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MEDIA RELEASE

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More jobs possible for Port of Geelong

If the Brumby Government moved on reducing congestion at Webb Dock in Melbourne by relocating roll-on roll-off cargo to the Geelong port, it would create hundreds of new jobs for Geelong, says David Koch, Member for Western Victoria, speaking in Parliament last week.

He said that Webb Dock is used for roll-on/roll-off freight movements between Melbourne and Tasmania, and the import and export of new motor vehicles.

“Currently cars are shipped through Webb Dock on specialised vessels called ro/ro’s that are like floating multi-storey car parks. These vessels also move trucks, mining equipment and agricultural machinery. The back of the ship opens so that the vehicles can be driven straight on and off the dock. The Port of Melbourne handles an average of 920 vehicles every day.

“In its *Draft Port Development Plan*, The Port of Melbourne Corporation envisages that Webb Dock will be further developed over the next 20 years to handle 50 per cent of the Port’s total international container trade and to be the major terminal for Bass Strait and our coastal freight.

“But expanding capacity for container traffic will significantly add to existing pressure on the road network and the limited space at Webb Dock means a substantial investment in infrastructure to accommodate this growth will be needed.

“The Port of Melbourne already generates about 1.2 million truck visits a year, adding to congestion on the roads and fuelling community anger, particularly on port truck routes.

“While the total container trade through the port is expected to quadruple from 1.9 million containers per year to 8 million by 2035, exacerbating congestion problems, there is a solution that will help ease the current situation.

“Transferring roll-on roll-off cargo to the Port of Geelong would significantly reduce heavy vehicle congestion in and out of Webb Dock and on Melbourne’s major thoroughfares and if the Brumby Government adopted this strategy, it would allow for Webb Dock to be extended and eliminate the need to dredge toxic sludge at the Yarra mouth.

“Relocating all new vehicle import and export movements to an expanded Geelong facility would cater for more efficient movement of container cargo at an extended Webb Dock.

“By further developing the Port of Geelong, especially in relation to the automotive manufacturing and associated industries, more than 300 new jobs would be created in Geelong, again easing congestion on Melbourne’s already over-stressed heavy-vehicle corridors.

“Expanding and utilising existing port facilities in Geelong will also create many flow-on opportunities for future development of the Geelong region and its economy.

“The Minister for Roads and Ports should immediately move on a strategy that relocates roll-on/roll-off vehicle movements to the Port of Geelong so as to ease congestion at Webb Dock without further procrastination,” said David Koch.

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