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For Immediate Release

Patrick Problems continue at Port Botany

"Member lines are most concerned that Patrick Terminal at Port Botany is, once again, from today implementing restrictions that will involve the handling of container volumes lower than those contracted with the terminal", Llew Russell, CEO of Shipping Australia said today.

"Patricks have stated that a high number of off-window vessel arrivals in Sydney are expected this week. This will result in vessel bunching and berth congestion. As a result, they will only handle a certain percentage of contracted volumes for on-window vessels and a lower contracted volume for off-window vessels.

It is the view of our members that quite a number of these off-window vessel arrivals are due to previous congestion at the Patrick Terminal at Port Botany and across the board restrictions do not take into account the requirements of individual contracting shipping lines. In other words, if they are working with individual lines ways and means could be found to speed up vessel handling without the need to restrict contracted volumes", he said.

"Previously with such restrictions, there has also been a build-up of empty containers and if these restrictions are maintained, it is expected that this will occur again in the Sydney region."

Mr Russell stated that it was imperative that Sydney Ports Corporation introduce key performance indicators into their lease with Patrick Terminals as a matter of priority similar to the ones they have in the lease governing the operations of DP World at Port Botany. This will provide added incentive to the terminal to find ways and means of dealing with congestion other than restricting the contracted volume of containers to be handled.

"Whilst it is understood that the flow on effect of the conclusion of the recent EBA negotiations will undoubtedly assist in improving productivity at Port Botany, there is an urgent need to take action now to reduce the impact of these problems not only on shipping lines but importantly the importers and exporters of NSW", Mr Russell said.

Mr Russell noted that the congestion in Sydney has a flow on effect for other container terminals around Australia and in many cases it makes it very difficult to get back on-window with significant import volumes coming into Australia.

Editor's note:

For additional information please contact Llew Russell, CEO on 0414 958 247.