



MEDIA RELEASE

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Victorians deserve Port of Melbourne lease legislation passage before Christmas

A report tabled in the parliament today should pave the way for the much-anticipated passage of legislation that would enable the lease of the Port of Melbourne, with the state's peak transport association urging law-makers to get it done before they break for Christmas.

The Victorian Transport Association (VTA) has welcomed the recommendations in the Port of Melbourne Select Committee Inquiry report that would strengthen and enhance the economic regulatory framework governing the transaction.

Four of the report's 15 recommendations dealt with improvements to the economic regulatory framework for the lease of the port, which VTA CEO Peter Anderson said complemented the industry group's suggested improvements to address concerns about excessive operator cost hikes.

"The VTA has held a very consistent position of supporting the lease of the Port of Melbourne to access the funding required to improve Victoria's neglected transport infrastructure," Mr Anderson said.

"Our written submissions and testimony before the Inquiry was that while we supported the lease of the port, it was essential that the legislation be amended to include explicit and better protections for port operators against future excessive price hikes by the new monopoly owner.

"The additional economic protections and safeguards announced by the Victorian Government in late September went a long way to addressing our primary concerns, and the Inquiry's recommendations build on those improvements to give port operators better certainty over pricing arrangements."

Mr Anderson said that with the Inquiry complete, and recommendations in place to address the concerns of almost 90 individuals, companies and industry groups that prepared submissions and appeared before the Inquiry, it was time for all sides of politics to pass legislation to allow the lease to proceed.

"We have always said that the once-in-a generation decisions around leasing the Port of Melbourne were too important to get wrong and that it was right and proper for the legislation to be subject to rigorous scrutiny," Mr Anderson said.

"With that process complete and some sensible recommendations made, we urge the Government, the Opposition and the minor parties to act on the recommendations and pass a Bill, so the port can be leased, and the Government can get on with delivering its infrastructure program," he said.

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