

Dissenting Report by Coalition Senators

1.1 The Coalition cannot support the committee report as it relates to evidence provided by Surface Transport Policy on 23 May 2012, relating to the \$20 million Tasmanian freight assistance package.

1.2 The matter is dealt with in paragraphs 3.32 – 3.34 of the committee report.

1.3 On the afternoon on 23 May 2012 the committee heard evidence from Mr Deegan of Infrastructure Australia:

Senator COLBECK: I want to ask some questions about the work that you are doing in Tasmania around the export freight issues that they have been dealing with. My understanding is that you were going to hand a report to the government by early May; is that correct?

Mr Deegan: That is correct. I am hoping that it will be released shortly. The federal minister asked that I undertake some further consultation after a discussion I had with him towards the end of April, which made a lot of sense.

Senator COLBECK: That is fine. So you have handed him the initial report?

Mr Deegan: I have had a discussion with him about the report. I have not yet handed in my report. That is imminent.¹

1.4 Later that evening the committee took evidence from Surface Transport Policy regarding the allocation of the funding.

1.5 The committee was again told that the Infrastructure Australia report was not completed and that the finalisation of that report would be an input into finalising the assistance package.

Mr Mrdak: That will contribute some further thinking in relation to the terms of the arrangements, and we anticipate that over the coming weeks the minister and the Tasmanian government will announce the details of the arrangements.

Senator COLBECK: So we will not see a final answer on the allocation of that funding until the report from Infrastructure Australia is released?

Mr Mrdak: Certainly the finalisation of Mr Deegan's report will be one of the inputs into finalising the program.²

1 *Committee Hansard*, 23 May 2012, p. 72.

2 *Committee Hansard*, 23 May 2012, pp 117–118.

1.6 The Committee was further advised that the detail of how the funding package was to be allocated was yet to be finalised.

Ms Gosling: That is right. As Mr Mrdak said, it will be a payment to the Tasmanian government. Once we have settled the exact detail of how that money would be allocated, then the allocation of the funds would be a question for the Tasmanian government.³

1.7 It is the Coalition's view that the evidence provided to the committee regarding the allocation of the funding indicated that decisions had not been made and it would be perhaps weeks before announcements would be made, and that the decision would be made by the Tasmanian government.

1.8 On the morning of 24 May 2012 articles appeared in *The Advocate* and the *Examiner* newspapers announcing the allocation of funding from the package (see pages 30 and 31).

1.9 It subsequently became evident that an embargoed media release had been issued on 23 May 2012 by Minister Albanese and two colleagues announcing the funding (see pages 32–33).

1.10 As indicated in a letter from Mr Deegan to the committee, the report from Infrastructure Australia was not handed to Minister Albanese until after the embargo time on the media release and the media articles had appeared in the two Tasmanian papers.

1.11 It is clear that the prerequisites for finalising the details of the funding, as outlined in evidence to the committee, had not been met when the announcement was made by Minister Albanese.

1.12 During debate on the matter at the commencement of business on the morning of 24 May 2012, the Chair, Senator Sterle said:

CHAIR: Thank you. Now, with all due respect, I know I sat here as you did ask those questions of the officers last night and I certainly share that you have some form of reason to be upset. The officers are big enough to look after themselves—and I am happy to facilitate a private meeting, should we need that—but I think the committee should write to the appropriate department and perhaps seek a briefing.⁴

1.13 It is the view of the Coalition that Minister Albanese was attempting to avoid the scrutiny of the committee in the allocation of the Tasmanian freight assistance package.

1.14 It is this action that the Coalition contests saw the committee misled by the evidence provided.

3 *Committee Hansard*, 23 May 2012, p. 118.

4 *Committee Hansard*, 24 May 2012, p. 5.

Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck

**Senator the Hon Bill Heffernan
Deputy Chair**

NEWS



Welcome boost for exporters

Burnie receives \$4m for port

A \$4 MILLION infrastructure upgrade for the Burnie port is part of a \$20 million, federally funded assistance package for Tasmanian exporters.

The funding, which was officially announced yesterday, is a welcome boost for local exporters to enable them to reach international markets.

Ideas for the package were first raised after Tasmania's sole shipping container operator AAA ceased its operations last year.

