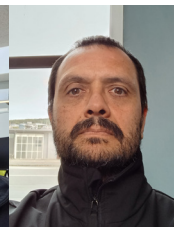
We also had a few (on and off the Port) who took part in the mo growing part of Movember, check out their before and after photos.

BEFORE



Eduardo Queluz
Environmental Technician

AFTER



BEFORE



Alastair McKerchar (Shorty)
IFC Supervisor

AFTER



BEFORE

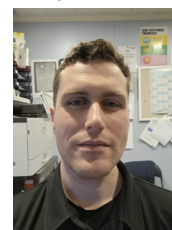


Hayden Mikkelsen
Container Operations Manager

AFTER



BEFORE



Will Thomson
Bluff 4 Square Store Manager

AFTER



PERSON OVERBOARD AND RECOVERY TRAINING

Marine Person Overboard and Water Recovery training took place at Splash Palace in Invercargill earlier this year.

This involved the entire marine department including tug and pilot launch crew, pilots and marine coordinators, who were joined by the Bluff Coastguard and Southern Ocean Safety – equipment and servicing providers.

This exercise is conducted annually to give practical experience with life preserving equipment and recovering a person from the water to a life raft or other vessel.

"Conducting realistic drill exercises for recovering persons from the water are essential to ensure the marine department are prepared for any situation that may occur," said Sam Moore, Marine Operations Manager.

Some of the drills and exercises undertaken were – entering water from height, activating life jackets, swimming and entering life rafts, survival techniques (both in water, and using the equipment on a life raft) and recovering persons from the water.

During the drills those involved experienced firsthand the use of life rafts, life buoys, inflatable life jackets and other lifesaving equipment.

"It is imperative that our staff are all trained and familiar with the use of all Person Overboard equipment, and for some it was the first time they had undertaken training such as this," said Sam.

"Thanks to the involvement of Bluff Coastguard and Southern Ocean Safety the day was a great success with plenty of learning and up-skilling for our team," he said.



The Marine team during the life raft drill attempting to recover persons in the water.



Learning how to right a life raft if it has capsized.



UPDATE ON OUR BOARD DIRECTORS

In accordance with NZX regulations, following their 3-year term serving on the Board, Mr John Schol and Mrs Clare Kearney retire this year by rotation. Mr Schol being eligible was re-elected at the ASM held in October.

Mrs Clare Kearney elected to retire after serving 3 terms (9 years), on the Board.

“Clare has been an excellent contributor to the Company since her appointment to the Board in 2016, especially in her role as Chair of the Health and Safety panel which she has held since 2021. Clare’s passion and advocacy for both staff, the local community and the environment will be missed on the Board,” said Philip Cory-Wright, Chair.

Following the application and interview process, the Board nominated Mr Derek Nind to join them as an Independent Director, this was voted on and approved at the ASM.

Derek has extensive port knowledge having previously held senior commercial roles across three New Zealand ports over the last 30 years.

He is currently the Managing Director of 360 Logistics Group, and was previously the CEO of CentrePort where he was instrumental in leading the business through the devastating impacts of the Kaikoura Earthquake, recovery and regeneration.

Derek has previously held several governance roles in the logistics and property sectors.

Very recently, Michelle Henderson also resigned her position on the Board, effective 27 January 2026, to take up the role of General Manager at Tiwai.

“Michelle has brought a wealth of engineering and broad business understanding to the Board room from her executive career at Rio Tinto and PowerNet and we wish her all the very best for the future”, said Philip Cory-Wright.



Departing Director Clare Kearney.



Incoming Director Derek Nind.



COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP

Applications are **now open** for a scholarship for eligible students and individuals who have resided in the Bluff Ward for three or more years who plan to undertake apprenticeship training, tertiary or university education in 2026.



Further details and application forms are available upon request from Hollie Cooper:
Email: hcooper@southport.co.nz Phone: 03 212 6050

Applications close MONDAY, 5 JANUARY 2026

Note: Late applications will not be considered.



PORT FUNDRAISERS

Spring may have brought us some very unpredictable weather, but it also brought us daffodils.

The Port collection for the annual Cancer Society Daffodil Day fundraiser saw us raise just under \$700!



Our fundraising dynamo's (from left) Monique Ackerman and Penny Hostetler.

FOOD TRUCKS COME TO PORT

Over the last few months we have been trialling having food trucks come to Port at lunchtime. There has been plenty of variety and though there were some testing conditions for them to travel in, they have been well received by staff.



Our first day of having food trucks on Port.



FAMILY FUN DAY OUT with Activities, Food Stalls and Music
at the Bluff Oyster Festival Site (Barrow Street, Bluff),
and 2-hour interactive port tours on the Island Harbour!

SUNDAY | 8 MARCH 2026

**FREE
ENTRY**

Tickets available closer to the date
@ www.eventbrite.co.nz



FURRY VISITORS TO THE ISLAND HARBOUR

These visitors to Port attract quite a bit of interest! For the previous few years, a fur seal pup has set up residence near the Syncrolift, enjoying relaxing time on the rocks during low tide.

With the increase in fish life in this area, this is a good place for a young fur seal to forage and grow with plenty of 'spotties' readily available.

Fur seals mating season ensures the pups are born during the warm summer months of the following year, and these sociable animals return to the same area for the breeding season.

"About this time every year we spot a young pup, they get bigger and then disappear," said Rob Dixon, Syncrolift Coordinator.

"Though they don't seem too concerned about us, they don't come too close either, they seem to like sticking pretty close to the water," he said.

Rob has seen an increase in the number of animals in the vicinity – from octopus to ducklings, and especially noted an increase in marine life, spotting Kahawai which haven't been seen for a few years.



NEW WAVE MONITORING BUOY DEPLOYED

September saw the deployment of a new wave monitoring buoy placed at Southern Anchor Ridge (The Spit).

The Datawell wave buoy is a new marine asset that will provide the South Port Marine Department valuable real-time information on sea conditions prior to shipping movements.

The wave buoy information will eventually be available on the South Port website for other boat users wanting to check sea conditions.

"This will be a great boating safety tool for the wider public," said Sam Moore, Marine Operations Manager.

The yellow monitoring buoy is moored to 2 surface floats and anchored to the seafloor.

All harbour users are asked to proceed with caution in this area and maintain a 100m exclusion zone as the buoy will shift with tides and swell.

