



MEDIA RELEASE

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VTA: Port of Melbourne must be sold, but not at any cost

The Victorian Transport Association has endorsed the privatisation of the Port of Melbourne in a submission to a Victorian Government Select Committee inquiry tasked with reviewing the lease-enabling legislation.

However, the VTA submission has called for the lease to be amended to contain explicit and greater protections against excessive cost hikes levied against port users for non-prescribed services, as a condition of the peak industry group's full support.

"The VTA has always supported leasing the port because proceeds are desperately needed to fund level crossing removals and other road infrastructure, which is essential for addressing the traffic congestion that cripples productivity and increases costs," said VTA CEO Peter Anderson.

"However, Victoria only has one shot at privatising the Port of Melbourne, underscoring the importance of ensuring that the lease-enabling legislation contains the necessary protections for port users against excessive cost increases being imposed by the new monopoly owner of the port.

"These protections are essential so that port users that offer non-prescribed services have the certainty they need to invest confidently in their operation and employ Victorian workers," he said.

Mr Anderson said the Victorian Government had made a number of infrastructure investment commitments that are contingent on the lease proceeding, such as provisions for Princes Freeway upgrades to accommodate High Productivity Freight Vehicles contained in the *Agriculture Infrastructure and Jobs Fund*.

"The VTA fully supports these proposed infrastructure investments and congratulates the government for recognising the need for urgent infrastructure upgrades between Geelong and the Port of Melbourne," Mr Anderson said.

"However, it's more important that non-prescribed service providers at the Port of Melbourne get the certainty they need to properly manage their business and plan for future growth.

Mr Anderson said the VTA would continue to be an active participant in the Standing Committee's inquiries.

"The VTA is looking for the lease of the Port of Melbourne to promote fair competition, greater efficiency and improved productivity, and we will strongly advocate to the inquiry for legislation amendments that achieve this, whilst protecting transport operators and port users," he said.

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