



MAI I TE WĀPU

From the Wharf

Community Newsletter | June 2026 | Vol. 5 | Issue 1

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Tēnā koutou katoa,

As many of you will know, we farewelled Nigel Gear at the end of May after more than three decades with South Port, including eight and a half years as Chief Executive (CE).

During his tenure as CE, South Port has strengthened operational performance, broadened its trade base, and continued to invest in key infrastructure to support regional growth.

I worked with Nigel for two of his three decades at South Port across many projects, during his time as Commercial Manager and as Chief Executive. Two milestones stand out: the launch of Mediterranean Shipping Company container services in Bluff in 2008, and the introduction of a second mobile harbour container crane in 2014. Both were significant steps forward for the Port's container operations.

Nigel is leaving the business in strong heart. As noted in our recent trading update South Port delivered a record interim performance in the first half of FY26, with volumes, revenue, and earnings remaining resilient into the second half of the financial year.

This performance is due to a combination of factors, including:

- Continued strength in agricultural demand and export activity
- Strong container volumes
- Improved smelter-related throughput
- A diversified trade base and disciplined operational focus

These outcomes are a testament not only to favourable market conditions earlier in the year, but also to the hard work and commitment of our team across all areas of the business.

Looking ahead, we are preparing for an exciting new chapter - Derek Nind has been appointed as Chief Executive Officer and will commence in the role on 27 July, 2026.

Derek brings extensive port-sector and logistics experience, including previous leadership roles as Managing Director of 360 Logistics Group and Chief Executive Officer of CentrePort, along

with earlier executive positions at Lyttelton Port Company. His prior service as a Director of South Port combined with his Southland roots, positions him well to lead the business into its next phase.

We look forward to welcoming Derek back to Southland, and the Port. In the meantime, I am pleased to be supporting the business as Interim CEO.

Alongside this leadership transition, we have continued to make progress on a number of strategic initiatives including the purchase of the Bluff Freight Centre, which enhances our capacity and flexibility to support customers. Work is ongoing to upgrade and optimise the facility ensuring it is well equipped to meet current and future demand.

It has also been a busy and rewarding period for the wider South Port team. Our recent Australian port tour provided valuable insights into operational best practice, innovation, and future-focused infrastructure planning. These learnings will help inform our own approach as we continue to evolve the Port (see more on page 6).

Closer to home, we were delighted to open our gates to the community for Port Open Day. It was fantastic to see such strong local interest in our operations, and to share more about the role South Port plays in supporting the Southland economy (see more on page 4).

As we look ahead, South Port remains well positioned for the future, supported by a strong operational base, a clear strategic direction, and a team committed to delivering for our customers and community.

Ngā mihi nui

Geoff Finnerty

Port General Manager | Interim CEO



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A WELL-EARNED RETIREMENT: CELEBRATING 17 YEARS OF RICKY BRETT

For 17 years Ricky Brett has been a familiar face at the Port, known not only for his hard work, but for the steady presence and good humour.

On Friday 1 May, the proud Bluff local officially retired from his permanent role, however, it's not a full goodbye, with Ricky continuing to lend a hand to the Container and Marine teams on a casual basis.

Known for his honest opinions and straightforward approach, Ricky has built a reputation as someone people can rely on. For nearly two decades, he has been a valued team member not only for his technical skills, but also for his willingness to help others and mentor new staff. His good nature and sense of humour have made him a respected colleague across the Port.

Reflecting on his time at the Port, Ricky says one of the biggest lessons he has learnt, has been the value of working alongside others and sharing knowledge. He has always encouraged people to ask questions and learn from those around them. The camaraderie of the team, along with the variety of work - from fish and scrap vessels to MSC ships and repair work, have been among the highlights of his career to date.

Terminal Supervisor Graham Brown acknowledged Ricky's consistent effort over the years and has appreciated him being a dependable

team member, as well as recognising the contribution he's made to team culture.

Ricky is particularly proud of the skills he developed over the years. Starting with little experience on the machinery, he became known for his ability and precision, and was often trusted with complex tasks. He also places strong importance on understanding each machine's limits and operating them safely.

Over time, he has seen the company evolve, with advancements in machinery and technology, a stronger focus on health and safety, and many new faces joining the team along the way.

Although officially retired, Ricky describes the transition as a "work in progress". He plans to stay connected through casual work, catching up with colleagues, and keeping an eye on how things are going.

Looking ahead, Ricky is excited about spending more time with family, travelling, visiting family in Whanganui, and making the most of time at the caravan in Clyde.

