

# Capturing the view from Europe

Jason Sprott speaks with friend and colleague Charles Haine, a sustainability professional based in the United Kingdom who leads the environment discipline for consultancy group WSP

## What's your current role with WSP?

I have a great role at WSP, being the maritime market sector lead for the environment discipline (more than 700 people in the UK, and 8000 worldwide – including within Australia).

We also design maritime structures, configure marine civil works, design terminals, optimise operations and/or get involved in discrete port solutions.

What I can tell you is that the work never stops and each day is different.

## Could you share your thoughts on major challenges for European industry coming out of COVID?

European ports have been on a rollercoaster ride through COVID. In some, the rulebook for emergency response and contingency planning was ripped up.

Authorities and terminal operators received unplanned cruise vessels, became part of the supply chain for COVID-related supplies, such as PPE and medicine, suffered the brunt of volume dips and cancelled vessel visits, and were overloaded with empties.

On top of the economic crunch we have a layer of sustainability pressure adding scrutiny into company ESG performance and strategic targets to cut carbon.

Driven by national targets (e.g. net zero) and group/corporate targets (e.g. carbon neutrality), this includes concerns around reduced volumes of liquid bulks, such as fuels, coming through ports.

With many ports having sorted clean supplies of electricity, their Scope 2 GHG emissions are low, or can be zero, so the attention will turn to diesel in the yards. No credible company can even think about pursuing net zero without taking measures and investing in technology to eliminate these Scope 1 fossil fuels.

Linking the cogs in the supply chain (i.e. shipping – ports – transport/logistics) to be united in decarbonisation and embrace alternative fuels is an even bigger challenge.

## Could you provide a snapshot of some good sustainability examples you've seen in European region of late?

We are seeing some excellent pilot studies albeit at a small scale. The Scottish government is developing plans for a new green model focused on inclusive growth in local communities, fair work practices (including living wage) and delivering a net zero economy – remembering this is the COP26 year. Adopting the UK government's freeport proposition, they will offer more efficient planning processes, a tax deal and customs reliefs.

In regard to managing Scope 1 emissions, properly, technology companies such as Cavotec will step up delivery of electrification and automation for cargo handling equipment.

New legal requirements and market demand is driving growth for shore power, automated mooring and equipment electrification.

In its quest to improve its green ports credentials, Associated British Ports has invested in renewable energy generation projects providing clean power for its own activities, customers and also feeding excess back into the grid.

## What are your thoughts on the importance (and opportunities) from industry partnerships?

The Scandinavian and Nordic ports always steal a lead on sustainability activities. The Tranzero Initiative is formed by the Port of Gothenburg, Sweden, Volvo Group,

Scania and Stena to reduce the one million truck visits and the 55,000 tonnes of GHG emissions generated to and from the port every year.

Touting the need for collaboration, the port authority is showing that changes can be made to influence behaviour change across the logistics supply chain. Land transport is going to need to become fossil fuel-free while Stena is going to introduce low, or no carbon emission vessels, by bringing its battery-powered concept – Stena Elektra – into play on the Gothenburg-Frederikshavn route by 2030. In turn, the port will provide the infrastructure and access to electricity, HVO, biogas and hydrogen gas for heavy transport.

Maersk provides another example of leading action. The company is embracing all sorts of fuel types in the race to zero. Leaning on those port-city relationships than many European hubs seem to use well, Maersk is in a consortium with other Danish companies, such as Ørsted, DSV Panalpina, DFDS ferries, and the aviation sector (SAS and the Copenhagen Airports) to develop hydrogen. There are collaboration lessons galore here on the theme of cleaner and greener futures.

What's missing for me is the integration of container operators in this puzzle. As tenants in long concessions operation a big portfolio of mobile machinery and vehicles 24/7, their emissions can be far greater than the carbon footprint of the landlord port authority. ■



Jason Sprott, owner and director, Sprott Planning & Environment



Charles Haine, technical director, lead sustainability & climate, maritime sector lead, environment, WSP

# The state of affairs in north Queensland

MtS has been hit hard by the changes COVID-19 has brought. Townsville manager Graham Miller writes on how the mission continues to serve seafarers

## THE MISSION TO SEAFARERS AT

the Port of Townsville is set between the sugar and mineral berths at the port on the ground floor of the Port Control Building.

Like so many other safe harbours, our seafarer centre at Berth 9 Port of Townsville is self-funded. Our previous monthly 600-700 visits from international seafarers have been reduced to zero. Yet, as a faith-based organisation, we operate on faith as well as finance – and with continued support of the port community and shipping industry we are hopeful that 2021-22 will see us continuing our work.

## NO SHORE LEAVE

We all know that crews are doing it tough during this pandemic, as they do not have access to shore leave.

Like missions worldwide, Townsville MtS began producing care packages for ships entering our ports as talks began nationally to obtain assistance funding early in 2020. Care packages contain general supplies, toiletries and items for the crew mess to remind seafarers that they are uppermost in the thoughts and prayers of the MtS family, Stella Maris and other maritime ministries.

Our focus here is to remind the industry that it is imperative to keep all this activity happening until seafarers have access to vaccinations and shore leave and we can once again welcome them throughout our island continent. This is expressed internationally by the hundreds of signatories to the Neptune Declaration.

In the beginning, shipping companies told crews to be wary of going ashore because they might catch COVID-19. On land, people were equally afraid of catching the virus from overseas visitors, including seafarers.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SEAFARERS

The mental, spiritual and physical well-being of the world's seafarers impacts on all

our lives. Without these men and women, we would have nothing – the delivery of our vehicles, clothing, white goods and so much more is totally dependent on their ability to work harmoniously and in good health. Until seafarers are treated as front-line workers, their situation remains dire.

I grew up with the motto, "Think globally, act locally". With the ongoing problems in repatriating seafarers, we at Townsville continue to contact vessels and offer any assistance possible with a dedicated group of volunteers. We realise how lucky we are with two of the berths only 30 metres from the doors of our canteen at Berth 9.

It is important to relate to as many seafarers and supporter networks as possible. We continue to receive reports from all major seafarer ministries worldwide and continue to send Facebook posts and emails across the world.

Over 2020 we were able to provide 128 vessels with care packages from donations to the mission here in Townsville, while more than 300 personal Christmas presents were taken to vessels in December, along with 70 Christmas cakes from the Rotary Clubs of Townsville and St Vincent de Paul Society.

Online shopping from canteen to ship is proving worthwhile and the system gets better as we find more effective ways of accessing vessels coming into port. It

is now the mainstay of our work as we continue to reach out to help the seafarers on their ships.

On a positive note, Townsville Mission to Seafarers recently contacted our supporters with the news that our annual Golf Day will be a go-ahead in 2021 on 16 July; looking forward to their participation.

We will continue to provide online shopping and care packs as donations until we either sink or are thrown a lifebuoy to allow us to continue the work begun in 1856 by the founder of our organisation. For as long as there are crews to sail the oceans of the world, there will be a need for those who care for them. ■



A team of volunteers preparing packages for seafarers

Spratt Planning & Environment; WSP

Mission to Seafarers