

# Women leading the way

*Daily Cargo News' Paula Wallace speaks with women who are blazing trails within the maritime, logistics and supply chain sectors about how they came into their current roles, the challenges and the victories*



**Hermione Parsons,**  
director, Centre for Supply Chain & Logistics



**Sue Tomic,**  
general manager-logistics,  
DP World Logistics Australia



**My Therese Blank,**  
Oceania customer service director,  
AP Moller-Maersk



**Teresa Lloyd,**  
CEO, Maritime Industry  
Australia Limited

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**Ranee Crosby,**  
CEO, Port of Townsville



**Alison Cusack,**  
principal, Cusack & Co and  
WISTA Australia president



**Eliza Anning,**  
general manager corporate  
services, LINX Cargo Care Group



**Audrey Galbraith,**  
executive general manager  
operations, Royal Wolf

Masterfile

It's a sad indictment of the shipping and maritime logistics sector that we don't actually know how women are represented in the different parts of the industry. But we know anecdotally and from our own associations that women are starting to infiltrate previously male domains.

The figure commonly quoted is 2% for the share of on-water operational roles held by women and less than 10% in logistics management positions. The Centre for Supply Chain & Logistics, through its Wayfinder program, hopes to build a bigger picture. It expects to receive funding soon to move into the research stage of its program to examine the causes of female under-representation in the supply chain.

In the meantime, Wayfinder has worked with industry sponsors this year to develop and deliver training modules that cater for a general audience and also those women already employed within sponsor companies who want to learn more about changing their roles.

## The biggest challenge can be that shipping is still seen as a bloke's world.

**Alison Cusack**, Cusack & Co/WISTA

"I believe that over the last ten years a lot of women have come into the industry but in the services sector," says Dr Hermione Parsons, director of the CSCL.

"I've done this before at a luncheon of say 400 people, where I get everyone from the sector to put their hand up and then how many work in recruitment HR, finance etc... and finally you get down to operations and out of 400 there might be six or eight women."

There needs to be a shift in attitudes, according to lawyer and president of WISTA in Australia, Alison Cusack.

"There is currently a shortage of seafarers globally. The International Transport Workers' Federation predicts that if there is no course correction, by 2025 we are looking at a workforce shortage of 147,500," she says.

"If we are shutting out up to 50% of the potential workforce, we're not going to solve this issue."

To change the gender balance, young people also need to know there are opportunities to work in the maritime and supply chain sectors. This is why Wayfinder is also working at the community and education provider levels to promote supply chain and logistics careers.

Given the lack of awareness of shipping and logistics careers, particularly among girls and women, many of the women DCN spoke to either entered the industry by fortunate "accident" or have been part of specific programs to attract young talent or women into the industry.

"Initially I fell into it by accident really," says Raneë Crosby Port of Townsville CEO.

"I was a casual receptionist in engineering, saving money to move away for university. I had many great bosses and role models who gave their time to me and helped shape my career choices," she says.

"I had the opportunity to see many great ports around Australia and the world, and was in awe of the role they play in shaping economies, regions and cities. I have been hooked ever since."

In 2003, Ms Crosby joined the Townsville Port management team at just 25 years of age, the youngest female to enter the executive, and in 2014 was appointed CEO.

At the Australian Shipping and Maritime Industry Awards in Sydney last year, the Port of Townsville won the award for gender diversity.

"We are very fortunate," Ms Crosby says, referring to the port's environmental technician team. "We have seven female environmental scientists, which is terrific."

"We have a female chair leading our board, a female CEO, and eight females in our senior management team," she says, adding the port's female representation in executive and management areas is just shy of 50%.

"But overall we have more work to do," Ms Crosby says. "Around 30% of our workforce is female, 70% male, which is at the upper range of the industry average globally. This is largely due to male-dominated areas of the industry such as marine pilots, trades and security personnel."

Sue Tomic, general manager-logistics at DP World Logistics Australia also came into the industry purely by accident around 10 years ago in the capacity of interim CFO at a large intermodal in Sydney's St Peters.

"I was engaged for a six-week contract to cover the exit of their existing CFO until they appointed a new recruit and ended up staying for eight years."

Fortunately she couldn't have picked a better "accidental job" as she was exposed to all challenges of container movement from port to paddock or port to distribution centre including both road and rail modes.

"I quickly learnt no one day was the same and the pace and diversity of issues faced to service the IMEX market fuelled my passion for the industry and ways to improve efficiency," Ms Tomic says.

For the last 12 months, she has been in her current role with DP World Australia's first venture into landside operations that has quickly become the largest rail volume service provider to the NSW container export market.

