

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation
Minister for Ports and Freight
Minister for Fishing and Boating



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GEELONG HOME FOR NEW VICTORIAN PORTS BODY

Geelong will become Victoria's centre for maritime excellence with the Andrews Labor Government establishing a new statewide ports body in the city.

Ports Victoria will bring together the Victorian Regional Channels Authority and Victorian Ports Corporation (Melbourne) to lead the strategic management and operation of Victorian commercial ports and waterways.

The new organisation will begin operating out of Geelong on 1 July, recognising the city's important role in Victoria's ports system – through the Port of Geelong and the future relocation of the Spirit of Tasmania.

The creation of Ports Victoria is a key finding from the *Independent Review of the Victorian Ports System*, a comprehensive review set to cut red tape, boost safety, and improve the way this vital industry operates.

It is the first holistic review in almost 20 years for an industry that has gone through significant change, including the introduction of a third stevedore in 2015 and leasing of the Port of Melbourne in 2016.

The Department of Transport will use the broad industry analysis to suggest changes to increase efficiency and simplify operations for all stakeholders.

Other changes have been recommended to ensure there is a consistent process for issues like navigational safety, pilotage, and towage and to improve safety for operators and regulators.

The review also recommended and will inform a new Victorian Ports Strategy, currently under development

Approximately \$26 billion of locally produced and manufactured exports pass through Victoria's commercial ports annually, handling almost a quarter of Australia's total food and fibre exports.

An industry roundtable took place today to present the findings of the independent review and to put forward some suggested actions to implement recommendations from the report.

The full response from Government to the review will be released later this year.

For a summary of the independent review's findings, visit transport.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Ports and Freight Melissa Horne

"Ports Victoria will ensure our ports operate in a smart, efficient way to support the sector, continue to grow our economy and create jobs."

"We thank Mark Curry and all involved in the review, and we continue to examine the findings to determine the best way to support the sector to continue to grow and prosper."

Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

"This is great news for Geelong –recognising the role our city plays in the ports system – and will create more local jobs and boost our economy."

Quote attributable to Member for Western Victoria Gayle Tierney

“Geelong and the Bellarine Peninsula have a long and proud maritime history and I’m delighted the Victorian Government has committed to this continuing by establishing Ports Victoria in the region.”

Quote attributable to Member for Lara John Eren

“This is another fantastic maritime announcement for Geelong and I look forward to working with Ports Victoria as we prepare for the arrival of the Spirit of Tasmania in Corio Quay next year.”

Quote attributable to Member for South Barwon Darren Cheeseman

“This announcement shows the Victorian Government’s continuing commitment to the economic success of Geelong and the Surf Coast.”