



SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



Landside Infrastructure Can Assist Decarbonisation

In an era where climate change is becoming of paramount concern, the challenge for ports is to promote collaborations so that landside infrastructure feeds into a more sustainable maritime industry.

That was the message given to the MLAANZ New Zealand Branch Conference by Marsden Maritime Holdings (MMH) chief executive Rosie Mercer, whose business is a 50/50 owner of Northport with the Port of Tauranga.

Ms Mercer pointed to how MMH is using its store of land behind Northport to create “ecosystems” that will support and blend in with port activities, enabling them to be grouped in a tight, sustainable network.

The port ecosystem has provision for container yards, vehicle storage and a private internal road through to the port, she explained. The commercial ecosystem sits behind that, with a varied list of proposed uses ranging from cafes and supermarkets to retail trade.

Further out is the industrial ecosystem with provision for warehousing, manufacturing and engineering. Finally, there is the marine ecosystem, factored around the marina, boat haul-out and maintenance sheds.

Ms Mercer said MMH was offering tailored commercial and industrial land for lease to growing businesses, with a masterplan aimed at shaping Northland’s economy over the next 30 years.

Inherent in that vision is providing the infrastructural support to help achieve International Maritime Organization targets of cutting greenhouse gas emissions from global shipping by at least half by 2050, compared with their level in 2008.

However, she questioned whether consumers were ready to pay the price of change.

“The challenge is how to make investments in change when you can’t get a financial return from them?” said Ms Mercer.

An integrated strategy would help overcome barriers and enable a focus on long-term value creation, using the measure of a 20-year vista to support investment decisions that built resilience now.

“Ports have an opportunity to connect to the supply chain for renewables and low-emission fuels and connect to the grid. Funding from the state could allow shore-based power supply to ships. Ports could become the hubs for the road fleet to refuel.”

Already, some ports and companies are making advances, such as Ports of Auckland with its electric tug and the decarbonisation plans of Napier Port and Lyttelton Port Company. Other current options include the potential to use ammonia or hydrogen to power port vehicles – although regulations need to be updated to allow for hydrogen production and refuelling.

“Partnering is essential for success. Collaboration is possible to enable production, storage and distribution.

“The case for action is compelling. It will take decades to implement change, but landside infrastructure is a critical element to support maritime decarbonisation.”

December 2022

