



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.

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'Sector focused legal experts'

Season's greetings



During 2025 we have seen the increased influences of technology and innovations like automation, the increase in trade of riskier cargo such as lithium-ion batteries, electric vehicles and dangerous goods and more stringent safety regulations, requiring improvements in communications and collaboration in the cargo supply chain.

In 2026 ICHCA look forward to continuing to work with you to gather, analyse and share cargo information and best practices, to help you improve your safety decisions and cultural change along and across your cargo supply chain.

On behalf of the Board and Management of ICHCA Australia, I wish you and your families all the very best for the festive season and a happy and prosperous 2026.

Scott McKay, Chairman ICHCA Australia

Save the date

ICHCA Queensland will be holding an event in Brisbane on 19 February, which includes a visit to the Patrick Brisbane Autostrad Terminal. More details to follow in early January.

Safety Award Ceremony



The TT Club Innovation in Safety Award Ceremony will be held on 25 February 2026 and will be available online.

More details to follow in the new year.

Australia re-elected to the IMO council

Australia has been re-elected to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Council. Elected under Category B for the 2026-27 biennium, this will allow work on improving global maritime safety, environmental protection and innovation to continue. Australia is a founding member of the IMO Council and currently the only representative from the South Pacific region.

In recent years, Australia has demonstrated leadership through regional cooperation to improve ship safety, maritime incident response, and communications and information services to support our Pacific and Indian Ocean neighbours. Australia also actively supported the establishment of the IMO's Pacific Regional Presence Office in Fiji, strengthening capacity building across the region.

Australia's representation at the IMO means continued involvement in helping shape modern, future-focused maritime standards that will benefit all member states. The Australian Government has made strong commitments to the maritime sector, including by advocating for seafarers' welfare, fair treatment of workers and the elimination of exploitation and modern slavery.

ONE Continuity loses 45 containers in heavy weather

The 8,102-TEU containership *ONE Continuity* recently diverted to Las Palmas in the Canary Islands after losing about 45 containers overboard during severe weather in the Atlantic Ocean.

The Singapore-flagged vessel was en route from Le Havre to Singapore when it encountered heavy seas south of the Canary Islands. The 320-meter containership declared an emergency after powerful waves struck the vessel.



Initial assessments revealed that nearly 100 containers were toppled when the heavy seas caused multiple stacks to shift, with approximately 45 containers falling into the ocean. Several other containers were crushed after toppling within the stow. Authorities conducted an aerial drone inspection at the request of the shipowner, revealing that around ten container rows at the stern had collapsed.

Source gCaptain

The vessel arrived at the Port of Las Palmas and tied up at Boluda's terminal with the tilting stacks positioned dockside. A complex cargo recovery and re-lashing operation is now underway, involving a team of specialised personnel, crane operators, welders and lashing experts. Dockworkers are working to free damaged containers from twisted securing gear and lower them safely ashore, while repairs to the vessel's mooring equipment are also planned. It remains unclear when the vessel will be able to resume its voyage to Asia. No injuries were reported in the incident.

The *ONE Continuity* was built in 2008 and is operated by Japanese shipping company Ocean Network Express (ONE). The vessel is owned by Seaspan.

ACCC Container Stevedoring Monitoring Report released

Australia's stevedores are charging record high prices and making historic profits despite having significant spare capacity in ports and with their costs and productivity remaining relatively stable in recent years, according to the latest **Container Stevedoring Monitoring Report** released by the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC). In 2024-25, stevedore profits rose for the 5th year in a row, reaching historical highs across most metrics measured by the ACCC. Stevedores are now charging a higher total price per container, in real terms, than at any time since the ACCC began monitoring the container stevedoring industry 27 years ago. The report concludes that a government policy or regulatory response is likely required to address apparent market failures and to improve Australia's container freight supply chain to the benefit of households and businesses.

The ACCC uses total real revenue per container lift as a proxy for the total stevedoring price paid per container. The stevedoring industry's total real revenue per lift has increased by \$21.93 (or 5.5%) in 2024-25 and \$68.88 (or 19.4%) since 2019-20, to a historical high of \$423.11 per container in 2024-25. The report also compares the profitability of the stevedoring industry with other companies in the transportation and industrials sectors. It shows the stevedoring industry's profitability in 2024 was higher than the transportation sector across all metrics the ACCC uses, and higher than the industrials sector across most metrics.

"These are very high short run returns for an industry with significant spare capacity at ports, stable costs and stable productivity," ACCC Commissioner Anna Brakey said. "Typically, we would expect to see excess terminal capacity placing downward pressure on the stevedores' prices and short run profits. The fact that

stevedores are performing better than they were prior to entry of Hutchison, a time when the industry was operating as a capacity-constrained duopoly, raises serious concern about how this market is operating.”

Landside charges the main driver of rising prices and profits

In recent years, stevedores have significantly increased the fees that transport companies have to pay to collect or drop off containers, known as landside charges. “Over the years, landside charges have gone from a relatively small part of revenue to a major driver of profit for the industry,” Ms Brakey said. In 2024-25, the stevedoring industry collected almost half (49.5% or \$1.15 billion) of its revenue from landside charges. This is almost equal to the entire investment that the stevedores have made collectively over the past 8 years (\$1.25 billion). More than \$642 million of the \$1.15 billion in landside charges revenue came from terminal access charges alone, which stevedores previously described as infrastructure levies.

