

# PORT I3

ISSUE: 3



**PORT OTAGO**

## **FEBRUARY '25 STAKEHOLDER NEWSLETTER**

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Port Chalmers 9023  
New Zealand

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## **Celebrating 150 years**

On Labour Day Monday, we opened the gates to the owners of our port – the people of Otago and Southland – and celebrated 150 years in our community.

More than 2000 people attended and \$15,000 was raised. In the spirit of the Open Day, Port Otago boosted the amount, so a rounded-off \$2500 donation was made to each of our seven local organisations: Port Chalmers

Maritime Museum, Dunedin Marine SAR Water Rescue, Iona Church, Koputai Trust, Otago Navy Cadets, Royal Albatross Centre and Terra Nova Sea Scouts. We also topped up the contribution to the three larger organisations – Dunedin Marine SAR Water Rescue, Royal Albatross Centre and Port Chalmers Maritime Museum – so each also received an additional \$10,000.

*See Photo Essay page 9.*



*The most dramatic part of our Open Day was the arrival of the Otago Southland Rescue Helicopter to “save” two Dunedin Marine Search and Rescue Water Rescue team members.*



## Our strategy: To be always open

During 2024, the Board and Leadership Team reviewed the company's strategy to consider how our customers will need to be supported into the future.

Port Otago Chief Executive Kevin Winders says the material issues engagement process – a core aspect of Integrated Reporting – provided important insight from stakeholders, which directly shaped our thinking about where we need to focus. “Based on that insight and the support of our shareholder, the Otago Regional Council, we have developed our roadmap for the future: To be New Zealand's always open port.

“We will leverage our existing infrastructure to be always open, underpinned by our natural harbour and our robust harbour defences and in-house dredging capabilities. We will be prepared and respond to extreme weather events, so we are first to be always open for our customers and shipping partners. At the same time, we will adapt and be always open to growth opportunities, so long as they deliver sustainable value

for our customers and stakeholders. We are already investing in additional buffer capability within the supply chain, to be always open so our customers can continue operating.”

Kevin says the “always open” strategy also applies to the board and leadership mindset. “We are always open to the use of new technology. We are increasingly using data to guide day-to-day decisions, as a first step towards future decision-making models. We continue to optimise our operational performance, doing so more safely, with the same resources.

“Reducing our climate-related risks – both at port and across our property portfolio – is important to remove volatility and deliver reliable returns. Investment in reducing our carbon footprint needs to be balanced with the short-, medium- and long-term needs of the business, versus the needs of our shareholder and stakeholders. Our challenge is to balance these competing needs.”

## Multi-million dollar railpad project begins

A \$13 million project to replace our Port Chalmers Container Terminal railpad has begun.

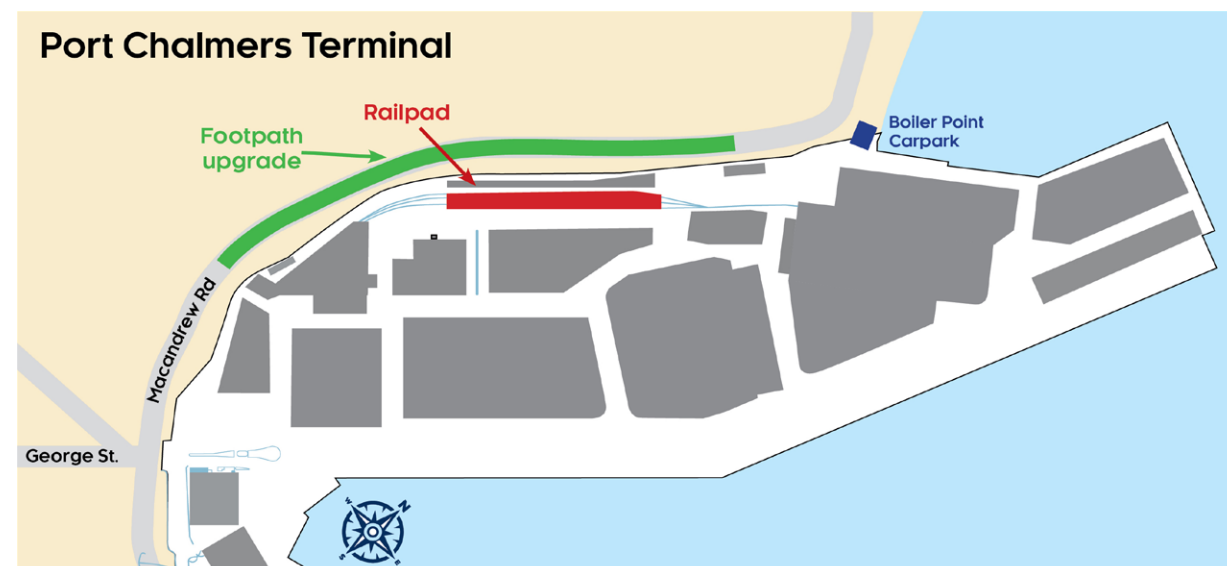
The railpad refers to the area on our terminal where shipping containers are removed directly off the train, via straddle carriers.