Container company Royal Wolf's Audrey Galbraith says some of its best-performing depots are run by women.

After 21-years with the company, Ms Galbraith has just been promoted to the position of executive general manager of operations.

"Within our own business there are examples of female operations managers... especially in New Zealand. Royal Wolf has

### COLLABORATING TO ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY

■ The annual Supply Chain & Logistics Association *Women in Logistics luncheon* is taking place on August 30, in Melbourne. It's an event that challenges thinking, inspires action, encourages diversity and motivates collaborative change.

In its fourth year, the event gives participants the opportunity to join the supply chain and logistics community and share ideas that can be put into practice to encourage diversity in the workplace.

The SCLAA has announced that Victoria's minister for ports and freight Melissa Horne will open the luncheon. Registrations are now open: <http://bit.ly/2019WILL>

a policy of the best person for the job and some great opportunities for further study and career advancement,” she says.

Ms Galbraith is now one of four women in Royal Wolf’s executive committee, a number that has increased in the past 10 years.

“When I first started working in the industry, there weren’t many women in senior management — but that’s shifted. While the shipping industry is still a man’s world, Royal Wolf has changed faster than the shipping industry,” she says.

“We now we have four women in the committee, who work across HR, marketing, operations and technology. Women broaden the outlook and we bring a new perspective to the business,” Ms Galbraith says.

**A BLOKE’S WORLD?**

“The biggest challenge can be that shipping is still seen as a bloke’s world,” Ms Cusack says.

“Sometimes, I think, the automatic assumption is that women aren’t interested in a particular aspect of a job, or won’t have the skills. Things like ‘it’s dirty, it’s a man job’. I’m not saying that this is everywhere in the industry however the industry is due for a re-branding.”

Most of the women DCN spoke to challenged assumptions by consistently expressing their passion for the industry and genuine interest and insight into how freight is moved around the globe.

“There are three things that I love about working in this sector. Firstly, the work we do is tangible. Whilst we make one move at a time, the efficiency of each move is what creates an effective supply chain,” Eliza Anning, general manager corporate services, LINX Cargo Care Group, says.

“Secondly, the diversity of work in this sector is like no other I have worked in. As the sector embraces new technologies, this is not going to change,” she says.

“Finally, and most importantly for me, it is about the people who work in this sector.”

My Therese Blank, Oceania customer service director, AP Moller-Maersk, says the people are the most interesting aspect of her job.

“We have some amazing people working in the shipping and transportation industry, in Oceania and all around the world,” she says.

“I find it fascinating to learn about the challenges of the past, as well as the changes our industry is now undertaking.”



Dani McGlashen (left) and GBRIMC teacher, Mick McDonald in the Great Barrier Reef International Marine College’s full mission bridge simulator



Sunlover Reef Cruises group general manager Sharon Sheldrake (left), Dani McGlashen (centre) and Sunlover Reef Cruises group human resources manager Nadine Machan

**MAKING A SPLASH IN THE MARITIME INDUSTRY**

■ Cairns resident Dani McGlashen is making her mark in the maritime industry and she’s passionate about encouraging more women to join the community.

Born to navy parents and growing up by the ocean, the 29-year-old has the sand and sea in her DNA.

“Ever since I was young I have always felt really good and comfortable being on or near the ocean, and I decided early on that I wanted a career in the maritime industry,” Ms McGlashen says.

“I spent several years working as a dive instructor in Thailand and on the Great Barrier Reef which was so fulfilling and a dream of mine since I was a little girl.

“I reached a point where I started wondering what I was going to do with my career long term, and I decided that the boat handling and driving side of things seemed like a natural progression for me.”

Natural for Ms McGlashen but traditionally uncommon, women represent just 4.2% of the marine transport industry’s national workforce.

In order to take the next step in her career, Ms McGlashen enrolled at TAFE Queensland’s Great Barrier Reef International Marine College.

“I was blown away by the college, it is an amazing facility and it has the latest training gear and equipment,” she says.

Throughout her studies she learnt how to forecast the weather and predict ocean conditions, operate propulsion systems, radar and other electronic navigation equipment, manage a small crew, and act as a chief mate on a vessel up to 80 metres long.

“It was great to practice my boat driving skills in the full mission bridge simulator, as it’s a safe environment to troubleshoot problems which could happen in the real-world,” Ms McGlashen says.

She has now reached a major professional milestone - becoming Sunlover Reef Cruises’ first ever female captain.

“Five years ago I couldn’t picture myself here so I am really happy and grateful for the opportunities that have come my way and for the support I’ve received from Sunlover,” she says.