“The stevedoring industry began to significantly increase terminal access charges in 2017 and since then they’ve collected over \$3 billion in terminal access charges,” Ms Brakey said. “We are concerned that stevedores can increase these charges, and thereby their profitability, independent of the underlying market conditions. These unavoidable costs land first on trucking companies, who then pass them on to importers and exporters, who have no real way to avoid or negotiate them. With similar charges across terminals and lack of ability or incentives for most importers and exporters to switch stevedores, they cannot influence these costs through competition,” Brakey said. “Targeted reform is likely needed to ensure there are effective competitive constraints on stevedores to support the supply chain. Without it, Australian businesses and households will ultimately pay the price through higher costs.”



Freight market analysis

The freight market has been subject to significant disruptions and volatility throughout 2025, but conditions have started to stabilise in the second half of the year. As a result, trade volumes have remained constant since mid-2025 and figures do not indicate an overall increase or decline in global trade. Factors indicate that there may still be some volatility to come in the short term but, in the medium- to long-term, the container freight market may be tilted towards more stable conditions. We set out below some key factors impacting the freight market as we head into 2026.

US tariffs and the WTO

As has been widely reported, US tariffs announced earlier this year significantly impacted the freight market. However, in late October 2025, the US announced a suspension of the USTR port fees for one year,

with China also postponing its retaliatory measures. It remains to be seen how this will develop once the suspension expires.

Containership orders

At the end of October 2025, it was reported by Trade Winds that "the container ship orderbook has surpassed one-third of the trading fleet for the first time since the financial crisis." And the "orderbook stands at around 1,040 vessels, or some 10.9m TEU". Surplus capacity is already evident and has the potential to further dilute the market. If demand does not increase in line with container capacity, freight rates may decline. Further, at the end of August 2025, BIMCO reported more than 500 alternatively fuelled container ships were on order. It seems that despite the implementation of IMO net-zero regulations being postponed for a minimum of 12 months, owners and carriers have remained committed to their own decarbonisation targets. The shift to alternative fuels could see an increase in fuel prices if supply fails to keep pace. However, improved efficiency of new vessels is expected to reduce fuel costs over the long term.

Red Sea passage

Despite Houthi rebels having signalled a halt to their attacks on Israel and commercial ships in the Red Sea following a ceasefire in Gaza, shipping lines have been slow to return to the Red Sea. Data from Lloyd's List indicate that transits through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, which links the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, declined by nearly 5% in September 2025 compared to August 2025, with containerships seeing the steepest drop, down 10% month-on-month pre-ceasefire. However, recently, it seems that container shipping companies are cautiously returning to the key trade route. In November 2025, transits through the Bab-el-Mandeb strait hit their highest level in two years, according to Lloyd's List Intelligence, though the number of trips remained at half the level of October 2023 when the Houthis began attacking vessels. Relevantly, CMA CGM, which owns one of the world's largest fleets of commercial container ships, is planning more trips through the Suez Canal in 2026 according to the schedule published on the company's website. Further, according to Marsh, war risk insurance for the Red Sea has reduced by around 70% compared with prices at the peak of tensions in mid-2024. As war risk insurance continues to reduce, the number of shipping lines transiting the Red Sea should also increase.

HFW comments

Although the overall direction of the global freight market seems to point to more stable conditions, the freight market may continue to face some uncertainty heading into 2026. One area to watch is the US Trump administration's recent attack on the World Trade Organisation (WTO). In a recent memo, the US declared that the "era had passed" for the long-standing most favoured nation principle, which requires countries not to discriminate between their trading partners. The memo lists the US grievances against the WTO and reflects Trump's unilateralist approach to trade and further confirms that the US would rather set tariffs with countries on a case-by-case basis. Moreover, with China's trade surplus increasing to more than \$1 trillion this year, the US further attacked the WTO for its repeated failures to address trade imbalances, which the US blames on unfair subsidies for the steel and auto industries. These matters are expected to come to a head in March 2026 at the WTO's ministerial meeting.

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

Port of Melbourne looking to offer incentives to move containers on rail

Port of Melbourne (PoM) is calling for registrations of interest for a potential start-up incentive for importers considering contracting rail volumes to ITC's Melbourne Intermodal Terminal (MIT) Somerton. This program would be aimed at supporting base-load import volumes during MIT's start-up phase, and support timely take-up of rail services now that the MIT is operational. The current proposal contemplates an offer of \$100 per TEU and \$200 per FEU for import containers moved by rail from the port to MIT. Any incentive would be subject to time and volume limitations.

The registrations of interest process is now open, closing on 6 February 2026. Further discussions with respondents will allow preferred recipients to be identified and terms of any arrangements to be formalised. Registrations can be made at **Port Rail Shuttle Network (PRSN) Incentive Program – Registration of Interest**.