Port Otago Civil Engineer and project manager Andy Pullar says the existing concrete railpad (230 by 25 metres) is 50 years old and has reached the end of its life. “A new pad, covering a larger footprint of 250 by 25 metres, will be installed over the next five months. In addition to being a necessary capital investment, the

larger pad will also improve operations and safety.”

Because the current railpad is situated in the most logical position within the terminal, a temporary pad has been established for the duration of the project. “In this way, the replacement railpad remains in the optimal spot.”

The project is being carried out by specialist rail contractor Martinus, assisted by local subcontractor SouthRoads. It is scheduled to be complete by mid June and will include widening a very narrow section of footpath that runs along Macandrew Road.



## Partnering to build \$36m dredge



Port Otago and Napier Port have jointly commissioned the build of a TSHD-1000 trailing suction hopper dredge, which will be shared between the two ports via a Limited Partnership Agreement.

Demonstrating that our “always open” strategy is already being activated, Port Otago and Napier Port announced a joint venture in December – to build and purchase a \$36 million state-of-the-art trailing suction hopper dredge from Dutch shipbuilder Damen Shipyards.

The partnership builds on a long-standing collaborative relationship between the two ports and will see formation of a new dredging company, via a Limited Partnership Agreement.

Given New Zealand's relatively small size, this investment is a financially astute approach to ensuring the country's port infrastructure is well placed to meet the future demands of global shipping. From a safety and resilience perspective, it protects the

two ports' shipping channels and harbour access for future generations.

Port Otago will manage and operate the dredge, leveraging its 150 years of expertise in dredging operations. Port Otago Chief Executive Kevin Winders emphasised the broader benefits. “This collaboration between two like-minded ports strengthens New Zealand's maritime infrastructure. Shared ownership of the TSHD-1000 enhances operations at both ports and reduces duplication of investment within the sector.”

He says the acquisition aligns with both ports' commitments to sustainability and environmental stewardship. “The new Damen TSHD-1000 is fitted with industry-leading dredging and monitoring systems. Replacing our 40-year-old New Era

suction hopper dredge with such advanced technology will improve operational efficiency, reduce our carbon footprint, and operate with a lighter touch on nature.”

The dredge is expected to be operational by late 2026.

### TSHD-1000 SPECS:

- Trailing suction hopper dredge (TSHD)
- Capacity: 1000m<sup>3</sup>
- Length: 59 metres
- Beam: 12 metres
- Depth at mid length point: 4.5 metres
- Deadweight: 1400 tonnes
- Speed: approx 10 knots
- Pump performance: approx 2000m<sup>3</sup>/hour

## Inland port update

Port Otago's plans to develop an inland freight hub in Mosgiel, called Southern Link, are progressing.

The proposal is part of a wider discussion and consenting process around Dunedin's future development strategy.

For the past two years, Port Otago and Dynes Transport have been collaborating to create the road- and rail-enabled hub, where containers can be stored, repaired, packed, devanned and then railed to Port Chalmers or Dunedin Bulk Port.

This will optimise our wharf-side capacity by providing much-needed buffer space and supports future growth.

From a community safety and emissions perspective it would result in 3500 fewer trucks using State Highway 88 (Dunedin to Port Chalmers) annually.

We expect to begin construction in 2026. To bridge the gap, a 1000-container capacity depot has been established at Ravensbourne. This is already reducing container congestion on our Port Chalmers working terminal.





## More artefacts for Boiler Point walkway

The Boiler Point walkway is quietly morphing into an intriguing sculpture and historical artefacts walk.

The latest addition to join Magnus Sinclair’s “The Sentinels” and the two 1800s coastal defence guns is a second Magnus Sinclair work.

