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For Immediate Release

Shipping Australia calls for Government intervention in Fremantle Strike

“Members of Shipping Australia are most disappointed that the Maritime Union of Australia has begun a strike of six to eight days at Fremantle when almost all the outstanding issues in the new enterprise agreement have been resolved”, Llew Russell, Chief Executive Officer of Shipping Australia said today.

Union members are striking to secure a clause in their enterprise agreement that will prevent the compulsory redundancy of staff in the event of a privatisation.

“It is understood that the Premier of Western Australia has stated that there is no intention to privatise the port. An important point is that such an issue is a matter for the Government and not the Fremantle Port Authority.

“In any event, in commerce there can be no jobs for life if the demand for certain services are no longer required”, he said.

SAL agrees with the comment by the CEO of Fremantle Ports, Chris Leatt-Hayter that “any industrial action that impacts on trade is a major concern, and the stoppage we are facing at this very busy time of the year has the potential to severely impact on our customers and the community”.

“In addition, with these kinds of stoppages, shipping lines have to speed up and consume a lot more fuel to regain schedule integrity which is extremely expensive given the current high cost of fuel”, Mr Russell said.

Shipping Australia has called on the Minister for Workplace Relations, Bill Shorten to intervene to ensure both parties continue to negotiate in good faith and that strike action is withdrawn forthwith.

Editor’s note:

For additional information please contact Llew Russell, Chief Executive Officer on 0414 958 247.

Shipping Australia is a peak national shipping association comprising 35 member shipping lines and shipping agents that would be involved with over 70% of Australia’s container and car trades and over 60% of our breakbulk and bulk trades.