Thank you for your loyal and dedicated service over the past 17 years, and we wish you all the best for what lays ahead.



Mai I Te Wāpu is compiled and produced in-house by South Port Communications Advisor, Hollie Cooper. Published twice a year (June and December), it is delivered to letterboxes in Bluff township, and available online @ southport-plato.netlify.app/media-and-investors/communications-centre

If you have any feedback or stories you'd like to share, please email Hollie @ comms@southport.co.nz.



2026 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP

EMILY HANSEN

Local Bluff resident Emily Hansen is currently undertaking a Master of Social Work having previously gained a degree in Psychology. Emily is dedicated to a career in frontline and community based social services, particularly in areas supporting women, individuals in crisis, and those experiencing mental health challenges, trauma and structural disadvantage.

Alongside her studies, Emily volunteers at a crisis support centre, where she provides empathetic, stabilising support to people in acute emotional distress. This work has strengthened her practical capability and reinforced her commitment to trauma informed, compassionate practice. Emily also works at the Bluff Medical Centre, where she engages community members experiencing a wide range of social, health and economic factors that affect their wellbeing.

Balancing postgraduate study, employment, volunteering, and parenting two young children, Emily exemplifies resilience, discipline, and purpose. Her lived experience enriches her empathy for families navigating stress and change. Emily's strong academic performance, organisational skill, and commitment to service position her to make a meaningful and lasting contribution to the social services sector.

We have no doubt Emily will achieve her goal and wish her all the best for this final year of study.

STAFF SCHOLARSHIP

LETICIA BUSATO QUELUZ

Leticia Busato Queluz is the daughter of Eduardo Queluz, Environmental Technician at South Port. Inspired by the profound impact nurses have during a patient's most vulnerable moments, Leticia is committed to pursuing a career as a Registered Nurse in New Zealand. She has a passion for pediatric and geriatric care which stems from her experience in Brazil, caring for both her younger cousins and her grandmother - moments that taught her the importance of patience, empathy, and ensuring others never feel alone.

Beyond her career goals, Leticia is an active and engaged member of her school community. Participating in volleyball, Athletics Day, and serving as a Senior Reading Mentor, International Academic Mentor, School Tour Guide, and Library Supervisor has strengthened her leadership, teamwork, and communication skills. Her volunteer work with World Vision and the LEO Club further reflects her deep commitment to the community and to helping others.

Having moved from Brazil to New Zealand as a non-English speaker, Leticia has demonstrated resilience and determination by learning a new language while excelling in leadership roles. She hopes this scholarship will support her studies as she works toward becoming a nurse dedicated to serving her community with skill, compassion, and heart.

We wish Leticia well for her first year of studies.



South Port Director, Derek Nind (right), congratulates scholarship recipient Emily Hansen.



South Port Director, Nicola Greer (right), congratulates scholarship recipient Leticia Busato Queluz.



2026 PORT OPEN DAY

Following months of planning the 2026 Port Open Day went ahead on Sunday, 8 March, despite undesirable and challenging weather conditions.

This biannual event is a great chance to interact with the community and showcase how a commercial port operates.

In order to do this safely, the Port is essentially closed for the day with the support of shipping companies and other Port users, with minimal operations taking place.

The tours start from the Bluff Oyster Festival Site which also features an Entertainment Hub, including face painting, mini jeeps, bouncy castles and live music from Darcy Kerr. This is open to everyone, not just tour attendees.

From here ticket holders board buses and head to the Island Harbour. Each bus is hosted by South Port staff as tour guides, who share their knowledge of the Port on the drive around.

At the stops participants interact with heavy machinery and cranes, and board the tugs to learn about the role they play, all of which takes approximately 2 hours. The bus then returns to the Oyster Festival Site.

The event is free of charge, but ticketed reservations are required to match bus capacity. After the initial release of tickets was sold out, an additional 2 buses were added, which also sold out.

The adverse weather impacted final numbers of participants, despite this, feedback was positive with many who took the tour commenting how informative it was.

Other community organisations including Bluff Coast Guard also took the opportunity to raise awareness of their role in the community, and local Woolworths stores joined the entertainment hub with a supply of free fruit, chocolate and water for all.

As a community engagement event South Port staff are asked to volunteer their time. In addition to the organising committee, it requires more than 50 staff on the day to make the event happen.