### Magnus Sinclair weather vane

It’s an extraordinary weather vane that sat for many years in front of Port Otago’s old glasshouse admin building. The building’s demolition meant the weather vane was removed, providing an opportunity for some much-needed TLC. Its restoration was undertaken by an ex marine engineering artificer, Murray “Muzz”, who also knew Magnus during his lifetime.

Muzz spent about 40 hours on the restoration. “The vessel is a generic steam/sail ship, but what is special is the placement of two pieces of forged glass in the globe below the ship. They represent Port Chalmers and London, and they are linked by a line that follows the route The Dunedin took on its voyage to the UK with our first shipment of frozen meat.”

### Coastal defence guns

In September, after more than a century, two coastal defence guns were returned to the Otago Harbour, albeit 5 nautical miles (9km) inland from their original spot at Tairaroa Head. They are now positioned at the far-end corner of the Boiler Point walkway.

The two guns were installed at Fort Tairaroa in the late 1800s to defend the harbour from a potential Russian

attack. They remained in place until 1911 and were then displayed in Dunedin’s Queens Gardens. In 1936, the two guns were dismantled and their barrels buried in the gardens. They were exhumed in 2006 for restoration and volunteers have worked away - on and off - behind the scenes for the past 18 years.

One of those volunteers was the late Harold Wood, who championed for completion of the guns’ restoration and coaxed our Engineering team into helping. Harold died eight months ago, but we can still hear him saying “they are guns, not canons!”, as we would inadvertently get it wrong.

The larger gun is a 7-inch (barrel diameter) rifled muzzle-loading gun. It is made of cast iron and weighs 7.0 tonnes.

The smaller gun is also a rifled muzzle-loading gun - a 64-pounder. It weighs in at 3.5 tonnes.

## NEW RADIOS FOR SAR WATER RESCUE

Supporting the Dunedin Marine Search and Rescue Water Rescue is one of our key sponsorships.

The team of highly-skilled individuals put significant hours into their training, so they can act fearlessly when our community needs them.

Our latest support is particularly practical, in the form of four new marine radios and a Gecko headset. (The headset connects to a Gecko helmet, so the helicopter pilot has direct comms with the Water Rescue swimmers.)

Water Rescue came to us in the wake of a fishing boat incident at Tairaroa Head in June last year. They had used existing, older radios and – in the heat of a full-on emergency – the radios were barely up to the job.

Team Leader Cam Third: “All the other emergency agencies on the scene were operating on a shared channel that our old standard marine radios didn’t have. We weren’t able to easily communicate with them, and our on-shore liaison person couldn’t talk directly with the rescue swimmers.”

That won’t be a problem in the future.



Two historic guns have been installed along the Boiler Point Walkway, more than 100 years after they were removed from Tairaroa Head.



## Harbour surveying moves in-house



Our new Hydrographical Survey team of Surveyor Peng Ong (right) and survey boat skipper Allan Sutherland.

Port Otago has brought its hydrographic surveying in-house and employed experienced surveyor Peng Ong to lead the work.

Peng had worked with our Marine and Infrastructure team in 2017 as the contracted Site Engineer for the Multipurpose Wharf extension and, more recently, on the Cross Wharf rebuild.

Peng originally trained as a land surveyor and became involved in hydrographic surveying for oil and gas 17 years ago. He spent many years at sea, working off the coasts of West Africa and Australia, and in the South China and North Seas. Peng had wanted to live in New Zealand since he was a small child and, in 2012, he fulfilled his dream.

A brand new survey boat – Mātai Awa (a Sentor 650 with twin 90hp outboards) – has been fitted out with

the latest in surveying equipment and is now fully operational.

Peng: “The channel is the lifeline for our port operations. So we need to continually monitor the ever-changing seabed of the channel, basins and berths. We’ll be working closely with dredging crew – our job is to make their job easier. It’s about providing them with up-to-date information, so they can work more effectively.”

Peng is joined in the survey boat by skipper Allan Sutherland, who was hydrographic surveyor for Port Otago from 1986 to 2014. He moved up the road to PrimePort in 2014 and recently retired – albeit for only four months – before being persuaded back south to skipper the Mātai Awa.

