

# Interview

## Ian Doherty, Executive Manager Customer & Strategic Development, Port of Newcastle

As a part of a series of updates on developments at the Port of Newcastle, Paul Zalai, Director FTA, speaks with Ian Doherty



### 1. PAUL ZALAI - The Port of Newcastle is shortly to publish a Port Master Plan. What is the Port of Newcastle's long term vision?

Our vision is to become Australia's first-choice East Coast port. The privatisation of the port has changed the way we view ourselves as a business, and part of that is recognising we need to be focussed on the entire supply chain and how we can best work with customers and stakeholders to free up capacity and lower costs. The port is already able to accommodate a diverse trade base and we want to partner with customers and stakeholders to grow and diversify in sustainable, profitable and innovative ways.

We have ambitious plans for the future of freight in regional NSW and the shortly to be released Port Master Plan will be a key

part of our ongoing conversations with our customers and industry partners to 2040.

### 2. PAUL ZALAI - What are the key projects and development opportunities identified in the Port Master Plan?

The projects highlighted in the Port Master Plan include the Newcastle Container Terminal, the Newcastle Bulk Terminal, an automotive and Ro-Ro hub and the Maritime Precinct in Carrington. We are

**“ Our vision is to become Australia's first-choice East Coast port. ”**

also planning for the continuation and growth of our major bulk trades, including coal, fuel, fertiliser, wheat and mineral concentrates.

### 3. PAUL ZALAI - Aside from the Port Master Plan initiatives, how else is the Port looking to grow and diversify trade?

Diversification means different things to different people. There is a suite of key strategic development opportunities currently underway that support both our short- and long-term plans. Having said that, while our eye is on the future, we need to ensure we provide best-in-class service delivery to our existing clients.

We are in the process finalising the development of a General Cargo Hub with a focus on making Newcastle the East Coast's port of choice for steel and general cargo handling, with improved berth availability and the best in cargo care.

The Newcastle Bulk Terminal is a \$33 million investment by Port of Newcastle into bulk handling equipment that will be unlike any other Australian port. The Newcastle Bulk Terminal will feature best practice in safety and environmental management, while also driving efficiency and maximising trade growth. The old unloaders are currently being dismantled and the new unloaders are due to arrive in late 2019.

Thinking long term and the future disruption of the traditional automotive supply chains, we are currently investigating the establishment of a specialised niche automotive and oversized Ro-Ro facility on our Mayfield site.

**4. PAUL ZALAI - Australian freight is predicted the double in the next 20-years. How will the Port accommodate the predicted increase in trade?**

Port of Newcastle has developed a number of trade growth scenarios which can be accommodated without the need for substantial public investment or additional infrastructure.

Newcastle already has a significant competitive advantage as an underutilised major deep-water seaport. A legacy of the old BHP Steelworks and our current coal industry infrastructure is that we already have direct connectivity to the national rail and heavy vehicle road system that is also underutilised. As a global gateway to regional and northern NSW, we are ready to go.

**5. PAUL ZALAI - What does a container port at Newcastle mean to the people and businesses of the Hunter?**

The opportunities presented by a Newcastle Container Terminal are far

broader than Newcastle and the Hunter. It would unlock economic opportunities in regional NSW and the northern areas of the State. It would grow and diversify the Hunter's economy, boosting jobs and business opportunities across the region.

We are proud to be the world's largest coal port but are also realistic about coal's prospects in decades to come. It's important to think long term and that's why we are committed to pushing for the development of a container terminal now to support the future diversification and growth of the Hunter's economy.

**6. PAUL ZALAI - Australian trade is import-driven. I have a lot of members who are exporters who see enormous potential in a container port at Newcastle, but does the business case stack up on imports?**

Currently, 27% of New South Wales' total imports are already destined for the Port's catchment area. This is driven by the population's demand retail, manufactured products and consumable goods. As the population of regional NSW grows, so will demand for containerised imports.

The availability of portside land for new import warehousing and distribution is another area where we can reduce double handling, avoid congestion issues and overall provide what we feel is an incredibly competitive supply chain for import across NSW.

**7. PAUL ZALAI - Do you think a container terminal at Newcastle affects the proposed investments and planning associated with Port Kembla?**

One of the points we have made is that this is a not zero-sum game. We are not trying to take a container terminal from Port Kembla or Port Botany, which together with the Port of Newcastle could provide a competitive and efficient freight network for Australian businesses. Our interest, and the wider public interest, is to have the opportunity for a level playing field to unlock productivity-enhancing competition.

# PORT MASTER PLAN 2040

Port of Newcastle is the global gateway for NSW and will soon be releasing its Port Master Plan 2040.

The Port has an ambitious plan for the future of freight in regional NSW and the Master Plan will be a key part of our conversation with customers and the wider logistics industry into the future.

Find out more

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