



19 March 2012

For Immediate Release

MUA takes the money but reneges on agreement

"Despite Patrick paying a 5% good faith, salary back payment to its workforce in December last year after an in principle agreement on a new EBA between the MUA and Asciano, the MUA is still engaging in stoppages and work limitations and bans", Llew Russell, Chief Executive Officer, Shipping Australia said today.

"We have just witnessed two days of strikes at the Patrick container terminal in Fremantle and this will be followed by an indefinite period of rolling stoppages and work bans.

"Fremantle is often the last port of call so cotton exports, for example being loaded in Brisbane or Sydney will be delayed by the Fremantle stoppages. In addition, WA exporters and importers have been severely disadvantaged.

"For many years, collectively we have been seeking to build Australia's reputation overseas as a reliable supplier and on top of all the stoppages over the last eighteen months, clearly this reputation is now at risk which will do long-term damage to our trading prospects and provide significant challenges to exporters struggling with the high Australian dollar," he said

"SAL undertook an exercise in additional fuel costs required to cover from stoppages in Australia and over a seven week period late last year that amounted to over twelve million dollars for twelve container shipping lines.

"Once again shipping lines are being asked to bear serious additional costs at a time of reduced revenues given the worldwide over supply of container tonnage. There is also the possibility of having to drop a port call to regain sailing schedule integrity", he said.

Mr Russell pointed out that if the Federal Government wanted a case study on why the Fair Work Act should be significantly amended, then the MUA has given them that case study in this instance. He raised the question of how good faith bargaining can occur when the Union agrees to an in-principle agreement as a negotiated outcome and then subsequently strikes on some of the very issues they have previously agreed to? How can these strikes be protected industrial action authorised by FWA?

"Shipping Australia continues to support Asciano as it seeks to finalise the new enterprise agreement which will allow us to collectively concentrate on facilitating Australia's international trade", Mr Russell said.

Editor's note:

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