



Photo: Hansa Heavy Lift

Project cargo special report: Opening of Perth office has paid off for new-to-the-region operator

Hansa Heavy Lift -

May 07 2015 - 20:06:32

It has been a year since the project and heavy lift tramp shipping line Hansa Heavy Lift committed to the Australasian market by opening a new office in Perth.

Since that time, the carrier, which is one of the biggest in the heavy lift and project market, has undertaken a number of moves in the region and across the globe.

"Increased modularisation means we are transporting ever more complex cargoes and often to challenging destinations," said Trent Robson, director of Hansa Heavy Lift (Australia), who is heading up operations in the region with fellow director John McNamara.

"Expert engineering is essential and having vessels with flexible stowage and up-to-date equipment is a must.

"Having a young fleet and an in-house team of engineers has meant Hansa Heavy Lift is able to offer the Australian market a true alternative to the traditional heavy lift operators."

In the year that its Australian office has been open, the company has shipped roughly 600,000 freight tons of project and heavy lift cargo into the region.

The cargo has all weighed between 200 and 500 tonnes, and has included modules; mine and port stackers and reclaimers; crushers; rolling stock; operations buildings; and subsea equipment.

The tramp shipping line has one of the youngest fleets in the market and is currently transporting giant cranes, from Europe to Botany Bay on board HHL Venice.

HHL Venice transported a similar cargo earlier this year, travelling open hatch through the Bosphorus with two cranes fully erected and another stowed below deck.

The cranes, manufactured by Kirow Ardel, were transported for Dealex Transport and travelled from Split/Croatia to Yushny/Ukraine aboard the ship – one of Hansa's fleet of 21 vessels which are, on average, five years old, and equipped with cranes with a combined lifting capacity of 1400 tonnes.

The available draught alongside during the lift was on average only seven metres so that clearance below the keel was sometimes limited to 50cm. The cargo also had challenging 28 metre-high lifting points.

"Stability during the lift was critical because of the draft restrictions in the port of loading", said Joerg Roehl, head of Asia Pacific (APAC) and chief commercial officer.

"However, our ships come with state-of-the-art equipment and are able to act independently of local infrastructure, giving us the ability to overcome such obstacles.

Expertise

"The team also followed our own six-step process, which we have in place to ensure every piece of cargo is delivered safely and on time," he said.

"This process involves everything from initial contact with the customer, through to planning and implementation, and on to closure and evaluation."

The carrier recently drew on its engineering expertise to discharge two exceptionally large reactors at the US port of New Orleans.

The cargo included one reactor weighing 830 tonnes with a length of 39 metres and another, with a weight of 405 tonnes and a length of 56 metres.

Both reactors were delivered by barge and loaded waterside in Mumbai, India on board HHL Richards Bay, one of Hansa Heavy Lift's P2-series vessels.

While loading the heaviest piece of 830 tonnes, there was only a ten-centimetre clearance on each side of the beam underneath the cargo, so the piece had to be lifted straight up.

Mr Roehl said heavy load platforms were placed under each saddle to distribute the weight.

"Prior to this we ensured all the measurements were exact as we would not be able to move the heavy lift platforms once the cargo was in place," he said.

"This move clearly demonstrated how we have the in-house engineering expertise to deal with the increasingly larger cargoes that our customers present to us."

Although there has been strong activity involving large projects in Australia and New Zealand, including, for example, Gorgon, Ichthys, Wheatstone, Roy Hill, and the Australian Pacific CSG Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) projects, Trent Robson believes that the heavy lift market in the region is moving into a tougher period.

"We have been involved in a number of the larger projects, but the number of new projects in the market has reduced, with decisions for major investment stalling.

"That said, there are certainly opportunities still arising," he added.

And Hansa Heavy Lift chief executive officer Roger Iliffe said that despite challenges in the Australasian economy, the carrier has still seen a demand for resources from the region from other parts of the world that are experiencing growth.

"The general outlook for the global heavy lift market is looking more positive after a period of overcapacity," he said.

"We have seen an improvement in 2014 already which is on-going and even a slight recovery on the freight rate levels.

"Certainly those still need to develop even further. We are positive this will feed into Australia and New Zealand and lead to improvements in our sector."

The shipping line has seen increased demand from the oil and gas sectors, Mr Iliffe added, as well as an uptick in mining and infrastructure developments, all important drivers to the demand for heavy lift vessels.

"We will expand our focus on the super heavy lift and offshore business," he said.

Hansa Heavy Lift is also witnessing new opportunities opening up in the transport and installation sector.

"The oil and gas industry in particular is looking for alternative modes of installation and since we have carried out major projects including subsea handshakes, this will be a growing focus for us," said Mr Iliffe.