The package has three key aspects — immediate assistance to exporters via a one-off payment to assist them to stay competitive, the infrastructure



BOOST: The Burnie port will receive funding for an infrastructure upgrade. Picture: Kelly Slater.

upgrade at the Burnie port and the establishment of a freight logistics coordination team.

Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Federal Member for Braddon Sid Sidebottom said the Burnie port upgrade was an important part of the package.

"These infrastructure im-

provements at the port of Burnie are crucial and recognise its importance as the major freight port in Tasmania," he said.

"This \$4 million in federal infrastructure funding will increase container handling capacity and improve the movement of goods within the port, boosting efficiency and helping lower costs for Tasmanian exporters."

Mr Sidebottom said the package, combined with the existing Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme, would help further support local exporters and consequently Tasmania's economic growth.



LOOKING TO FUTURE: Commercial gummy shark fishermen Peter Smith (left) and Shane Rose at the industry's sustainability and marketing forum yesterday. Picture: Caitlin Heathcote.

Quality, not quantity key to fishing industry sustainability

By CAITLIN HEATHCOTE

COMMERCIAL fishermen are out to challenge a widely held stereotype.

Fishermen from across the state converged on Barclay Motor Inn in Devonport yesterday to learn about sustainable fishing and marketing practices.

Shane Rose, of Launceston, and Peter Smith, of Wynyard, said fishermen were stereotyped as "uneducated rough men who raped and pillaged the ocean of its fish".

However, this was far from the truth. Tighter quota regulations and sustainable

fishing practice are at the forefront of the industry.

Mr Rose and Mr Smith both fish commercially for gummy shark, while Mr Smith widens his net to include king crab and crayfish.

They said they were attending the two-day seminar to help learn more about marketing their product to a mass consumer audience and to promote quality over quantity.

Mr Smith said the culture of the fishing industry had changed from a culture of quantity, to quality.

Mr Rose agreed saying it was important to let the consumer

know that Australian-caught fish was better quality than imported fish, although the import might be cheaper.

"We are trying to learn how to market sustainability to the general public," Mr Rose said.

Both Mr Rose and Mr Smith lauded the program and said they would recommend all Coastal fishermen took the opportunity to further educate themselves.

Mr Smith said it was important to the industry that fishermen had as minimal impact as possible on the marine environment and sustained the industry for future generations.

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Councils to get in early on carbon tax

By PATRICK BILLINGS

LOCAL government will be given a year's head start to cover the cost of the carbon tax levied on landfill emissions.

The Launceston City Council is looking to raise \$75,000 in 2012-13 to pay for carbon emissions, which won't attract a bill until 2014.

This is because emissions from waste occur over a number of years after the waste is placed in the landfill.

"As you are accruing the liability, your charges should reflect that liability. You don't wait until the 2013-14 year and then hit everyone with the tax for the previous two years," council gen-

eral manager Robert Dobrzynski said.

All landfills, including council landfills, that produce more than 25,000 tonnes a year of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions will be liable to pay the tax.

Mr Dobrzynski said that the cost would be passed on to tip users and residents through the waste levy rather than being absorbed in general rates.

"This would be counter-productive to the intent by the federal government to use carbon taxing as a price signal to change behaviour," he said.

The council will spend about \$25,000 of its carbon budget on research and analysis on the cost

of the carbon tax at the Launceston Waste Centre.

It will also be able to reduce its carbon tax liability by capturing emissions and converting it to renewable energy.

The carbon price will have other impacts on the council's bottom line but it does not have enough information to accurately assess it. The Launceston City Council is one of seven Tasmanian councils that have been written to by the government's carbon cop to help them determine if they are liable.

Mr Dobrzynski said that he had not yet received a letter from the Clean Energy Regulator but said that he was anticipating one given the council runs a large regional tip.



Gradco project supervisor Rodney Grace, Dale Luck, of JMG Engineers, Launceston City Council infrastructure director Harry Galea, council graduate engineer Josh Coates and Mayor Albert van Zetten at the Mount Pleasant Dam site.

Picture: PAUL SCAMBLER

Dam work to boost protection

THE Launceston City Council has started work on a \$1.4 million expansion of the Mount Pleasant Dam designed to protect parts of Kings Meadows from a one-in-100-year flood.

The Mount Pleasant Stormwater Detention Dam collects water from the Kings Meadows rivulet.

It was first built between 1900 and 1910, as part of the Mount Pleasant Estate, along with an 1860s homestead built by politician John Crooks.