In 2012, Ms Blank had the opportunity to experience first-hand the industry's impact on global trade.

"I was assigned to Myanmar for three months to conduct a strategic analysis of the business development opportunities in the country and make a proposition for future investments in the country," she says.

"My contract was extended and I was tasked with setting up the Maersk agency as well as the first Maersk feeder service into Yangon."

Ms Blank ended up staying in Myanmar until mid 2014 at which time she had seen the transformation of the country, with farmers having access to bigger markets and supermarket shelves filled with international goods.

Ms Cusack describes the maritime sector as "fascinatingly unique" and one that "transcends country borders".

"Another great thing is that it is tangible. A big ship taking cargo around the world beats theoretical concepts that are often found in law. If a ship collides with another ship, there are pictures," she says.

"You can also legitimately talk about pirates, which no other industry gets to do."

While she has not experienced restrictions in her career based on gender, Ms Anning says she is regularly the "only woman in the room".

"As a traditionally male-dominated industry, there is still a perception that women would not be interested in the moving and lifting of goods," she says.

"Someone recently said to me that the shift work nature of operational roles naturally means that women are less likely to want some of the frontline operations roles... we must challenge these views.

"Women have traditionally held shift work roles in a number of sectors. Shift work in the supply chain sector is not special."

Ms Tomic agrees the industry is male-dominated, especially at the senior and executive management levels and that this has to change.

"More is required to achieve a balance across organisations and it really stems from the male executives and current decision makers. There needs to be a conscious decision to actively change the dynamic at the highest levels," she says.

### GOOD NEWS STORIES

"Returning from maternity leave and taking on the role as country manager and sales director for Maersk Australia did really open my eyes to some of the challenges and perceptions that exist in our industry," Ms Blank says.

"It was not until then that I realised the importance of having female role models in our industry. For me it's important to be a role model and show that anything is possible regardless of gender."

Ms Blank was a beneficiary of Maersk's parental policy offering mothers or primary caregivers 100% paid leave for 18 weeks and the ability to work 80% at full time salary for up to six months prior to the child turning one year old.

"We offer all employees the opportunity to work flexible hours to manage school pick-up and drop-off, as well as work-from-home arrangements," Ms Blank says.

"We see continued growth in our female employment ratio, with 49% of female employees across Maersk Oceania, and 53% in Australia."

Outside of Maersk, Ms Blank highlights two programs she sees as effective in getting more women into operational leadership

roles: the Patrick Women in Logistics cadetship program as well as the Port of Brisbane female cadetship program.

"Stevedoring is the bastion of male dominance in the industry and this is a very positive step to providing the necessary skills and training to foster diversity," Ms Tomic says.

"More of these types of programs are needed to attract and retain, not only women to the industry, but also younger people and the next generation of industry leaders."

Another program worthy of mention was the Port of Auckland's recruiting processes when hiring for their gantry crane operators. This new approach broke down barriers and allowed more women to be hired, increasing the percentage of women in the workforce from under 5% to 23%. The operation also increased productivity from around 22 crane moves per hour to 41.

**For me it's important to be a role model and show that anything is possible regardless of gender**

**My Therese Blank, Maersk**

Leading an all-female team at Maritime Industry Australia, Teresa Lloyd says there are many great examples of programs that support women's participation in the industry.

"Having said that, I've now been around long enough to admit that in general progress has been glacial and I now support dedicated programs as a way to accelerate change to create a more balanced workforce and leadership mix," she says.

### WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN

"I think anyone can be anything in the maritime industry with the right work ethic, attitude and passion," Ms Lloyd says.

"If someone feels they are being held back in any way from advancing their career I encourage them to reach out to someone to support them – there are plenty of people ready and willing to assist."

WISTA is hoping to expand its reach with a mentoring program, to further connect women in the industry as well as hosting a WISTA APAC conference here in Australia in the near future.

Ms Galbraith says she is keen to set up a mentoring program within Royal Wolf as well.

"My fellow female executive committee members meet on a monthly basis and we will be looking to see how we can support and help our fellow woman within Royal Wolf and beyond, from practical support around further study for example or just to listen to their thoughts on where they would like to head on their career journey," she says.

Ms Crosby says it has been important for her to watch and learn from many leaders and influencers.

"Kerry Sanderson was the first female port CEO in the country - of Fremantle from 1991 to 2008 - I remember meeting her early in my career and was blown away by what she had achieved," Ms Crosby says.

"Having more women on boards and in executive roles is essential, it is incredible that there is still such under-representation when it has been proven more women equals more profits." ■