



Port of Melbourne



17 December 2020

Port of Melbourne Stakeholder Update 12

Record container volumes in November

November 2020 was another record month for total container throughput (full and empty) with 295,022 TEU, 12% above November 2019. Volumes remain strong as a result of the Christmas/summer holiday retail rush and continued changes to consumer spending as a result of COVID-19.

Shipping schedules are still adjusting after interruptions in previous months with several vessels either bypassing Port Botany and unloading at Melbourne to avoid congestion, or changing rotation and calling at Melbourne first. Additional vessels have come to Melbourne to meet the seasonal demand for imports.

Overall November 2020 container trade results compared with November 2019 were as follows:

- Total container volumes (full and empty) up by 12%, with year to date volumes up by 8.3%;
- Full overseas container imports, including transshipments, up 16.9%, with year to date volumes up by 10.6%;
- Full overseas exports, including transshipments, down 5.4% but up 3.3% for the year to date;
- Tasmanian full container volumes, excluding transshipments, up by 5.1%, with year to date volumes up by 6.5%; and
- Record empty container movements totalling 74,966 TEU, 15.7% above November 2019 and 8.0% up for the year to date;
- Full transshipment volumes were 10,479 TEU higher;
- Total motor vehicle volumes (by units) increased 49.9% overall (12,280 units) reflecting the strong automotive market sales in November and the easing of COVID-19;
- In the dry-bulk category, a 2.9% increase (revenue tonnes), with one export shipment of barley compared to nil in November 2019; and
- Liquid bulk was up 18.6% overall, with an increase in crude oil of 188.6% (192,305 tonnes) offset by a decline of 67.1% (182,766 tonnes) in petroleum products, with no motor spirit or kerosene (jet fuel) imports in November. The monthly comparison is skewed by the Altona Mobil refinery being shut for maintenance for part of November 2019.





Trade outlook

Container trade data for early December 2020 continues to follow the November month trend when compared to the corresponding period in 2019. Although the well-documented ban by China on Victorian timber is affecting export volumes, imports continue to trade strongly. Grain exports commenced earlier than usual in 2020 and are expected to have a bigger and longer season than the previous year.

Supply chain

Some container truck operators are reporting concerns on landside congestion and PoM is proactively working with shipping lines, empty container parks, terminal operators and industry members to assess options for vacant PoM land for short-term overflow capacity storage, if required.

Industrial relations

Throughout November no Protected Industrial Action (PIA) activities were undertaken at the international container terminals. Limited forms of PIA continue at the national vessel towage operator Svitzer, with minimal impact on PoM shipping due to mitigating measures taken by Svitzer.

The past 12 months

We have all faced significant challenges during the past 12 months. We are proud that PoM and all involved in port operations and the freight and logistics sector have been able to maintain operational activities without material disruption during the pandemic.

PoM has reached key milestones this year, including the publication of our 2050 Port Development Strategy and our second Sustainability Report. Infrastructure investment has continued, with major achievements including the Port Rail Transformation Project, for which design and construction works are scheduled to commence in early 2021. Investment to facilitate larger capacity container vessels calling at the Port is ongoing, including asset integrity upgrades at South Wharf 30/31 and Gellibrand Pier, a new mooring dolphin at Webb Dock and remediation of Swanson Dock East including bollard upgrades at Swanson Dock East and West.

Like many other organisations, we are looking forward to more of our staff returning to work in the office in the New Year, in accordance with State Government announcements and protocols.

On behalf of Port of Melbourne, I wish you and your family a safe and joyful holiday season and a happy and prosperous 2021.

Please call your Port of Melbourne contact or email us at covid19@portofmelbourne.com if you have any queries.

Brendan Bourke
Chief Executive Officer