

Tuesday, 8 August 2006

S.A.'S INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS REPUTATION BOOSTED BY OPENING OF \$45 MILLION DEEPENED SHIPPING CHANNEL

South Australia's growing international reputation for doing business has been bolstered today with the official opening of the State's new \$45 million main shipping channel.

State Government Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Mr Patrick Conlon, and Flinders Ports Chairman, Mr John Rickus, today welcomed the dawning of a new era of economic growth and international competitiveness for the State as a direct result of the multi-million dollar project at Outer Harbor.

The project was jointly funded by Flinders Ports - the private operators of the Port of Adelaide - and the State Government in a successful Public-Private Partnership (PPP)

Under the project, which took about 11 months to complete, the main shipping channel at Outer Harbor, in Adelaide's north-western suburbs, was deepened an extra two metres to 14.2 metres, and extended into St Vincent Gulf from nine kilometres in length to 11.7 kilometres.

The deeper channel now begins about 8.5 kilometres west of the main breakwater entrance, extending through the main passenger and freight wharves, and ends about 400 metres north of the main container terminal at Outer Harbor.

The multi-million dollar upgrade of the precinct now enables fully laden panamax size vessels to include Adelaide onto their international schedules.

"Today's official opening of the State's deepened main port represents a major milestone in South Australia's economic and maritime history," Flinders Ports Chief Executive Officer, Mr Vincent Tremaine, said.

"The importance of this project to the State cannot be understated. The economic benefits will flow on for many decades to come," he said.

"The Premier recently released a Government study that showed Adelaide was the 'number one place' in the Asia-Pacific region to do business.

"From today, that reputation has been significantly and directly enhanced with the opening of the State's new deepened main port."

“For the first time in history, the State is well and truly on the map of international shipping companies, which are extremely selective of where they assign container movements.

“Our deepened port also gives SA an advantage over our nearest rival port – the Port of Melbourne – which remains several years behind us in its proposed deepening of its main channel in Port Phillip Bay.

“The challenge for us now is to attract more international importers and exporters – both domestically and globally – to do business through SA’s ‘new’ main shipping precinct.

“We will do this by proving to them how economically viable and competitive our port is - in international terms - to their businesses.

“Deepening SA’s main shipping harbour has been touted for many years – today that vision has become a reality.

“This project has been successful because of the combined support of the State Government, the Department of Infrastructure, the South Australian Farmers Federation, the shipping agencies and liner services operating out of SA, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the great work of the project manager, Egis Projects, and the dredging contractor, Dredeco.”

To mark the official opening, Mr Conlon and Mr Rickus fired maritime flares across the width of the channel, as tugboats provided by Adsteam Marine put on a water cannon display.

Mr Tremaine said an independent study had indicated the economic benefits to the State of deepening the main channel were between \$500 million (freight, safety, environment and road maintenance savings) and \$1.9 billion (full economy wide impact) over a 20-year period.

This does not include the value of benefits to the State’s grain industry resulting from the use of larger ships.

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