## NAU MAI MĀTAI AWA

Mihimihi to Te Rūnaka o Ōtākou for gifting the perfect name for our new survey boat: Mātai Awa. Mātai means to survey, study, observe. Awa is a river, stream, creek and references the Ōtākou Harbour. Te Rūnaka Māori language expert Tumai Cassidy gifted the name and Upoko Edward Ellison was delighted when he heard it. “There was a vessel that supplied lighthouses up and down the New Zealand coast and islands in the ‘20s and ‘30s.

It was named the Mātai and my father worked on it. It was one of his favourite vessels.”







## Building climate adaptation into business

As part of integrating climate change adaptation into our day-to-day business, our asset management plan has been centralised to provide a company-wide overview of asset risk points and timeframes for the replacement of high-cost capital assets.

All physical risks identified in a recent risk assessment overview have been reviewed to establish adaptation plans. The key adaptation plan actions are now being incorporated into the asset management plan, strategic plan and risk register. Monitoring methods and triggers for action were also included.

The asset management plan includes an asset hierarchy – a systematic list of all the company’s assets that takes into account interactions and interdependence between assets.

Sustainability Manager Carolyn Bennett says Port Otago has followed New Zealand’s port sector and has begun using software company BraveGen for emissions data collection and reporting. “The software allows scrutiny of all aspects of the business, so we can track carbon reduction efforts by measuring emissions intensity data.

“The asset hierarchy has been created in BraveGen, so we can readily track carbon intensity by capturing and reporting on fuel consumption and activity data for our major emitting assets. These are our large marine plant, such as pilot vessels, dredges and tugs, and the container terminal’s large mobile plant, such as straddle carriers and side loaders.”

## Port Otago welcomes Northern Star service

In November, Port Otago welcomed the Maersk Innoshima – the first vessel to berth in Port Chalmers as part of the new Northern Star service.

The weekly service operates a rotation of: Shanghai – Hong Kong – Brisbane – Auckland – Nelson – Timaru – Port Chalmers – Napier – Tauranga. Eight vessels will service the route.

Port Otago GM Customer Craig Usher says the service provides a welcome addition to the company’s container business. “Maersk made a business decision to optimise its network, in order to provide the lowest-cost supply chain. To pick up the Northern Star service is great, as it offers our exporters another shipping option – one that’s direct to China and Hong Kong, with a shorter transit time to market.”

The eight Northern Star vessels are 2500-3000TEU (20-foot Equivalent Unit containers) and each has a high number of reefer plugs, making them ideal for our export-heavy region, where a large proportion of exports are chilled/frozen product.



## Monte Lascar silenced

Our community’s patience was rewarded with Maersk’s swift action and \$1m-plus investment to silence the Monte Lascar. She is a relatively modern ship that is safe and efficient for our Operations team to work, so it was a great outcome. Maersk went a step further and it was the Monte Lascar that they generously made available for ship tours during our October Port Open Day – the vessel’s first visit, post silencer installation. See Photo Essay page 9.



## Iona Church’s invisible addition

The beauty of this community sponsorship is that it’s essentially invisible.

Port Chalmers’ Iona Church is a Class 1 Historic Places Trust building and a much loved and admired building within our community. Over many years, countless community hours and millions of dollars have gone into renovating and preserving this iconic building. The most recent round of work required the organ be relocated, which triggered a resource consent and the requirement for a more substantial balustrade around the upper gallery. The quote for the transparent balustrade was significant – and not budgeted for.

Given how valued this church is by our community and its popularity with cruise passengers, Port Otago happily helped with the balustrade’s cost.



Historic Iona Church Restoration Trust trustee Pete Hodgson and Trust treasurer Liz McLennan pictured in front of the new, barely-visible balustrade.

## Visitors flocking to museum



The Pioneer Room includes a collection of domestic inventions that make life easier. It generates many moments of reminiscence for visitors.

Since re-opening on 19 October, the Port Chalmers Maritime Museum has welcomed more than 8000 people through its doors. The single busiest day was 482 visitors on 19 November, when the Pacific Adventure was in port.

Shirley Jack is President of the Port Chalmers Historical Society, which operates the museum. She says overall visitor numbers are up about 70% since the

refurbishment, and non-cruise-ship days are much busier than previously.

### Most popular displays

Comments regularly heard from within the Pioneer Room are: “My mother had one of those” or “We’ve got one just like that in the shed”.

The Wall of Ships is a favourite, with the only disappointment being that some of the models are too high on the wall to be seen easily. (This will be addressed by a touch screen monitor, which is being installed.)

