

Interview

Röhlig Logistics - 50 years in Australia

Paul Zalai from Freight & Trade Alliance (FTA) recently had the opportunity to sit down with Mat Vermeulen, Managing Director of Röhlig Australia, the Australian subsidiary of Röhlig Logistics, an owner-operated logistics company that offers its customers services in the areas of sea freight, air freight and contract logistics, to talk about their 50 years in Australia.

“ *The beauty of technology is that it can help to automate everyday tasks and we can focus on perfecting our customer experience* ”

50
YEARS
RÖHLIG AUSTRALIA

1. Paul Zalai - Mat, to start, can you give us a little background on yourself and your role at Röhlig?

I have been 25 plus years in the industry with large international companies both in Australia and New Zealand. My journey with Röhlig Australia commenced in October 2018 as Chief Sales Officer and I became Managing Director in July 2022.

2. Paul Zalai - Would you like to tell us a bit about the Röhlig operation in Australia and your services?

In the last 5 years, Röhlig Australia has grown existing facilities and opened new ones. We have a branch now in Newcastle, NSW and moved into a new office at Perth Airport last year. We opened a new warehouse in Adelaide in June 2023 and have taken strides into the transport sector, offering linehaul and coastal services across Australia.

Our Contract Logistics division has expanded, leading to the new warehouse openings. This expansion mirrors the ongoing evolution of our business in Australia, complementing our core offerings in Air and Sea Logistics.

We are very proud of our market leading Air Freight service from Germany to Australia and we continue to focus on our products being Air and FCL, especially given current market conditions. We believe we have one of the best products in the market and combine that with Price, Reliability and Speed.

Customer experience is everything at Röhlig.

3. Paul Zalai - You have great national coverage, and, as you just mentioned, you have an office in Newcastle. Can you tell us how that operation is going and its role in developing that region of NSW?

We have had a presence in Newcastle since 2002 and a dedicated representative there since 2005. In 2019, we decided to open a new office due to rapid expansion of Sydney and NSW. Newcastle was a destination and has attracted a lot of businesses. We saw this as an important strategic step for Röhlig Australia and are happy we can be close to our Central Coast and Newcastle customers.

Over the past two decades, Röhlig has played a pivotal role in supporting the local business community, a testament to our commitment to the region. Today, we dispatch a fleet of 2-3 Röhlig trucks to Newcastle daily, ensuring that our clients receive the prompt and reliable service they deserve.

Currently, we have 4 people in the office and continue investing in our team to grow this regional market. Look out for our trucks and Röhlig logo at King Street, Newcastle.

4. Paul Zalai - There is a growing interest in de carbonising / greening the supply chain and ESG (environmental, social and governance) is becoming a topic on everyone's lips – what is Röhlig doing in this space?

We clearly see our responsibility and strive to promote all aspects of the ESG principles in all business activities and decisions.

Röhlig globally has been awarded SILVER status in the Ecovadis assessment with improvements across all sectors, with the biggest improvement verticals being Environment and Sustainable Procurement.

We also completed an SBT Commitment registering our focus on reducing our own carbon footprint. We have a short-term target of a 42% reduction by 2030 within the ANZ region, with a global focus on Net Zero.

We are a signatory to the world's biggest corporate sustainability initiative, the UN Global Compact, and are regularly evaluated in the EcoVadis sustainability rating.

We are also supporting our customers in reducing or offsetting their carbon footprints by making the emissions for their selected freight routes visible via EcoTransIT, using our CO2 calculator. In addition, we have established a cooperation with Lufthansa (in Europe) to provide a sustainable transport offering on selected routes. To do this, we focus on investment and certified climate protection projects to effectively compensate for CO2 emissions. We have also launched a similar programme specifically for our customers in Australia, for LCL shipments in our own consolidated containers.

We recently moved the entire forklift fleet in ANZ to electric and when sourcing new facilities – our minimum requirement is 5* environmental rating.

5. Paul Zalai - Technology has made a huge impact on our industry and continues to do so; what role does this play in your day-to-day operations and client engagement?

Technology plays a massive part in our business, and we pursue two approaches: On the one hand, we develop digital software products with which our customers can handle their shipments themselves and gain access to important data.

On the other hand, we develop digital solutions together with our clients that are individually tailored to them in order to integrate processes and systems. *We attach great importance to working in a customer-oriented manner and responding very specifically to their requirements.*

We were one of the first companies to implement CW1 as a global platform. We have our own Software team developing bespoke solutions for our customers, that is why we have the flexibility to customise your digital evolution and we have a proven track record for this in ANZ.



(LtoR) Paul Zalai with Thomas Regin Hansen, CEO - Australia & New Zealand and Mat Vermeulen, Managing Director Australia for Röhlig Logistics

6. Paul Zalai - Is Technology the answer moving forward, or do you still see a critical role for people?

Both, technology and people combined, is the answer moving forward. We believe in offering the best of both worlds, relying on our excellently trained employees in customer service as well as our digital platforms. Our customers can decide whether they want to work with us exclusively digitally, prefer personal contact or opt for the hybrid model. We offer every service option, and this flexibility is what sets us apart. The beauty of technology is that it can help to automate everyday tasks and we can focus on perfecting our customer experience.

7. Paul Zalai - More businesses are offering a holistic approach to services they offer – can you tell us a little about your 3PL offerings?

We originally moved into 3PL space to accommodate our existing customers through end-to-end offerings. We have now perfected our 3PL offering with our new WMS and TMS platforms, subsequently resulting in the opening of larger and new facilities offering direct 3PL contracts to new customers. We have warehouse space in all states of Australia with a skilled workforce committed to streamlining our customers' warehouse and distribution requirements.

We also have a 4PL solution where we manage, on behalf of our customers, all aspects of their supply chain under the proven 4PL solution that Röhlig offers in the market. We have had a great success in 4PL space, and this continues to evolve.

8. Paul Zalai - I understand Röhlig are one of, if not, the largest airfreight carrier out of Germany. Did you wish to touch a little on your global network and services?

Yes, we are a market leader out of Germany, we currently have 11.2% (some 2,431 million kilos) market share from Germany to Australia, and we are proud as a German-owned organisation to be a market leader in Australia. We have a proven track record on this very important trade lane.

As to our Network and Services, Röhlig continues to grow globally. Our network consists of more than 2,500 employees and over 150 offices in more than 30 countries across all continents. In 2022, we added Dubai and Switzerland to our network, and Brazil in 2023. In the coming years, we will continue to expand our network, extend our range of services, and invest further in the digitisation of our products.

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