"Given the terrible weather, the commitment and positive attitude shown by all staff to ensure those who did turn up for the tours enjoyed themselves, was an outstanding highlight" said Hollie Cooper, Communications Advisor and Event Coordinator.

"It was also great to see staff reminded of what a unique and interesting workplace they have, and to promote it proudly," she said.

Staff were acknowledged and rewarded with vouchers by way of a thank you from South Port.

Those involved in the organisation of the event will take on feedback from the day, and review how other Ports across New Zealand run similar events in order to improve the experience for next time.



Photos supplied by staff, visitors and Joel Ryan Photography.





AUSTRALIA PORT TOUR

During March the South Port Board and Leadership team travelled to Australia and over 4 days visited and met with the leadership teams at Port of Townsville Limited, Port of Brisbane Pty Ltd and Port of Newcastle.

The objective of the trip was to learn from their experiences in the property, environment, technology, energy and health and safety spaces. The South Port team found the presentations from all three of the Port's visited very informative, and the discussions with other port leaders were constructive.

Our travelling contingent also saw the automated terminal in Brisbane, thanks to the Terminal Manager at Patrick Terminals.

"The visit provided a valuable opportunity to learn from our counterparts across the Tasman, while also reinforcing the areas in which South Port is performing strongly. A particular highlight was the quality of engagement and collaboration between the Board and the Executive Leadership Team," said Nigel Gear, Chief Executive.



VERY BUSY PORT

If you were thinking that the Port has seemed even busier than usual over the last few months, you'd be correct.

There has been strong trade numbers in both bulk cargo and containers through the Port, which resulted in all berths being full in February.



A full house on Port with all berths occupied. Photo by Tammi Topi, South Drone NZ.

THE WORLD VISITS BLUFF

On a grey day In January, The World arrived at South Port!

Launched in 2002, this is the largest private residential yacht on earth, featuring 165 luxury apartments (studios to 3-bedroom suites), owned by residents from various countries and acts as a continuously sailing, floating condominium complex.

The World, is the world's first apartment ship. She has passed this way before, most recently in 2012 when she spent several days at Stewart Island. She is the first apartment ship to arrive at Bluff.



Photo by Tammi Topi, South Drone NZ.

HEALTH AND SAFETY LEADERSHIP

In a continuation of the work being done on Port around Health and Safety, during May we hosted Dr Philip Voss from Leading Safety.

Philip co-founded Leading Safety with Hillary Bennett in 2011 after careers in academia and professional services. Philip has a PhD in Psychology and is a member of the Institute of Directors in New Zealand.

His approach and ability to translate the complex into the practical provided valuable insights for our teams on the important role leadership plays in workplace health and safety, a continual focus for us.



ANOTHER STEP FOR PAIGE



Congratulations to Paige Gilbert, who recently passed the Institute of International Container Lessors (IICL) certification exam.

Paige joined the container Depot Team in 2024, and with diligence and hard work it wasn't long before she was signed off on the use of the forklifts and vessel operations.

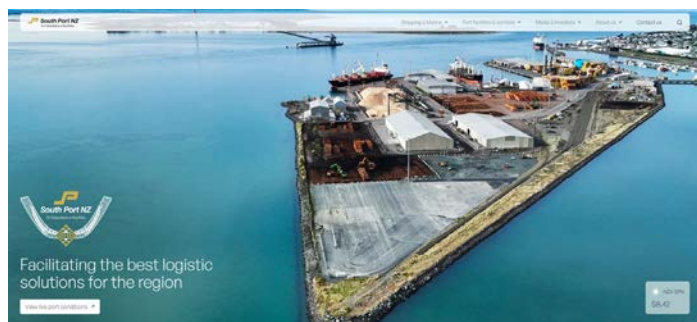
Through this she became interested in the survey role, so when the opportunity arose Paige jumped at it, and has been studying toward this since the start of the year.

This certification is a globally recognised standard for container inspectors, and Paige is now one of three qualified Surveyors in the Depot Team.

OUR NEW WEBSITE IS LIVE!

Our new website went live in March, and we are thrilled with the new fresh, modern design and easy navigation.

This was a very large project for our Communications Advisor, who engaged Plato for their extensive website experience and expertise, to bring this to fruition.



BIOSECURITY BUSINESS PLEDGE

South Port has recently joined The Biosecurity Business Pledge, a voluntary national partnership that encourages businesses to actively manage biosecurity risks as part of their everyday operations.

As the gateway port for Southland, South Port handles cargo that arrives from all over the world. Every vessel that docks, every container that is opened, represents a potential pathway for unwanted organisms to enter New Zealand. Joining the Pledge signals the Port's commitment to doing everything it can to stop that from happening.