The public viewing gallery on the first floor of the Port Otago Annex is also a popular distraction for visitors on their way in or out of the museum.

### Sterling job of volunteers

Shirley says the museum is being well supported by a wonderful pool of volunteers, experienced and new. “This museum is the work of its volunteers over many years, not just the present. It’s their diligence in collecting, cataloguing and maintaining that makes the museum special. Our new volunteers are responsive to that and keen to continue the tradition. They take their service ethic seriously.”





## Customer profile: Daiken New Zealand

Daiken New Zealand and Daiken Southland manufacture premium MDF (medium density fibreboard) and are highly regarded internationally for their product range's density and colour uniformity.

Daiken Southland is based just south of Mataura, on State Highway 1. It employs 125 staff and operates year-round, 24 hours a day.

The southern plant specialises in manufacturing a full range of MDF, made from light-coloured plantation radiata pine.

Both Daiken New Zealand and Daiken Southland are owned by Daiken Group, a leading building materials manufacturer in Japan. We talk to Tristan Dawson, Sales and Distribution Group Manager for Daiken in New Zealand.

### Q: Describe your customer?

A: MDF is used mainly for building material applications (doors, wall panels, mouldings, etc), furniture, and cabinets (kitchens and bathrooms). Demand is primarily driven by residential and commercial construction.

Daiken's customers fall into two broad categories: end-users and distributors.

End-users rely heavily on tailor-made products that are fit for purpose for specific applications. For example, a door manufacturer that produces fire-rated doors requires a very specific MDF that will withstand burn-testing protocols.

Distributors generally carry a wide range of MDF products to meet market demand.

### Q: What is your customer looking for in your product?

A: MDF's key attribute is its homogenous nature. Unlike timber, there are no imperfections to deal with during added-value processes such as painting and overlaying with decorative finishes. This allows users to fully utilise each MDF panel in their manufacturing process, without risk of defects being present in their finished products.

### Q: What do they value about Daiken products, ahead of the competition?

A: Daiken's MDF is sold under the brand "Customwood". This is the original MDF brand in New Zealand and highly valued

overseas, particularly in Japan.

Customwood is manufactured using radiata pine logs and chips. Radiata is light in colour and allows end users to reduce the amount of paint applied to panels or to use thinner veneers, ultimately saving unnecessary production costs.

### Q: As a business, how are things going in the period that is now beyond the covid recovery?

A: The post-covid period has been challenging at times, due to volatility across the supply chain. I'm sure many exporters can identify with the difficulties faced in recent years with the supply of input goods, highly variable shipping schedules, unstable weather, geopolitical events and ever-increasing cost structures.

Daiken has settled into the new normal, but regularly faces challenges presented by the capricious nature of the domestic and export business environment.

### Q: Plans for the next 12 months?

A: Daiken Southland will continue to strive for increases to production capacity from our MDF mill. To remain globally competitive, it's important our production capacity matches that of new mills being constructed across the Asia-Pacific region.

Target export markets traditionally include Japan, Asia and North America. Daiken has an increasing focus in the North American market. We are increasing our presence in this market, not only with exports from New Zealand, but also via acquisitions of production facilities in the wood industry.

### Q: How long have you been working with Port Otago?

A: The Daiken Southland mill has a 20-plus year relationship with Port Otago. This relationship has been important in managing our growing export volumes. The Daiken mill operates 24/7, 12 months of the year. It's vital our product is managed smoothly and without extended interruption to supply-chain flows.

### Q: What services do you use at Port Otago?

A: Warehousing and container loading

services.

### Q: What do you care about, when it comes to a port service?

A: We prioritise efficiency, reliability, and flexibility. The timeliness of product unloading and loading, as well as the condition of our goods upon arrival or departure, are essential. Additionally, having good communication and clear documentation is important to avoid any misunderstandings.

### Q: What has been your experience of using Port Otago?

A: Overall, positive. Operations are generally smooth, with good coordination between the port and our team. There are minimal delays, with staff being professional and knowledgeable, helping keep operations running efficiently.

### Q: What do you believe are the strengths of Port Otago?

A: Its excellent location, which facilitates easy access for shipping, and the advanced infrastructure that supports efficient loading and unloading of cargo. The team is responsive and provides reliable service, which is crucial for our operations.

