About ICHCA – International Cargo Handling Co-ordination Association

The International Cargo Handling Co-ordination Association (ICHCA) is an international, independent, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving the safety, security, sustainability, productivity and efficiency of cargo handling and goods movement by all modes and through all phases of national and international supply chains. ICHCA International's privileged non-government organisation (NGO) status enables it to represent its members, and the cargo handling industry at large best, in front of national and international agencies and regulatory bodies. Its Expert Panel provides practice advice and publications on a wide range of practical cargo handling issues. ICHCA Australia Ltd is proud to be part of the ICHCA International Ltd global network (**www.ichca.com**). To access past newsletters and other useful information go to the ICHCA Australia website at **www.ichca.com.au.**

Inside this issue

Seminar on Safe Ports

Shipping Australia and Colin Biggers & Paisley Lawyers invite you to attend a free lunchtime webinar/ seminar on Safe Ports. Hear from the experts and gain insight from different perspectives as to what constitutes a safe port.

Speakers:

- Captain Melwyn Noronha, CEO, Shipping Australia
- Myron Fernandes, Harbour Master Sydney, Port Authority of New South Wales
- Stephen Thompson, Partner, Head of Transport & Logistics, Colin Biggers & Paisley Lawyers
- Michelle Taylor, Partner, Sparke Helmore Lawyers
- Marcus John, Managing Director, TT Club

When: Thursday 26 March 2026 12:00 for a 12:30 start, concludes at 13:30

Where: Colin Biggers & Paisley Lawyers, Level 42, 2 Park Street, Sydney

Register: https://www.shippingaustralia.com.au/event/safe-ports/

Ineffective bridge resource management causes collision

Ineffective coordination and monitoring by the crew and harbour pilots on board the container ship *Maersk Shekou* contributed to its collision with the tall ship *Leeuwin II* in the Port of Fremantle, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) has found. The 333-metre, Singapore-flagged *Maersk Shekou* was being navigated into Fremantle under the direction of two harbour pilots in heavy squall conditions before dawn on 30 August 2024, an ATSB investigation final report details.

The investigation's review of audio from the ship's bridge, taken from the vessel data recorder, found the primary pilot did not provide the helmsman with a planned port 10 helm order to turn into the inner harbour, which went undetected by the rest of the bridge team. This meant that as the pilot attempted to use the main engine and 4 attached tugs to turn the ship, the helmsman attempted to maintain the ship on the previously instructed heading of 083, opposing the ship's planned turn. As a result, the *Maersk Shekou* continued towards Victoria Quay and collided with the *Leeuwin II,* which was berthed at the quay, before the stern hit the wharf edge and containers struck the roof of the WA Maritime Museum. The *Leeuwin II* was dismasted and two crew members, who had been on board and were escaping via its gangway just as the collision occurred, sustained minor injuries. The container ship sustained minor damage, including a hull breach, but its crew and the pilots were uninjured.

Chief Commissioner Angus Mitchell said the ATSB found the ship's bridge team, comprising the two pilots and the ship's crew, ineffectively implemented bridge resource management practices. Specifically, members of the bridge team did not have a shared mental model of the actions needed during the passage, and they failed to adequately monitor, or challenge, the ship's turn and position in the channel.

