

In brief...

Hope for a brighter New Year

After a time of immense challenges for ocean carriers Hamburg Sud Asia trade manager, Simon Kirk, is looking forward to a better year.

He says 2009 was also a year of severe problems for exporters and importers as the effects of the global recession hit home.

"In terms of the containerised shipping operators, most will incur significant losses in 2009, with the forecast total lost for the global industry expected to be in the USD 20-25 billion range," he said.

To curb the effect of the downfall, the industry took major steps to lessen the harsh financial impact. This included laying up of vessels, deferring new vessel construction and deliveries, cutting back on new container deliveries and realigning vessel sharing agreements and vessel tonnages employed on many trade lanes.

"The key word going forward into 2010 is that of sustainability. With the New Zealand economy's major reliance on overseas trade, and absolute necessity for us to grow exports as we come out of this recession, it is vital that we have in place sustainable shipping services that can cater for growth and seasonal peaks."

Lobby group pushes for more weight

While some greener sectors of our political spectrum are advocating less road and more sea transport, Taranaki Transport chairman, Tom Cloke says, where trucking is concerned, bigger is definitely better.

He says the 70,000 annual truck movements in and out of the local port area contribute to the traffic problems around the city and the region but there is a simple way around the problem. Make each truck carry more.

"That's just what the government is now considering and it has the figures, from a year long trial, which prove the benefits."

Apparently, increasing the gross combination weight by just six tonnes to 50 tonnes, could reduce truck trips by about 16 percent, cut fuel use by 20 percent and improve per truck productivity by 10-20 percent.

Cloke said one major reason that Taranaki road transport costs were about 30 percent greater than in Australia was that Australian trucks "can, and do, carry more freight per vehicle."

He told the local Port Taranaki publication *Portal* that allowing trucks to haul heavier loads here would help Taranaki businesses compete overseas, as well as locally, against imported products.

2010 dedicated to seafarers

THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANISATION (IMO) has decided to give special recognition all seafarers by naming 2010 as The Year of the Seafarer.

"Our intention is to pay tribute to you, the world's 1.5 million seafarers – men and women from all over the globe – for the unique, and all too often over-looked, contribution you make to the wellbeing of all of us," an IMO statement released late December says.

"At IMO, we are ever-conscious of the important role you play in helping us achieve safe, secure and efficient shipping on clean oceans – the goals that we, as the United Nations specialised agency charged with the regulation of international shipping and as a member of the global maritime community, have set ourselves."

*Professional Skipper* readers will be well aware that seafarers help transport our fuel, carry our exports and stimulate the local economy. The general public, however, take these things for granted and scarcely give a thought to how our supermarkets and economy shops are stocked. They certainly give scant, if any, thought to the people concerned or the difficulties they may face.

That's why Terry Nobbs, the chairman of the Auckland International Seafarers Centre in Quay Street, is urging Aucklanders to take the theme to heart and to think of the seafarer this year.

Mr Nobbs, himself a former merchant



seafarer, says most people don't realise how much seafarers contribute to Auckland and said that it was high time they were recognised. "It is most appropriate that 2010 has been designated the Year of the Seafarer," he said.

"At least 90 percent of everything we import is brought in by ship," he said, "and in terms of volume almost 99 percent of our exports are also carried by ship. Seafarers bring us fuel and food, cars and machinery. Most of our meat, wine, wool and timber is carried overseas by ship and cruising is a popular activity for New Zealanders."

"The port company, ship maintenance companies and suppliers provide a number of local jobs," he added, "and though they are often in port for a very short time and aren't always that well-paid, the seafarers spend a lot of money locally and stimulate the local economy."

SECOND TUG FOR WA NEARS COMPLETION

WITH A SERVICE speed of 14 knots and a bollard pull of 65 tonnes the second tug of her class for a Western Australia client nears completion in the Northland yard of Shipco Marine Constructors Ltd.

Designed to work as both ship assist and escort tugs for bulkers of up to 330,000 tonnes at the iron ore mining ports of Dampier and Cape Lambert, the tugs need to have power and a strong bollard pull.

The tug is built to IMO standards and FIFI 1 fire fighting capabilities with both foam and water delivery capabilities.

With a length overall of 32m, beam 11.6m and a 4.3m draft, easing this monster of a tug into the water on launch day in late February is expected to take some skill.