### Q: Any other comments?

A: The collaboration between Port Otago and other service providers in the logistics chain has been a key factor in ensuring smooth operations. The seamless coordination between the port, its warehousing services and transport providers significantly reduces the risk of delays and ensures our shipments are handled efficiently at each stage.

We hope this synergy continues to grow, especially as we face increasing demand and complexity in the global supply chain. A continued focus on collaboration and streamlined processes will be crucial for our operations and meeting our customers' expectations.

## PHOTO ESSAY: OPEN DAY CELEBRATIONS

Below are our favourite photos from the very successful Port Otago Open Day, held on Labour Day Monday. It was a super day, with smiles all round.



The tug tours and rides were ever popular and contributed to the fundraising element of the day, with a total of \$15,000 raised through ticket sales and add-on rides. All proceeds were distributed into our community.



Any parent will tell you that face painting is a winner every time. It was no different at our Open Day, where the queue was never shorter than 10 metres all day long.



Sitting aboard the forklift was another source of joy for children. It was less joyful for our team members inside and nearby the forklift, as the Warehouse team cheekily left the horn enabled...!



A big shout out to Maersk for generously allowing us access to the Monte Lascar for the Open Day. It was a rare opportunity for our community to board a container vessel, and a busy tour from the moment the gates opened, until they closed.



Marine Pilot Sumanth cheerfully ferried life jackets between the tug rides and check-in desk throughout the day.





## Insights from our Board Intern

Kate Faulks recently finished her two-year internship with the Port Otago Board. She reflects on what she learned around the board table and how the experience shaped her philosophy as a director. [Kate was elected to the Ravensdown Board in September 2024.]

When I first embarked on the internship, I had specific expectations about the Board's focus and function. However, my time here has revealed a more complex and rewarding reality than I initially anticipated.

### Expectations vs. reality

My greatest learning came from discussions that went beyond the detail, focusing on the rationale behind long-term decision-making. Whether it involved investing in or divesting from properties, challenges around the port's large-scale infrastructure with regional volumes or how the business strikes the balance between sustainability objectives and operational and capital realities.

Port Otago is committed to its "straight bat" approach and facing discomfort to drive progress. The strategy shows fluid rigidity – structured yet agile enough to adapt to changing conditions.

I had a unique opportunity to observe the effects of board succession in real-time. The transition began with Tim Gibson replacing Paul Rea as Chair, followed by Tom Campbell's retirement, and the appointments of Anne McLeod and Rick Herd. This experience underscored the significance of effective board succession and continuity. It's been encouraging to witness subtle changes, all while the Board's overall direction and guiding principles remain intact.

A well selected board has a balanced mix of diverse skill sets, furthermore, when individuals from varied backgrounds collaborate on common challenges, it highlights the importance of diversity in achieving optimal outcomes. While I expected this dynamic, it was still compelling to observe how it evolved over two years of succession, particularly as the skills matrix of the Board changed.

### Personal insights

The nature of Port Otago business gave me an opportunity to recognise the strength of skills and attributes I bring to the table, and clearly recognise gaps I can focus on to improve the contribution I can make in future roles. The experience reaffirmed my philosophical views as a director, and what I stand for.



Upon first becoming an intern, I assumed my thoughts were trivial or that others had already considered them. However, with the supportive culture of the Board I came to realise that diverse perspectives enrich discussions, and my contributions are valid and valuable, no matter how simple they may seem.

My internship with the Port Otago Board was a transformative experience, offering invaluable insights into governance and organisational dynamics. I witnessed the complexities of board operations, the importance of strategic decision-making, and the nuances of stakeholder relationships. The Board's commitment to a proactive, transparent approach has not only fostered a cohesive culture, but has also reinforced the significance of aligning organisational objectives with shareholder interests.

Port Otago's Board plans to invite a new intern to work with the team, mid year.

## Wellness programme in full swing

In addition to ongoing free health checks, weekly fruit boxes and financial wellness workshops, Port Otago's Wellness team has also rolled out mental health literacy programme Good Yarn and free period products in bathrooms across our sites.

Good Yarn aims to increase knowledge of mental health. It provides kaimahi with the confidence to start a conversation with someone they are concerned about and guide them on where and how to get help. In-house work peers are trained to facilitate three-hour workshops of 15 to 20 people. Ten workshops have been held since the programme's launch in November 2023, with 85 participants to date.