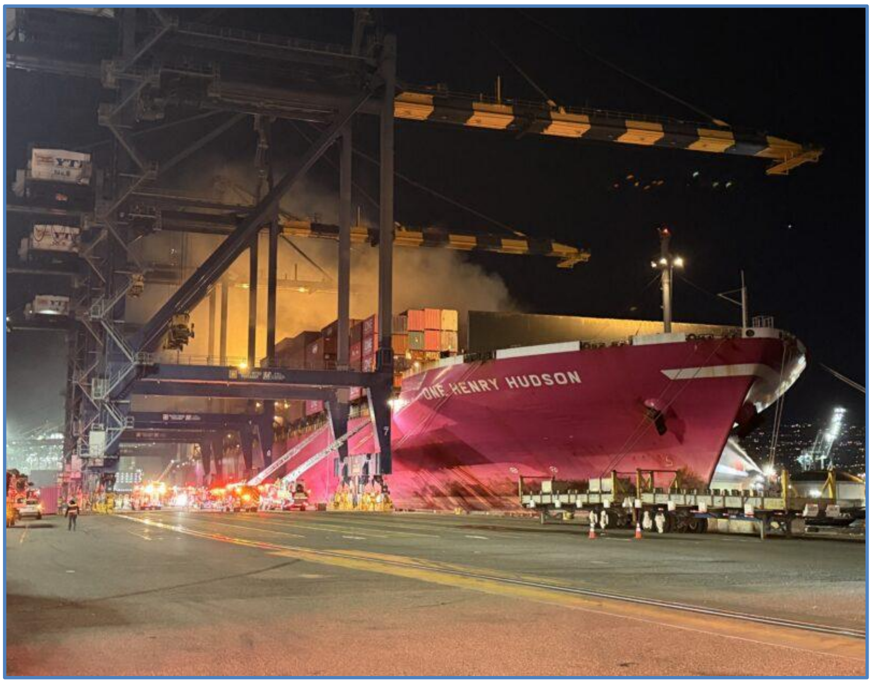
The ATSB's investigation also found the secondary pilot was distracted from monitoring responsibilities as they were engaged in a non-essential mobile phone call as the ship was transiting a critical area in the entrance channel. "This meant they were distracted from their monitoring role and did not identify that the lead pilot had not ordered a course alteration, and that the helmsman's actions were opposing the ship's planned turn," Mr Mitchell said. "This highlights the importance of minimising distractions on the bridge, especially during critical stages of a passage."

The investigation also identified that making fast the supporting tugs was delayed, resulting in the bridge team, including the pilot, being engaged with the final tug's attachment just as the ship approached the wheel over point for the inner harbour entrance channel. "This increased bridge team workload at the most critical stage of the passage." Mr Mitchell noted the ATSB also identified several risk controls established by Fremantle Ports to ensure the safe entry of large container vessels had not been adequately implemented, although these did not all directly contribute to the collision. "These included entering the inner harbour channel without all tugs being secured, prior to sunrise, and well in excess of the operational wind limits – all of which contravened documented procedures."

Both the port and the pilotage provider, Fremantle Pilots, have committed to implement a range of safety actions in response to the investigation.

Fire aboard ship at LA container terminal

The ship *ONE Henry Hudson*, an 8,212-TEU container ship built in 2008, has returned to its berth at the Yusen Terminal at the Port of Los Angeles following a multi-day firefighting operation that successfully contained a cargo fire which erupted while the vessel was moored. The incident began when fire broke out in hard-to-reach below-deck compartments while the vessel was berthed at port. All 23 crew members were safely evacuated with no injuries reported.



Source: Los Angeles Fire Department

The response drew nearly 200 Los Angeles City firefighters, supported by Long Beach Fire, the Coast Guard, Port Police, and Cal OES. A mid-ship explosion knocked out the ship's power, forcing crews to retreat and fight the blaze from the pier. After hazmat risks were identified, Unified Command ordered the vessel undocked and moved offshore in a major overnight operation. The ship was then anchored approximately one mile off Angel's Gate Lighthouse, where boundary cooling, container-by-container suppression, and stability assessments continued.

"The vessel's safe transit and return to port is a testament to the continued partnership of this Unified Command and all of the supporting agencies who have been working around the clock since the start of this incident," said US Coast Guard Captain Stacey Crecy, the response's Incident Commander. "Our top priority is continuing to ensure the safety of this operation through its completion." On Wednesday, crews assessed the vessel's stability to prepare for its transit back to port. Longshore labour crews completed lashing of the ship's cargo while the ship was at anchorage.

A safety zone remained in effect as the vessel transited back to port, with firefighting assets transiting alongside and remaining on standby. The Coast Guard and Los Angeles Port Police Hazardous Materials Team are actively monitoring air quality on the vessel and in surrounding communities. Levels remain below state and federal action levels, with no impacts detected outside the established safety zone.