At that time the dam provided a traditional English

lake and gardens for the landowners.

The council's redevelopment of the dam is designed to protect Kings Meadows — and particularly the Ernest Street area — from flooding.

It will protect the commercial area of Kings Meadows to a one-in-50-year standard, and the Ernest Street area to a one-in-100-year standard.

Launceston Mayor Albert van Zetten said it had not come about because of the proposed discount department store on Hobart Road but the dam would help protect it.

The redeveloped dam is much larger than the existing dam, with additional capacity to accept water during heavy rain, and to control discharge so that downstream areas do not flood.

The council has negotiated with the landowner to allow construction.

The original concrete dam has been demolished and is being replaced with an earth and clay wall six metres tall.

The dam's total capacity will be expanded from less than one megalitre to 7.3 megalitres.

Construction is expected to be complete by the end of August.

Burnie port gets federal financial boost

By CARLY DOLAN

The Burnie port will receive \$4 million from the federal government to increase container handling capacity as part of a one-off \$20 million package to help Tasmanian exporters reach international markets.

Federal Infrastructure and Transport Minister Anthony Albanese, Braddon Labor MHR Sid Sidebottom and Lyons Labor MHR Dick Adams will announce the funding package today.

It was first flagged in March in response to a decision last year by the state's only international

shipping container operator, AAA, to cease operations.

Since then, the state and federal governments have been crafting the package to address problems for Tasmanian exporters.

The package contains three key measures, including direct assistance to exporters through a one-off payment to help them to stay competitive, improving infrastructure at the Burnie port and establishing a freight logistics co-ordination team.

"This \$4 million in federal infrastructure funding will increase container handling ca-

capacity and improve the movement of goods within the port, boosting efficiency and helping to lower costs for Tasmanian exporters," Mr Sidebottom said.

Mr Adams said the package was a much-needed investment in the state's export industries.

"This is a blueprint for Tasmania to address the need for better co-ordination of our road, rail and shipping sectors and to create more efficient links to the mainland and overseas to meet the needs of the state now and into the future," he said.

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Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
Leader of the House

THE HON SID SIDEBOTTOM MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Federal Member for Braddon

THE HON DICK ADAMS MP

Federal Member for Bass

A NEW DEAL FOR TASMANIAN EXPORTERS

The Gillard Labor Government has announced details of a one-off \$20 million funding package to help Tasmania's exporters reach international markets.

The package was first flagged in March in response to the decision last year by Tasmania's sole international shipping container operator AAA to cease operations.

Since March, Commonwealth and Tasmanian Governments have worked together to craft the package which will ensure the State's exports can continue to reach world markets.

These practical measures address the complex commercial realities facing Tasmanian exporters.

They also address deficiencies in the State's supply lines and transport infrastructure, providing a better environment for Tasmanian exporters to compete internationally.

The funding package contains three key measures.

1. Direct and immediate assistance to Tasmanian exporters through a one-off payment to help them stay competitive in the new shipping environment.
2. Investing in infrastructure improvements at the Port of Burnie to increase container handling capacity and enhance the efficiency of movements within the port.
3. Establish a freight logistics coordination team with an industry leadership.

Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Federal Member for Braddon Sid Sidebottom says the package will be welcome news for Tasmania's exporters.

"My Federal Tasmanian Labor colleagues and I listened to the concerns of our local exporters and have worked very closely with the Prime Minister and Minister Albanese to provide this much needed \$20 million package," Mr Sidebottom said.

"These infrastructure improvements at the Port of Burnie are crucial, and recognise its importance as the major freight port in Tasmania.

"This \$4 million in Federal infrastructure funding will increase container handling capacity and improve the movement of goods within the port, boosting efficiency and helping to lower costs for Tasmanian exporters.

"Combined with the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme which was first announced by Gough Whitlam, the package supports exports which are so crucial to Tasmania's economic growth."

Federal Member for Lyons Dick Adams said the package is a much needed investment in Tasmania's export industries.

"This is a blueprint for Tasmania to address the need for better coordination of our road, rail and shipping sectors and to create more efficient links to the mainland and overseas to meet the needs of the State both now, and well into the future," Mr Adams said.

"I am delighted we have been able to secure this vital funding for Tasmania."

Media inquiries: Vivienne Skinner