Following a successful three-month trial, free period products were permanently rolled out across our sites. This initiative is a partnership with Dignity NZ, which works on a "buy-one, give-one" model. Port Otago has consequently supported the distribution of about 300

boxes of period products to in-need community groups around New Zealand.



Events and activities organised by the Wellness team include the ever-popular *Movember*. Eleven of our team got on board, including (from left): Ezra (Warehousing), Scott (IT), Len (Warehousing), Emily (People team), Ben (Engineering), Chris (Safety and Training) and Damon (Warehousing, Sawyers Bay).



## Cruise terminal for town wharves

Our Dunedin town wharves now have their own cruise terminal.

"The Red Shed", as it is known to Port Chalmers locals, was formerly part of the Port Chalmers Maritime Museum and needed to be relocated to accommodate the museum additions and Port Otago Annex build.

In the lead-up to the 2024/25 cruise season, the building was relocated – up the harbour on a pontoon – to T/U Wharf and re-fitted to become a cruise terminal.

What happened previously? Passengers had to stand out in all weather, while waiting for taxis or tours. Given the town wharves accommodate our higher-end vessels, this was not an ideal situation.

Port Otago Cruise Manager Carolyn Bennett says the building has been a godsend on wet days. "It was especially essential on a passenger change-over day in late January, when the rain fell heavily all afternoon."

Meanwhile, at Port Chalmers, the cruise terminal's footprint was increased for the 2024/25 cruise season. The terminal has traditionally occupied 38% of a 3800m<sup>2</sup> building, but the other occupant – our Timber team – was relocated to C Shed (a larger area, which provides more operational flexibility). As a result, the entire cruise terminal building is now dedicated to cruise activity during the season. This has allowed significant improvements to passenger transfer processes and traffic management. A purpose-built mezzanine has also been built to accommodate cruise vessel crews while in port.

The cruise season is now heading into its final six weeks. "It's been a very smooth season, with only two omissions to date\* – and all related to weather constraints elsewhere, rather than our harbour."

The last vessel for the season is the *Celebrity Edge* on 9 April.

\* 5 February 2025



The Dunedin town wharves' dedicated cruise terminal looking right at home on the T/U Wharf.

## Milford house removes pilot access risk

Port Otago now has a small pilot accommodation unit in Milford Sound, removing weather-related risk around Marine Pilot access via the road.

Our pilots are delivered to cruise vessels several kilometres out in the Tasman Sea beyond Fiordland's sounds, departing from Milford Sound township on the pilot vessel. It is therefore critical that they are safely in Milford the previous evening. Without a Fiordland-qualified pilot on board, a cruise vessel cannot enter the sounds.

Jodi Taylor managed the build project: "During the current cruise season, we had about 90 vessels scheduled to visit Fiordland. Having a base for our pilots and the pilot launch team has made a huge difference. We can now handle any last-minute weather and schedule changes, because our team is able to stay in Milford Sound, as required. Previously, it was a scramble to try and find beds in a very busy tourist location with limited facilities. This guarantees our pilots have a place to sleep, rest and eat."

Final concession to build the 90m<sup>2</sup> house was granted by the Department of Conservation in June 2023. Construction commenced in Invercargill in early 2024.

"The three-bedroom house was built as modular units, with each unit – including the kitchen and bathroom – lined and fully fitted out. The house was assembled during the build process, before being disassembled into its modules and trucked to Milford. The modules were built to a size that would allow them to fit through the Milford Tunnel."

Final assembly, including the roof structure, was finished on site.

Jodi says the per-square-metre build cost was similar to the average cost of a typical residential house. Costs associated with the remote location, e.g. transporting the modules, were on top of that.

The unit can accommodate up to six people, but will generally house only two or three people.



This small accommodation unit is minimising risk for Fiordland cruise vessel piloting, by providing a base for our Marine Pilots to overnight in Milford Sound.





## A RARE VIEW

The most recent of our vessels to undergo her five-yearly survey was the 390-tonne tug Tairaoa. The 10-year-old Tairaoa is an ASD tug, which means her main propulsion comes from two rotating azimuth units (pictured). Tairaoa is our heaviest and strongest tug, with a bollard pull of 68 tonnes. Her survey was carried out at Lyttelton's dry dock and she needed very little work. Just a good clean, some seals and anodes replaced, a standard anti-foul paint job, plus a handful of small maintenance jobs. Hardly a surprise, given how meticulously our Marine team cares for its vessels.

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