

*To whom it may concern:*

*Firstly I would like to thank you for the opportunity to tell a side of the story. I have been working off the waterfront, off and on, since the seventies ( a long time ) . The first thing that I would like to say is that there is a lot of resistance to change in both the transport industry and the stevedore industry. Change for changes sake is expensive and very counterproductive. There has been some expensive changes on the Sydney waterfront over the past decade or two. From the days of Darling Harbour, Walsh Bay, Woolloomooloo and Glebe Island, Port Botany has proved to be the best place for the stevedore Industry.*

*Having said that I must say that some of the changes to Port Botany have been cosmetic. The changes haven't had the positive impact on the transport we all hoped. We still have long waits. Now we don't have clean toilets, free water, shade or access to healthy food.*

*The people that are now in managerial and senior clerical positions have come from the old school.( they took a nothing job and made it into a job that had clout ) The biggest item to come from the ' OLD SCHOOL' is the **transtainer** used at DP World to deliver containers to the trucks. I know that they are used in other parts of the world but in the way that DP World uses them, sometimes it is a exercise in the absurd.( some of the incidences are ridiculous and to lengthy to go into here) This technology comes out the 60's and has no ability to speed up delivery if the situation calls for it. DP World has a very strict rule about time slots and it doesn't matter if their yard is empty, they will not let anyone in early. Sometimes they may bring the random rank in early but that is rare. Random ranks have sat in the sun for six or seven hours with no shade, water or toilets. We have been in time slot ranks waiting to enter DP World ( CTAL) and be processed then wait for our number to come up on the board that last for hours only to find that the reason is that they have block stack a whole ship and everyone is going to the same area on the wharf. Other areas are empty or operating normally.*

*Once in the DP World yard, which can take anywhere from five to twenty minutes, getting past the slow clerks ( many can only use one finger on the key board) with documents can put you almost at the end of your hour time slot. (DP World doesn't give a receipt so one never knows if the clerk has entered the correct info.) Remember that we are not in the system until we have been processed by the clerks. DP World runs best when it runs slow. The less ships they have the better for transport.*

*Patricks is a case of trial and error, and plenty of it. The management there has gone from the bad to the better to the good to ' WHAT ARE THEY THINKING !!' Patricks( aka ANL, NTAL) has had a checkered history as a Stevedoring Company. The changes they want to make are designed to make road transport even more painful than it is right now. If they put less than half the money they put into those five cranes into more straddle lifts everyone would be happy. They have twenty four (24 ) straddles and there is always five to ten, twelve or more straddles in for service every day. No matter how many straddles they have off the road they still*

*have the same amount working the ship. It is always the road that takes the hit when the numbers drop.*

*Our biggest problem with Patricks right now is that they want to slow down the road and they are going out of there way to do it. Patricks wants to run empties( empty containers) in the front gate - which their is only one - with the other traffic. On any day there could be hundreds of empties coming in. There is three lanes going into one lane on the approach to the security gate and when the empties are running they have priority. It seems that everything has priority over imports and exports. There are eighteen bays that have been allocated for trucks to deliver and receive containers. Only thirteen bays are available for export and import containers. Fourteen thou to seventeen are exclusively for empties and number eighteen is for Patricks trucks. The bays that are set aside for empties are never opened for other trucks even if there isn't any empties coming in. So it is almost always very stressful out there. Lots of frustrated drivers. The delays cause drivers to make bad decisions. They will put on two heavy containers when they know they have to come back and wait in a rank. They also have been known to drive too fast to try to make a time slot that is running out*

*As far as the time slots are concerned both DP World and Patricks play games with them. On weekends they want us to take up the slots but they don't have the labour to do their work. At DP World it isn't uncommon to have most of the transtainer fleet unmanned. When we complain we just get fobbed off. At Patricks on Saturday it isn't uncommon to have the shift start late. Many times during the week the time slot isn't opened until fifteen or twenty minutes after it is supposed too. If they have a problem they will honor all late time slots all day. If we have a problem then they tell us it is our problem and send us a bill for being late or for a no show. The bigger transport companies pay extra for better service ( A Class and B Class ). Transponders also play a roll in the way companies access the water front.*

*Of the two Patricks has always been the better but lately they have been getting harder to deal with. It seems that their whole motivation is to move containers by rail in the near future. Remember that the vast majority of empty container yards are in the Port Botany area and so they all have to come back by road.*

*There are many things that could make the waterfront work smoother. I hope that your committee has a good look at it with the view that the Stevedore Industry has sold government on the idea that they are operating on worlds best practice. In some way they might be but only when the rest of the world sleeps. They think that they are what the whole import-export economy is about. What we need is a team attitude. The customer is Australia and we all have to do our best to make it work better. The stevedores make a lot of money out of storage charges, late shows and no shows not to mention just the booking charges for the time slots.*

*There is much more that could be said and I hope that you can read into this that there are hundreds or thousands of stories from this industry. I bet that you would be hard pressed to find one transport company that is happy with the waterfront.*

*The average age of truck drivers is getting higher every year. People are getting out of the industry and not recommending it to their sons and daughters. Young guys and girls don't want to have to earn their money sitting in a rank and loose their weekends and holidays to the waterfront.*

*GOOD LUCK*

*David Lemke*