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# Woodchip trip opens channel of fortune

**DANNY LANNEN**

GEELONG Port's biggest ever woodchip cargo sailed from Corio Quay at the weekend on one of the world's biggest woodchip carriers.

Following five days of 24-hour loading the *Fujian Express* departed for Rizhao, China, with about 60,000 metric tonnes of woodchips, about

7000 tonnes more than the previous biggest loading.

The Chinese-built ship is owned by the Nova Group and part of a fleet of large, new carriers built to service China's growing wood pulp market.

Chiefs of North Shore woodchip exporter Midway Limited hailed the shipment as a big start to 2016, due to multi-million-dollar dredging of Corio Quay North No 4 berth.

"Before the dredging deepened the berth there was no hope of getting this ship here," development manager Stephen Roffey said.

"The shipment is only possible because of that work. Now we'd expect to get up to eight visits by these large woodchip carriers here this year."

Victorian Regional Channels Authority spent almost \$10 million deepening the

berth and City Bend to 12.3m in late 2014, making them uniform with shipping channels.

Mr Roffey said Midway could now chase new opportunities in the highly competitive global woodchip market.

Authority chief executive Captain Peter McGovern said providing safe access for bigger ships and improving port productivity were key aims in shipping channels upgrades.