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VTA putting up road blocks to efficient empty container parks

“SAL members find it extraordinary that the Victorian Transport Association has urged the establishment of working parties to find the best way of improving the operation of empty container parks (ECPs) in Melbourne but before they can finalise their deliberations; announce in the media their conclusions” Llew Russell, CEO of Shipping Australia said today.

SAL members support the need for the individual ECPs to run and operate their own commercial operations and business affairs. SAL agrees that a positive and collaborative approach is needed by all stakeholders, as the interests of the import/export community will see the benefits and therefore ECPs must remain viable as they provide an important service to the logistics chain.

“The VTA refers to rigid time slotting but not how a new flexible time slotting system will reduce truck queues.

“Why not let the working party seeking to improve operational efficiencies in the parks fully debate the matter and arrive at conclusions acceptable at least to the majority of stakeholders.

“It appears to us that the VTA were initially keen for VicRoads and the Victoria Police to strictly enforce the fatigue laws under the chain of responsibility legislation by reducing truck queues at the parks, but because the ECPs now wish to implement a vehicle booking system as one operational initiative to manage truck queues, the VTA are objecting and not allowing the introduction of an efficient vehicle booking system to even be considered” Mr Russell said.

Mr Russell added that there were other operational efficiencies that could be introduced in the parks to enhance flexibility in empty container returns.

“Simply extending opening hours for the same volume of containers without consideration of the existing pattern of truck usage to see if different opening

hours could more adequately meet peak demand would add costs to no-one's benefit.

“An infrastructure levy has in fact been established by the ECPs and is currently being paid by shipping companies for every import container, so we cannot understand the VTA's assertions and need to lobby the Minister for Roads and Ports, as such a levy is being charged by the ECPs and paid by shipping lines as part of their operational improvement program.

“The VTA has to get serious and work with all stakeholders to remove this potential supply chain blockage.

“SAL members have been proactive and put a lot of effort into seeking real solutions to complex issues but the VTA does not appear at all interested in a way forward that meets the majority of stakeholders' requirements” he said.

Editor's note

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