



MEDIA RELEASE

7 December 2017

Port of Melbourne industrial action a “sovereign risk” to Victoria: VTA

The Port of Melbourne risks becoming an international laughing stock if industrial action that has shut down stevedore Victoria International Container Terminal (VICT) for the past 10 days is permitted to continue, according to the Victorian Transport Association.

The warning from the peak freight and logistics industry representative group followed VICT's revelation yesterday that the person the MUA is pressuring the stevedore to employ is ineligible to work on docks under Australian law because he failed to obtain a Maritime Security Identification Card.

“It is an affront to every Port of Melbourne stevedore and freight operator working in and around the port that the Victorian economy is continuing to be held to ransom by the MUA over what we now understand is a legal reason for this individual being ineligible for employment at the docks,” said VTA CEO Peter Anderson.

“The effects of this ongoing action at our busiest time of the year are being felt right throughout the economy when you consider that the more than 1000 containers and their contents sitting idle at Webb Dock cannot be brought to market and sold to consumers during our peak retail trading period.

“Not only are VICT and the hundreds of freight operators that cannot move containers in and out of the terminal being impacted by this recalcitrant industrial action, so too are hundreds of small business operators and their families that are being denied access to goods demanded by Victorian consumers.”

Mr Anderson said it was a potential sovereign risk to the broader Victorian economy and the Port of Melbourne’s position as the nation’s largest port if the action is allowed to continue.

“VICT is already losing business to other Port of Melbourne stevedores through this action, but if foreign exporters determine Melbourne is an unreliable destination for freight forwarders they will send their business to ports in other states, at a massive cost to our economy,” Mr Anderson said.

“So, while this action may be confined to VICT for now, the real risk as we see it is the long-term reputational and economic damage the action will create for Victoria as a place to do business.”

Mr Anderson implored all stakeholders involved in the action to put the interests of the Victorian economy first and work constructively to bring an end to industrial action that is undermining the state’s hard-fought reputation as a reliable place to do business.

“This is not the time for our leaders to run and hide but rather confront the real issue of adverse union action that is brutal and selfish, and has a negative effect on the livelihoods all Victorians,” he said.

Ends...

For the latest VTA news follow us on Twitter @VTAComs
For further information please contact Brian O’Neil on 0411 055 284