

MEDIA RELEASE

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[Ports Australia responds to ACCC comments on privatised ports](#)

The key objectives of ports are to ensure that they are able to deliver the services required of them and that they can do so in an economically and environmentally sustainable way.

Today at the Ports Australia Centennial Conference, ACCC Chairman Mr Rod Sims, put forward some of his views on regulatory regimes in relation to pricing and access relevant to port privatisation models.

Mr Sims made it clear that he supports privatisation of ports but wanted to see more regulatory control rather than price monitoring regimes, which he dismissed as not being price regulation at all.

In a very informative Question and Answer session, Mr Sims confirmed that his comments were directed towards government sale processes and not private port operators and managers.

Ports Australia Chief Executive Officer, Mr David Anderson, said; “It is important that the ACCC, in putting its views across, does not undermine public confidence in private ports particularly when Mr Sims acknowledged today that he was unaware of poor pricing behaviour beyond the initial sale processes.”

In the same session, Mr Simon Muys, a Partner at Gilbert + Tobin, indicated that the “negotiate-arbitrate” framework now being proposed by the ACCC for regulating port pricing has not always been viewed as light touch by the ACCC, which in the past had called for this approach to be removed from the regulatory framework in other infrastructure sectors because it had led to a large number of complex and costly access disputes.

Mr Muys acknowledged the need for effective oversight, but warned that any shift in approach for ports needed to occur carefully and take into account these costs and risks.

“The Centennial Conference, which concludes today, has been a success and we are very pleased with the attendance levels and delegate response to the wide ranging subject matters of the sessions,” said Mr David Anderson.

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For media enquiries contact Mr David Anderson, CEO Ports Australia, on 0412 588 767.