

MPW SUPPLY CHAIN - INDUSTRY UPDATE - 28TH MAY 2025

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AUSTRALIA & NZ NEWS

TUG OF WAR OVER DARWIN PORT

Chinese Ambassador to Australia, Xiao Qian, defended Landbridge Group's right to operate the Port of Darwin, highlighting their significant investments and improvements over the past decade. Amidst calls to cancel Landbridge's 99-year lease, New York-based Cerberus Capital Management is preparing an offer to buy the port. Xiao urged Australia to honor the lease agreement and foster mutual trust, emphasizing the positive contributions of Landbridge to the local economy and the importance of a fair business environment for Chinese enterprises. [The DCN](#)

INDUSTRY OPINION: AUSTRALIA - THE LAST BASTION IN GLOBAL SHIPPING LAND GRAB

Australia remains one of the last major trading nations to resist global shipping lines' control over container terminals. CK Hutchison Holdings confirmed MSC's investment in a consortium led by BlackRock to acquire 43 port assets, including Hutchison Ports Australia. This move could reshape competition and raise concerns over vertical integration. Australia's four major stevedores remain independent, preserving competition. The ACCC and Productivity Commission have called for reform to ensure transparency and prevent market power abuse. [The DCN](#)

ACCC DELAYS DP WORLD-SILK DECISION AGAIN

The ACCC has delayed DP World's acquisition of Silk Logistics for a second time, citing the need for further information. The takeover, announced on 11 November 2024, involves DP World acquiring 100% of Silk Logistics. The ACCC's review raised concerns about potential discrimination against rival container transport providers, exclusionary discounts, and access to sensitive information. The decision date has been postponed to 10 July. [The DCN](#)

SUPPLY CHAIN NEWS

\$2.1BN E2OPEN PURCHASE WILL CATAPULT WISETECH INTO A DIFFERENT DIMENSION'

WiseTech Global has agreed to purchase US peer E2open in a \$2.1bn deal, marking its largest acquisition. This addition nearly doubles WiseTech's revenue and workforce. WiseTech founder Richard White highlighted the complementary nature of E2open's services, which will extend the CargoWise ecosystem. The deal is expected to be completed by the end of the year, with WiseTech raising \$3bn through a syndicated debt facility. E2open shareholders have already approved the merger. [The Loadstar](#)

LEGAL CHALLENGES FOR TARIFFS AND DE MINIMIS, AS EU EYES NEW ECOMMERCE RULES

A US autoparts retailer filed a lawsuit arguing that ending the de minimis exemption is unlawful, citing the Administrative Procedures Act. The retailer claims the policy change would force it to cease operations and that tariffs under IEEPA are unlawful. Twelve US states also challenged the president's authority on tariffs. In the EU, the EC is considering a market surveillance authority and a €2 processing fee per parcel to address ecommerce goods quality. [The Loadstar](#)

BOX-TICKING, WITH FITTING IN THE SCHOOL RUN STILL THE POSER FOR WOMEN IN AIR CARGO

The CNS conference's Women in Air Cargo panel highlighted industry inequities but felt like a box-ticking exercise. Despite Cathy and IATA's efforts, only 16 of 49 speakers were women. The panel focused on work-life balance rather than professional expertise. The first day was dedicated to golf, a male-dominated networking activity. Actions speak louder than words, and little has changed since 2023. [The Loadstar](#)

FMC GOES AFTER FOC'S

The United States Federal Maritime Commission has launched an investigation into the impact of Flag of Convenience shipping on US commerce. The inquiry will examine vessel flagging laws, regulations, and practices of certain foreign governments. The FMC seeks public comments on risks to the ocean shipping supply chain, including irresponsible vessel flagging and practices by vessel owners. The Commission is particularly interested in feedback from experts in vessel operations, international trade, law, and national security. [The DCN](#)

CREW SAVED AS MSC BOX SHIP, HIT BY 'MONSOON' OFF INDIAN COAST SINKS

The Liberia-flagged MSC Elsa 3 capsized off India's Cochin coast, raising environmental concerns due to oil spillage and hazardous cargo. The vessel sank on 25 May after developing a severe list in monsoon weather. All 24 crew members were rescued safely. The 1997-built vessel had 640 containers, including 25 with dangerous cargo. Salvage operations continue, and the vessel's age and history of accidents have raised concerns. The fate of the cargo and insurance claims remains uncertain. [The Loadstar](#)

CARRIERS REACT QUICKLY TO TRANSPAC DEMAND SURGE, BUT RATES REMAIN MUTED

Container spot freight rates on the transpacific continued to rise this week, though at a slower pace than last week's GRI-induced growth. Carriers quickly reinstated services in anticipation of a demand surge. Estimates suggest 180,000-800,000 loaded containers are ready to ship from China. Despite increased capacity, spot rates showed modest gains. Concerns remain over the impact of tariffs and the sustainability of demand. Asia-Europe trade rates remained flat. [The Loadstar](#)

ONE OPTS FOR SOUTH KOREAN NEWBUILDS TO AVOID HEFTY US PORT FEES

ONE is discussing ordering a dozen LNG dual-fuelled ships from Hyundai's shipbuilding division to avoid hefty US port fees for Chinese-built box ships. The \$2.5bn order overlooks the 11% higher price of South Korean shipbuilders. Meanwhile, Cosco is set to charter six 8,300 teu newbuildings from Seaspan. From October, Chinese-built ships calling US ports will face increased charges. Despite protectionist moves, shipowners continue to negotiate orders. [The Loadstar](#)

AIR FORWARDERS FACE FINANCIAL UNCERTAINTY - BUT THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES

Air forwarders face financial uncertainty due to a downward trend in air cargo yield growth. Charles Marrale, CEO of ExFreight, attributes this to the de minimis reduction, impacting imports from Asia. Brandon Fried, executive director of the Air Forwarders' Association, noted that many forwarders are reducing their balance forecasts. Despite challenges, Marrale sees opportunities in chaos and emphasizes the importance of digitalization for resilience. Flexport's Arno Hausch recommends considering quarterly or monthly deals. [The Loadstar](#)

BOTTLENECK FEARS AS CARGO GROWTH OUTPACES AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Forwarders and airlines fear new bottlenecks at airports as cargo growth outpaces infrastructure investment. Brandon Fried of the Air Forwarders' Association highlighted the need for federal investment to handle increasing air cargo volumes. IATA's Peter Cerda and LATAM Cargo's Andrés Bianchi emphasized the importance of visionary airport planning and streamlined procedures. Investments by FedEx and Lufthansa Cargo aim to improve infrastructure and sustainability. A government study on airport cargo congestion is underway. [The Loadstar](#)

US TARIFF REPRIEVE FOR EU

The US government delayed a planned 50% tariff on European Union imports until 9 July. President Donald Trump announced the tariff on 23 May, citing the US trade deficit with the EU. However, on 25 May, Trump agreed to postpone the implementation date after a request from European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. The delay aims to allow more time for negotiations. Earlier in the year, a 20% tariff was announced but delayed for discussions. [Air Cargo News](#)

DE MINIMIS EXEMPTION CHANGE HITS CHINA-US AIR CARGO DEMAND

Air cargo demand between China and the US fell in the first full week after the de minimis exemption for Chinese e-commerce packages ended. Data from WorldACD shows a 10% decline in airfreight volumes from China and Hong Kong to the US compared to the previous week. Year-on-year volumes were down 27%. The US-China trade war pause may help cargo volumes recover, but customs clearance adds cost and transit time. [Air Cargo News](#)