

TL;DR – What's happening in freight right now:

- GRIs and rate restorations continue across multiple Australia-bound trade lanes
- Blank sailings and capacity management remain active as carriers tighten networks
- Global schedule reliability has improved slightly, but delays and congestion persist across key hubs
- The 2025–26 BMSB season has officially ended for goods shipped on or before 30 April
- Middle East disruption continues to impact global shipping networks despite ceasefire announcements, with carriers maintaining operational restrictions and contingency routings

GRI AND RATE RESTORATIONS

Rate pressure continues to build across multiple trade lanes, with carriers implementing further GRIs and restoration measures throughout May. Ongoing blank sailings, tighter vessel utilisation and continued geopolitical disruption are all contributing to upward pressure across both ocean freight and associated landside costs.

Key updates:

- ANL, COSCO & MSC implementing increases from USD300/TEU
- Additional GRIs announced by ZIM, OOCL, PIL and other major carriers
- Continued fuel volatility and operational disruption driving surcharge pressure
- Space remains inconsistent across several China–Australia services

What this means:

Carriers remain focused on capacity discipline, with pricing pressure expected to continue in the short term across key Australia-bound trade lanes.

BMSB SEASON WRAP UP

The 2025–26 Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (BMSB) risk season has now officially concluded, with seasonal measures ending for goods shipped on or before 30 April 2026. While mandatory treatment requirements are easing, remain mindful that biosecurity inspections and intervention may still occur where risk is identified. The 2025–26 season again highlighted the ongoing importance of early planning, treatment scheduling and documentation compliance to minimise delays and disruption

GLOBAL CONGESTION & SCHEDULE RELIABILITY

Global shipping networks remain under pressure, although overall schedule reliability showed modest improvement through March, increasing to 62.2% globally according to Sea-Intelligence. Average delays for late vessels also eased slightly to 5.48 days.

While conditions have stabilised compared to the sharp disruption spikes seen earlier in the year, carrier networks continue to be impacted by ongoing geopolitical instability, particularly across the Middle East and Red Sea regions. Restrictions through the Strait of Hormuz, continued Red Sea security concerns and evolving carrier routing strategies are still creating flow-on effects.

Congestion also remains inconsistent across several major hubs. Shanghai, Ningbo and Busan continue to experience berth delays, while Singapore, although improved from earlier peaks, is still contributing to regional schedule disruption. Australian terminals are also facing ongoing pressure, particularly across Melbourne, Sydney and DP World facilities.

Carriers also continue to actively manage capacity through blank sailings and network adjustments. Australia's blank sailing rate remains elevated at 11.2%, highlighting the ongoing cautious approach from shipping lines amid softer demand and continued market uncertainty.

Space availability remains inconsistent across several trade lanes, particularly into Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, with carriers continuing to adjust schedules and vessel deployment in response to evolving global conditions.