

## Trans-Tasman turmoil

Iain MacIntyre

A wait period of four weeks to secure a cargo booking and “all-time-high” shipping rates are being reported on the trans-Tasman tradelane.

Burnard International commercial manager Rob Hageman confirmed that, particularly with Mediterranean Shipping Co recently suspending New Zealand calls on its Capricorn service due to local port congestion, space for Australian-bound cargo had become a “premium”.

“Under normal circumstances in early December you would expect to move it within two weeks,” he told the *Shipping Gazette*<sup>TM</sup>.

“With the Capricorn service gone, you’re losing an awful lot of capacity. You’ve got other lines changing routes and they are just chock-a-block.

“A lot of carriers at the moment are skipping, bypassing and moving ports, which then correlates to the shipping lines taking a different route, which means the bookings can’t be made.”

Mr Hageman said similar issues were being felt by shippers moving cargo in the opposite direction across the Tasman.

“Most carriers coming into New Zealand do call at Australia and with the amount of changes and redirections, you are getting some carriers that aren’t calling here at all [and] you are getting some carriers that are refusing to take bookings.”

In regard to the future outlook, Mr Hageman expressed hope the industrial situation on the Australian waterfront would resolve amicably to thereby remove one contributing factor.

“So that the carriers can have confidence in being able to call at their ports and not have their boats sitting around for, in some cases, ten to 14 days -- getting some surety back into schedule.”

With rates “going through the roof”, he said any arrival of new, additional tonnage would be “well received”.

However, in regard to the New Zealand side of the tradelane, Mr Hageman did not expect the impacts from the local port situation to lessen until at least February next year.

“You have carriers over 100% capacity, continued rollings and rates at an all-time high. I don’t think we’re in for much leeway until Q2 next year.

“You could get a softening of rates post-Chinese New Year -- but in saying that, inevitably around that time you get the traditional rush as factories get back into business and have to catch up.”