"For us, biosecurity isn't just a compliance box to tick, it's personal. We operate at the front door of New Zealand, and we take that responsibility seriously. Every cargo movement, every vessel interaction is an opportunity to either protect our country or put it at risk. We choose to protect it," said Nigel Gear, Chief Executive.

The Biosecurity Business Pledge connects organisations across New Zealand who are committed to lifting biosecurity standards. Members share knowledge, practical tools, and innovations to build a stronger, more resilient system, because biosecurity works best when everyone plays their part.

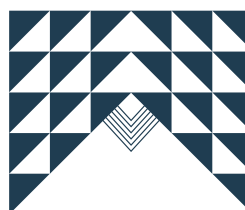
For South Port this means embedding biosecurity thinking into how staff are trained, how contractors are managed, how cargo is handled, and how vessels are serviced. It is a whole-of-organisation commitment.

"Becoming part of this national network means we can learn from others doing great work around the country and share what we've learned here in Southland. As global trade grows more complex and new risk pathways emerge, working together like this is more important than ever. We know every organisation is at a different stage in its biosecurity journey – what matters is that we're all moving forward," Nigel said.

Bluff doesn't need to imagine what happens when biosecurity fails, the community has seen the impact of a disease entering the environment through *Bonamia ostreae* (commonly referred to as bonamia). It has significantly reduced Bluff oyster populations, impacting the local economy and community. Its spread is difficult to control once established, highlighting the importance of strong biosecurity to prevent and limit such threats.

If you notice anything suspicious in local waters or on-shore, contact Biosecurity New Zealand's Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline:

0800 80 99 66



**BIOSECURITY
BUSINESS
PLEDGE**
KO TĀTOU



FAREWELL TO SOUTH PORT CHIEF EXECUTIVE NIGEL GEAR

At the end of May, we farewelled Nigel Gear as he concluded his time at South Port. Over his 32-year tenure, Nigel progressed through the company before becoming Chief Executive in 2017, leading South Port with a strong commitment to its people, customers, and the wider community.

Nigel's first role at the Port, in 1994, was as Company Accountant. He recalls the work was done in pencil on A3 paper, which he describes as "a flaming disaster". He says he learnt a lot in this role, including how to get his team on board after initially receiving plenty of pushback.

"They would say no to everything: 'It's not my job, that's your job,' and walk off. I'd think, 'Okay ... what am I going to do now?'" Nigel laughs.

"But it was a great experience," he said.

When the newly created role of MDF Coordinator came up in 1997, it was an ideal fit for Nigel, who had previously worked in operational roles while studying accounting part-time before joining South Port.

The role saw Nigel learn to drive forklifts and work alongside staff on operational duties, while also managing office work and building relationships with customers.

Nigel's natural leadership qualities saw the role expand in 1998 to Warehouse Manager, adding dry dairy and cold stores to his existing responsibilities.

In 1999, containerised cargo was also added, and his role became Cargo and Warehousing Manager.

"That was busy, really busy, juggling staff. There was a lot going on," Nigel said.

There was plenty of change during his time in the role, including the implementation of new digital systems and more modern equipment, such as the Liebherr mobile crane in 1996.

Nigel also fondly remembers the Pawling & Harnischfeger (P&H) mobile harbour crane. "That was an old rust bucket with big levers to operate it. It was terrible," he said.

In 2007, looking for a change of pace, Nigel took on the role of Commercial Manager. His accounting background meant he was already doing analysis, costings, and business case work for the Port, which carried over into the position.

Nigel spent 10 years in the role, deepening customer relationships, exploring development opportunities, and overseeing data and costings.

Those skills, along with the knowledge he gained during that period, helped Nigel transition into the role of Chief Executive in 2017.

"Nigel has been with South Port for more than 32 years. I have had the pleasure of being on the Board for half that time and can say with confidence that he has shaped many careers and initiatives during that period. He was instrumental in developing the six key values that South Port aspires to and has held himself accountable for ensuring we live by them," said Philip Cory-Wright, Chair.

"A highlight of his contribution was the successful completion of our channel deepening project, Kia Whakaū, with 40% of our ship visits now utilising the deeper draft. He is leaving the business in great heart," he said.

On behalf of all those who have had the privilege of working with him, we thank Nigel for his service, leadership, dedication, and contribution to the organisation, and wish him every success in the next chapter ahead.

