



MEDIA RELEASE

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Collaboration key to keeping Victoria number one for freight

Delegates to Wednesday's VTA Port Outlook seminar, held at the Royal Motor Yacht Club of Victoria in Williamstown, were treated to presentations from a wide range of senior leaders from the state's ports and channels network, with the importance of collaboration between stakeholders a common theme expressed by speakers throughout the day.

In remarks to the seminar, VTA CEO Peter Anderson prefaced speakers from DP World Australia, the Port of Melbourne, Victorian Ports Corporation, VICT, Transport Certification Australia, Victorian Regional Channels Authority, Patrick, Port of Portland and NMIRRAT, and reinforced how important our ports are for economic prosperity.

"It may sound like a cliché but our ports and channels are the arteries of our economy, because without them sustainable commerce and trade is virtually impossible," Mr Anderson said. "But it's not enough just to have ports, because they also need to be efficient and offer productivity incentives for supply chain participants that use them if they are to work to their full potential."

Mr Anderson told delegates Victoria is lucky to have some of the best ports and channels in the world servicing Melbourne and regional and coastal centres.

"It's encouraging that despite fierce competition from other states, trade volumes from offshore and between Bass Strait continue to go up, which is a credit to how port operators have responded to our shift away from a manufacturing to a service economy," he said. "This shift doesn't mean we will be trading any less – in fact quite the opposite when you consider Victoria is leading the nation in terms of population growth, and the exponential growth of online sales of consumer goods from offshore."

Mr Anderson contrasted this generally positive outlook with some of the issues and threats the industry needs to carefully manage for Victoria to remain the freight capital of Australia.

"Future growth of our ports and channels depends so much on continued improvement and productivity, and in Melbourne the disconnect between intermodal is a problem we need to solve for our supply chains to be efficient, lean and smooth," he said. "We need to strive for better connectivity where trucks, trains and ships interface, and there is certainly a role for governments with respect to a Port Rail Shuttle servicing the Port of Melbourne and reducing pressure on our road network."

Mr Anderson said on industrial relations, the formation of a super union from the merger between the CFMEU and the MUA has massive repercussions for workplace relations on our wharfs.

"We saw what happened last Christmas when these groups crippled trade through VICT and the Port of Melbourne by defying Supreme Court orders and running an illegal picket. That action set the trade union movement back 25 years, and is a potential harbinger of worse to come if we don't take steps to prevent victimising and discriminating against operators, and those businesses in the supply chain they service," he said.

Planning for future growth is another major issue that can impact on our ports with Mr Anderson saying we are seeing this right now in Melbourne with the draft Fishermans Bend Precinct plan.



“Planners want to run a bike path down Lorimer Street, which the VTA has fiercely objected to because it’s the only gazetted freight route for trucks servicing that side of the port. It’s the last place on Earth you’d want to encourage more bicycle traffic. It’s important to get Fishermans Bend planning right because whatever is built there has massive implications for the Port of Melbourne and the operators that service it,” he said.

Mr Anderson said for all the challenges, there are many positive things happening and reasons for optimism.

“The Government is investing in a port rail study and the Western Interstate Freight Terminal which will strike a better balance between road and rail freight in and out of the Port of Melbourne. Work has started on the West Gate Tunnel which will provide better truck access to the Port and road infrastructure beyond, and improve community amenity in the inner west, where the VTA has been working hard gain concessions on road curfews as a trade off against better trained drivers and more efficient vehicles.”

Mr Anderson closed his remarks by expressing confidence in the future and with a call to action for stakeholders to work together.

“All of us are equal shareholders in the future of our ports, and with open discussion, clear-thinking and a can-do attitude, we can all reap the benefits of the better efficiencies and productivity that is possible,” he said.

“Many of the issues we confront are not unique to Victoria. But that shouldn’t stop us taking a leadership role in finding solutions and improvements to the systems, processes and infrastructure that is so essential for our economic prosperity.”

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