All hazardous materials have been contained on the vessel, including water used in firefighting efforts. Once the vessel returns to its berth, firefighting water will be removed and transported to a facility for treatment. The salvage group DONJON-SMIT has been in temporary possession of the vessel and has flown in experts from around the world to execute marine firefighting efforts and prepare the ship for a safe transit into port.

Salvors had been focusing on cargo hold 03, now estimated to be 80% flooded from initial firefighting efforts, with no current concerns about vessel stability reported. The incident triggered temporary shutdowns at 4 of 7 container terminals and closures on State Route 47 due to smoke, though port operations have since resumed. The Coast Guard and National Transportation Safety Board are investigating the cause of the fire. General Average has now been declared by the vessel owner.

Supply chain 2026 outlook

Uncertainty was a constant across the supply chain and logistics industry globally in 2025 with economic volatility, geopolitical instability and tariffs being consistent themes which affected global trade throughout the year. While uncertainty is likely to continue into 2026, supply chain decision makers have become more adept at dealing with it and have had to become more strategic to offset the $907 billion in tariff costs as estimated by S&P Global. As the industry prepares itself for what 2026 may bring, we set out below some key areas which we anticipate will shape the supply chain industry in 2026.

Regionalisation

Globalisation as it has functioned in recent times is being rethought. After decades of chasing the cheapest global labour, companies are now looking to shift towards regionalised, self sufficient supply networks. This shift is driven not only by labour cost concerns but also general geopolitical tension, cybersecurity threats and environmental concerns. According to a 2026 outlook report from real estate logistics company Prologis, the majority of companies surveyed forecasted more localised supply chains by 2030, and more than three quarters of companies have already implemented or are actively building regional networks. "This represents a fundamental shift from cost-optimization to risk-mitigation as the primary business strategy". Supply chains are shifting away from the traditional lowest cost approach as “proximity and control outweigh traditional cost advantages”. It seems many companies will therefore sacrifice some cost efficiency for greater control, responsiveness and reduced risk in 2026.

AI and automation

AI is transitioning from a supporting role to a key part of supply chains with AI now embedded across many supply chain functions. The global warehouse automation market is projected to grow from around $29.9 billion in 2025 to $63.4 billion by 2030. The focus on AI is expanding beyond general demand forecasting towards prescriptive logistics and autonomous decision making based on live data. Hybrid models combining human oversight with AI-driven technology are becoming more common. The implementation of hybrid models allows flexibility and provides the benefits of AI where it can add value and human oversight where needed. According to the Prologis report "70% of organizations now have transformational or advanced AI implementation in supply chain operations" and as such, companies that have not adopted AI implementation or are just in the early stages "risk competitive obsolescence as AI-driven decision-making becomes the operational standard".

Workforce evaluation

As automation and AI implementation expand across the supply chain, the nature of supply chain work is evolving with more need for tech-savvy workers who can manage analytics and strategy and work alongside AI systems. Supply chains are therefore looking to shift from a labour-heavy model to one where humans collaborate with technology. Industry research indicates that supply chain roles will diversify with demand for traditional operations roles potentially declining, but demand for supply chain analysts and AI specialists increasing significantly. It will therefore be important for organisations to look at investing not only in technology, but in training and improving their existing workforces to be able to meet the demands of the new-look supply chain industry. Companies that fail to adequately upskill their workforce will risk falling behind as AI implementation increases across the industry.

2026 may well mark the beginning of a new supply chain era where supply chain is not solely about cost but instead it's about control, agility and human machine collaboration. Despite the potential challenges and uncertainty facing the industry in 2026 and beyond, we know from experience, especially over the past few years, that the supply chain and logistics industry is resilient and will adapt to the challenges. As ever, for those who are well prepared, challenges create opportunities.

This article was supplied by Owen Webb (Owen.webb@hfw.com) and Stephen Thompson (Stephen.thompson@hfw.com) of HFW, sponsors of Inside ICHCA.

