

EXPANDING SA'S OPERATIONS IN 2024

Flinders Warehousing & Distribution Operations Manager, Todd Clarke, tells MHD about the company expanding its operations in South Australia, improving security and safety in its warehouses, and implementing a new WMS.

Growth is on the horizon at Flinders Port Holdings (FPH), with an increase in cargo tonnage, grain tonnage and total containers in the 2022-23 financial year, with further growth anticipated in 2024.

South Australia's ports are the gateway to trade for the state, with more than 2000 ships calling during the past financial year including cargo ships transporting grain and other agricultural products, mining equipment, aquaculture, wine and other food and beverages.

EXPANDING SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S OPERATIONS

More than 90 per cent of South Australia's exports and imports pass through the state's ports.

In the year ending June 30, total cargo tonnage increased by 7.7 per cent from 23.9 million tonnes to 25.7 million tonnes, reflecting an increase in two-way trade.

Total container numbers increased

by 2.9 per cent, from 328,537 TEU (twenty-foot equivalent units) to 337,959 TEU.

Thanks to significant year-on-year volume growth at Flinders Warehousing & Distribution (FWD) since its inception four years ago, there has been an ever-growing need for storage and services capabilities, with improved systems and an optimisation strategy underway.

FWD is perfectly placed to offer customers additional benefits given its proximity to the Flinders Adelaide Container Terminal (FACT) which runs 24/7. Rail and road connectivity provides seamless access to the port; easy transfers of containers between the terminal, Empty Container Park and both FWD sites; and quick turnaround of containers from vessel discharge.

From ship to warehouse, no trucks are involved – just cranes and straddle carriers within the internal port network. The new straddle carriers used to move cargo are also hybrid –

the first of their kind in the southern hemisphere. This also allows FPH to meet sustainability targets and produce lower emissions.

To cater for the increasing usage of South Australia's ports and in particular Outer Harbor, FWD's largest warehouse – with a floorspace of 20,000 sqm – has just doubled its capacity by investing in and introducing racking.

The racking allows the warehouse to hold double the number of pallets vertically – now catering for more than 3000 pallets and duplicating the warehouse footprint. The installation of the new racking system was finished in January (2024).

Doubling the storage capacity at FWD provides significant benefits for FWD customers, both importers and exporters alike.

IMPROVING SECURITY FOR SAFETY

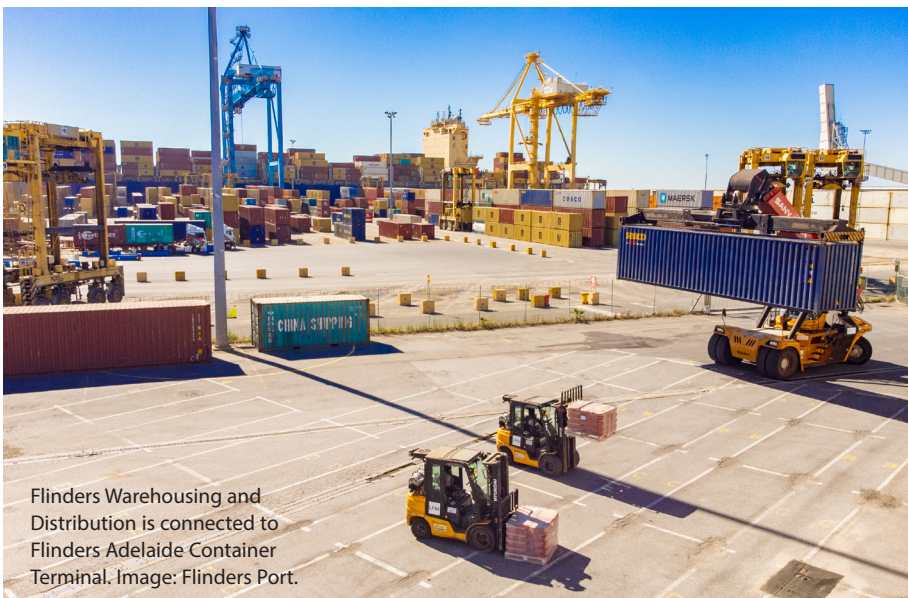
From a production perspective, doubling the storage capacity means fewer movements from rack to truck and rack to container and easier access to customers' stock.

It provides visibility of cargo and ease in identifying where the cargo is stored through the sophisticated warehouse tracking and management system FWD now has in place.

The system makes it easier to identify specific pallets and identify which ones need to be moved faster than others.

Along with its increased capacity, the warehouse is fully insulated and maintains an ambient temperature, allowing for the storage of temperature-sensitive products.

With the growth predicted in the Outer Harbor precinct over the next 25 years, having more warehousing space



Flinders Warehousing and Distribution is connected to Flinders Adelaide Container Terminal. Image: Flinders Port.



The warehouse is fully insulated and maintains an ambient temperature.
Image: Flinders Port.

will become increasingly important for importers and exporters.

FPH has recently installed a higher level of security in its warehouse, in readiness to become Customs bonded. Once this licence has been granted, it will enable FWD to hold high-risk materials and equipment related to various industries' demands.

The additional security includes extensive CCTV, automatic swipe access gates with face recognition and enhanced traceability processes and procedures to ensure every item, which passes through the facility is controlled in accordance with Australian Border Force's (ABF) strict requirements.

FWD will apply to the federal government for both the 77G Depot Licence and 79G Warehouse Licence, which allow for the movement and storage of under-bond containers, still being held for ABF verification or control, however it will allow the FWD team to unpack and store cargo on behalf of the ABF.

Having 77G and 79G accreditation

offers customers significant flexibilities by allowing FWD to commence the inspection of cargo without having to call in customs officers, and peace of mind that security regulations are being complied with.

FPH is also going through the Defence Industries Security Program (DISP), which allows FWD to store and transfer defence machinery and componentry through its facilities. With ASC an Outer Harbor neighbour, and with FPH being strategically aligned, gaining this approval by the Department of Defence is an important step for FWD.

IMPLEMENTING A NEW WMS

Over the next 12 to 24 months, a new warehousing management system is being developed and implemented, which will save FWD operators time.

Along with its electric forklifts, FWD's environmental footprint is being further reduced. The warehousing system is part of the FWD

optimisation project, which ensures better usage of the warehouse's footprint, and more seamless movement of inbound and outbound cargo.

The 20,000 sqm warehouse has been built to the highest industry standards, with an undercover awning the entire length of the facility, which ensures trucks, and their cargo is protected from the weather when loading or unloading.

The eight unique container bays provide not only an awning but side coverage, which closes around all sides of the container and offers complete weather protection to ensure the integrity of customers goods at all times.

With the increasing capacity to store cargo and shipping numbers growing, FWD has employed another eight team members over the last 12 months and is looking for continued growth. ■

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