PoM continues to work with all parts of the supply chain to improve mode shift as the Port Rail Shuttle Network becomes operational. The benefits of such an incentive program include helping to reduce traffic congestion on busy Melbourne roads and motorways and lowering emissions in state and national transport networks.

OMC celebrates 30 years at Port Hedland

Dynamic Under Keel Clearance (DUKC®) technology was first deployed in Port Hedland back in the mid-1990s and is widely credited with revolutionising port efficiency, safety, sustainability and export capacity. According to developer OMC International, the DUKC® system uses real-time environmental data and advanced modelling to calculate the minimum safe under-keel clearance for each vessel. To date, DUKC® has facilitated more than 5 billion tonnes of exports from Port Hedland.

Via close collaboration with Pilbara Ports during the past three decades, OMC International's digital port optimisation and risk management technologies have helped Port Hedland navigate growth from 60 million tonnes and 1,000 vessel movements in 1994/95 to 577.7m tonnes and 6,940 vessel movements in 2024/25. DUKC was used as part of the Channel Risk & Optimisation Project (CROP) to optimise the dredging profile, by maximising the capacity enhancements while minimising the environmental impacts.

OMC International Chief Executive Peter O'Brien said they had greatly cherished the journey they had been on with Pilbara Ports during the previous 30 years. "Pilbara Ports is commended world-wide for the incredible throughput it facilitates and its significance to the Australian and global shipping economy," Mr O'Brien said. "Rightly, it is recognised for doing so through delivering world's best-practice operations, and this has enabled it to continuously retain its place as the world's largest bulk export port. It's been wonderful for OMC to have been an integral part of this growth journey; we are a company built on innovation and Pilbara Ports have been a critical partner to the continual evolution of our technology to meet the growing demands, and we are very grateful for their vision and support."

Pilbara Ports Chief Executive Samuel McSkimming said they were "proud to partner with OMC International as they celebrate 30 years of DUKC®. Pilbara Ports has achieved record-breaking shipments safely over the years thanks to revolutionary programs such as DUKC".

OMC International is a member of ICHCA Australia

Patrick Terminals celebrates 20 years of automation



Customers, suppliers, partners and colleagues recently came together in Brisbane to celebrate a milestone that transformed container handling in Australia – 20 years of automation at the Brisbane AutoStrad Terminal. Guests heard from CEO Michael Jovicic, who reflected on the Australian-led innovation that made Brisbane the birthplace of the world's first automated straddle carrier operation, with the introduction of the AutoStrad at Fisherman Islands in 2005.

Image: Patrick Terminals

Mr Jovicic announced a new 10-year strategic supply agreement between Patrick Terminals and Kalmar (straddle manufacturer) strengthening a partnership that has underpinned the success of their automation for more than 20 years.

Terminal Manager Matt Hollamby outlined the history of automation at the terminal, the ground-breaking pioneers of the Patrick business and the continued commitment across the organisation to operational excellence and market-leading infrastructure. Chief Strategy, Development and Legal Officer Victoria Moore then unveiled the restored Straddle No. 1 (AB01), the first automated straddle carrier to operate in Brisbane. Now proudly mounted at the front of the terminal, AB01 stands as a symbol of Patrick's automation journey, engineering capability and the dedicated teams who have driven innovation throughout the organisation's history.

Patrick Terminals is a member of ICHCA Australia

Vale Glen Wood

The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) announced the passing of Glenton (Glen) Wood, a significant figure in the industry, calling him a "towering figure" and "lifelong warrior for wharfies". He was known for his dedication to veterans and union campaigns, with tributes highlighting his impact on the Sydney Branch and National Office. He was a respected wharfie and union official, deeply involved in the MUA, particularly the Sydney Branch.

The MUA expressed deep sadness and extended condolences to his family

Vale Bill Gibbins

Bill Gibbins was an important figure in the transport industry as the founder of his family-owned transport services company Full Container Load, which he later sold to Linfox in 2006. In 2007, when one of Australia's most illustrious military engagements, the Rats of Tobruk, could no longer afford the upkeep of their Albert Park headquarters where they had held meetings for nearly 50 years, Gibbins outbid property developers to purchase the property. Gibbins then told the veteran group that they were welcome to stay as long as they needed, stating, "I thought I'd buy it and let you keep it going, because we owe you a debt that can't possibly be repaid."

Gibbins was awarded Member of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours in June 2021 for significant service to horse racing and to people with disability, as well as his generosity as a philanthropist.

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.

Holiday working arrangements

The Department's Canberra Office will cease operations from close of business on Wednesday 24 December 2025 and will re-open at the commencement of business on Friday 2 January 2026. Imports Document Assessment and Inspection, and online portals and lodgement systems will be available for use

over this period. However, services will only be conducted by departmental staff during the hours of operation specified above.

More information is available here:

400-2025: December 2025 / January 2026 Holiday Shut Down Operating Hours - DAFF

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Do you have a story to tell?

If you have any news you would like to be considered for inclusion in future editions of *Inside ICHCA*, please contact Peter at peter.van-duyn@ichca.com. We hope you find this edition of interest.