Fire on board containership kills three

A recent fire aboard a containership alongside in Malaysia's Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP) killed 3 people and injured 3 others, reports Malaysia's State Fire and Rescue Department. This fire, along with an ongoing incident on another Maersk ship in the United States, again highlights the dangers of cargo fires after a series of incidents this year. The container vessel *Kyparissia* (70,461 dwt), owned and managed by Costamare and under time charter to Maersk, was alongside in PTP on Friday 7 November, when a fire was reported at midday. Initially the port's fireboats fought the blaze but were later assisted by teams from the State Fire and Rescue Department.

A spokesperson for Maersk confirmed the tragic incident, reporting that an explosion occurred aboard the vessel as cargo was being discharged. The subsequent fire was reported to have been under deck in the fifth hold of the ship, which has a capacity of 4,957 TEU. The ship is operating on a route that includes Onne, Nigeria, Cotonou, Benin, and Singapore. The vessel is registered in Malta. "At this stage, we are unable to determine the full extent of the fire's impact on the vessel and cargo aboard. We are working closely with PTP, authorities, the vessel owner, and ship manager to manage the situation and will provide updates as more information becomes available," said Maersk. Another Maersk-owned vessel, *Laust Maersk* (63,000 dwt) recently discovered smoke in one of its cargo holds. The affected containers were isolated and no crew were injured. The ship has since continued its voyage.

Box fires and the dangers from poorly packed cargoes or incorrectly identified cargo remain a major concern for the industry. The Allianz Safety & Shipping Review 2025 recorded around 250 fire and explosion incidents in 2024, a 20 % year-on-year increase and the highest total for at least a decade. In mid-August, Maersk reported a container fire aboard another one of its vessels, *Marie Maersk*, off the coast of West Africa. The firefighting efforts took more than a week, but with specialised crew and equipment sent to the ship, they were able to control the situation, and the ship was able to proceed to Malaysia. Wan Hai also recently reported that it is still working on salvage after a fire destroyed one of its vessels off India. That tragic incident caused the death of 4 crew members.

The industry is working on new tools, including the use of AI, to help identify dangerous cargoes. In a 2025 report, Insurer Allianz Commercial called container fires one of the major dangers and said mis-declared cargo is still the leading cause of fires.

TT Club and P&I Club discuss merger

The UK P&I Club and the TT Club have announced that they are engaged in discussions regarding a potential merger between the two mutual insurers. The Clubs have worked closely for many years through their common manager, Thomas Miller. At their meetings in November, the boards of both companies agreed to explore the possibility of cementing this existing relationship through a merger. The merged Club would have a unique breadth of expertise across the maritime and transport industries and bring together complementary strengths to enable an enhanced and integrated service to members and to meet the evolving needs of the industry.

The strategic visions of the UK P&I and TT Clubs are closely aligned, in each case they are focussed on providing exceptional service to members, delivering growth, efficiency and improving financial stability. Both Clubs are highly respected in their own markets and combining the two accelerates progress towards their shared strategic goals. Discussions remain at an early stage and will continue over the coming months.

TT Club is a premium member of ICHCA Australia and ICHCA International.

MAM proposes Qube Holdings buy out

The board of Qube Holdings has unanimously recommended a takeover offer from Macquarie Asset Management (MAM) that values the company at approximately $11.6 billion. In a recent ASX announcement the parties said that MAM, including on behalf of its managed funds and clients, and Qube had entered into a process and exclusivity deed via a conditional, non-binding and indicative proposal for MAM to acquire all of the shares on issue of Qube for consideration of $5.20 in cash per share by way of scheme of arrangement. The proposal price of $5.20 cash per share implies an enterprise valuation of approximately $11.6 billion.

Qube said the proposal followed an earlier unsolicited, non-binding and indicative offer at a lower value and a period of negotiation, which included the provision of limited due diligence information to facilitate an improved proposal from MAM. The proposal price will be reduced by the cash amount of any future dividends paid by Qube. The quantum of any ordinary or special dividends to be paid has not yet been determined.

