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New Owners Seek Greater South Australian Ports Power

Business Life reports on the export focus being adopted by the new owner and operator of our major seaports.

Four months into its ownership of South Australia's seven main ports, Flinders Ports Limited is well advanced in laying the foundations to boost trade across the State's wharves.

A new chief executive officer has been appointed; a trade development officer and business analyst, whose tasks are to identify new business opportunities, have taken up their duties; a management team from former owner, Ports Corp, is in place to help build future business; and the company has begun a consultation program with its customers and South Australia's regional communities.

"South Australia has very high quality port assets', says new CEO, Vincent Tremaine. "The challenge ahead is to build volumes through all of the seven ports now under Flinders Ports ownership.

"This will require us to gain new business from within South Australia, that will generate import and export movements across our wharves, as well as attracting to South Australia port volumes that may have gone through other southern Australian ports."

Flinders Ports became the new owner of the ports of Port Adelaide, Port Pirie, Port Lincoln, Klein Point, Port Giles, Thevenard and Wallaroo in November 2001 after purchasing them from the Government for \$190 million.

"We are excited to be the new owner of the ports and it is our vision for them to be the prominent ports in Australia", Bill Watson, a director of Flinders Ports, says.

"To realise this vision, it is our intention to work closely with customers and key intermodal/transport organisations to facilitate trade through South Australian ports at the best competitive price."

"The operation of the ports will not change dramatically overnight, and initially it will be business as usual", he said.

There will be a strong focus on rural exports by the company. The new trade development officer and business analyst have begun working with South Australian rural-based exporters to develop new logistics and transport solutions for their export product or commodity.

“When we bought Ports Corp we made a commitment that one of our first priorities would be to take our very high level of expertise in transport and logistics management directly into the heartlands of South Australia’s rural exporters’.” Bill Watson said.

“The potential for South Australia’s regional exporters can be significantly enhanced, we believe, through a more direct interface with the port owner.

“Navigating the transport chain requires understanding of and expertise in all of the contributing factors which combine to deliver on farm or manufactured products out of regional South Australia into national and international markets.

“In the intensely competitive international trading environment expected during 2002, successful South Australian regional exporters will be those that embrace pinpoint delivery and cost advantages for their export consignments.

“Achieving such export benchmarks will include being better informed about shipping lines, shipping agencies and potential bottlenecks so that the South Australian regional export product goes by the most relevant, direct and quickest route – and at a profit” he said.