After careful evaluation of the Proposal, the Board of Qube determined it appropriate to enter into a Process Deed with MAM. The Process Deed grants MAM a period of exclusive due diligence access from the date of the deed until 1 February 2026. Qube Chairman John Bevan said: “The Proposal from MAM is a reflection of the strength of Qube’s business model and our assets, and the quality of our people and culture. We look forward to continuing to engage constructively in the best interests of our shareholders.”

Qube shareholders do not need to take any action in relation to the proposal at this time. Qube has appointed UBS as financial advisor and Allens as legal advisor.

Aurizon and SCT join forces

Aurizon has developed a new customer-focused solution to help support its growing containerised freight business. A new agreement with Specialised Container Transport Logistics (SCT) will deliver Aurizon customers increased frequency and faster services on rail on the east coast of Australia. The 3-year agreement will also help mitigate the ongoing disruption for customers caused by the construction of the Cross River Rail project in Brisbane.

“Not only will this agreement provide improved planning and service execution resilience to mitigate closures associated with the Cross River Rail project, but it will also significantly enhance the service offering we can provide to our customers,” said George Lippiatt, Group Executive of Bulk and Containerised Freight at Aurizon. “On the East Coast between Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne customers will have increased services from 3 to 8 with 5 services to be operated by SCT and 3 to be operated by Aurizon.” As an outcome of this agreement, Aurizon has also separately decided to look at offering an additional weekly service on the east-west corridor from Sydney/Melbourne to Perth moving from 7 to 8 from mid-2026.

Mr Lippiatt said Aurizon currently used terminal facilities at the Brisbane Multimodal Terminal (BMT) at Port of Brisbane for loading and unloading of trains on the Melbourne to Brisbane route. “We have a strong working relationship with BMT, however unfortunately access to the terminal requires our trains to cross or intersect with key interface points of the Cross River Rail construction. Therefore, to mitigate this impact for our customers, we have entered into an agreement with SCT Logistics to use their terminal at Bromelton, south of Brisbane and outside the construction footprint of Cross River Rail. As part of this agreement, which is intended to remain in place for the duration of the Cross River Rail project, SCT will also provide a ‘hook & pull’ arrangement for our trains to and from the Bromelton terminal."

AAT managing director to retire

Australian Amalgamated Terminals (AAT) Managing Director Antony Perkins has made the decision to move on from AAT to pursue his travel goals. Over the past decade, Antony has been an invaluable and integral part of AAT’s growth and success. His leadership has contributed to key achievements, including the decommissioning and acquisition of high-capacity cranes, the expansion of Appleton Dock operations into a bulk facility, the securing of long-term clients, and active involvement in negotiating industry improvements. Antony has also championed sustainability initiatives across the company, driven new business opportunities, and most recently, led the successful acquisition of MIRRAT, now known as AAT Webb Dock West.

Pat Smtih will be taking over as managing director. Pat was AAT’s General Manager Commercial & Projects and prior to that was with Qube for 15 years, during which time he held senior commercial and operational roles. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Marketing), Master of Commerce (Prof. Accounting) and has experience in deployed logistics, port operations, road transport and mining services.

Updates from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

DCCC meeting

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Cargo Consultative Committee (DCCC) brings together DAFF and industry representatives (including ICHCA) to address biosecurity issues, such as container cleanliness, impacting trade and logistics, with the purpose of ensuring effective biosecurity regulation without unnecessary trade barriers. The latest DCCC meeting was held on 27 November 2025. If you would like more details about the meeting please contact Peter van Duyn.

Biosecurity Business Pledge

The *Biosecurity Business Pledge Australia* is a national initiative inviting businesses to take proactive steps in protecting their operations, and Australia, from biosecurity threats while improving general biosecurity awareness in the community. Businesses can sign up to the pledge online at biosecurity.gov.au/pledge. By taking the pledge, businesses commit to integrating practical biosecurity practices into their businesses, thereby helping to reduce risk, support business continuity, and build resilience across their industry. It's also about recognising biosecurity is a shared responsibility. The pledge program incorporates two activities: the first is taking the *Biosecurity Business Pledge Australia* followed up by becoming part of a Biosecurity Business Network program.

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