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Media Release

29 September 2026

DP World West Swanson Terminal Lets Down Landside Stakeholders Again

It was only six weeks' ago that CTAA commented on significant landside delays at **DP World's West Swanson Terminal (WST)** in the Port of Melbourne.

However, over the weekend just gone and into this week, further significant landside performance delays have caused havoc for container transport operators and their freight forwarder and import / export customers.

Lengthy truck turnaround time (TTT) delays of upwards of 2 to 3 hours, plus a lack of Vehicle Booking System (VBS) slots at DP World WST, have led to transport operators not being able to meet the import container pick up and export receival demands of their customers.

This has meant forwarders & importers not receiving their containers until Day 4 or Day 5 since discharge (in some instances), and export containers potentially missing vessel cut off.

The flow on impacts in the supply chain are numerous, including arguments about who is responsible to pay container detention bills levied by shipping lines for the late return of empty containers, despite the Shipping Lines' terminal service provider (DP World) being the source of the operational delays.

Promoted by CTAA given the lack of a public update from DP World about their problems, the **following statements have been received today from senior operational management at DP World**:

We faced unexpected labour shortages around the past weekend. We have been communicating with individual carriers since regarding recovery.

DPW is aware of the current delays carriers have faced on the road over the weekend, DPW WST Landside is working directly with individual carriers to facilitate the import and export requirements.

DPW will waive all associated penalty fees incurred on slots and will waive storage or extend free time for import units as needed, cut off export deliveries in the short term will be prioritised.

Additional labour resources have been acquired over the next 24hrs and will continue to be sort until operations are back to a satisfactory setting.

A further VBS Notification through the OneStop VBS messaging service (issued this afternoon, 29 September 2026) has confirmed the waiver of all no-show and wrong time zone penalties, commenting that this is “due to truck turn times”.

While the waiver of penalties on transport operators by the Terminal is welcomed (and of course justified), this response does not come close to accounting for the added costs endured by transport operators from the delays:

- Pressure on transport scheduling to work all available Terminal shifts, including over weekend and nightshifts, at added labour expense. This includes driver rostering to meet Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) driver fatigue rules.
- Added costs of container staging through transport yards and additional lifts.
- Disappointed customers who don’t receive their container deliveries when scheduled, or exporters missing ship receival windows.
- The cost of missed VBS slots at other container terminals when trucks stuck in WST are unable to complete their next scheduled jobs.

“On behalf of CTAA Alliance companies, we have commented previously that the Port of Melbourne hasn’t yet hit peak season volumes. However, the peak is now upon us and volumes are likely to be elevated over the coming weeks!” commented Neil Chambers, Director, CTAA.

“We sincerely hope that DP World allocates enough labour and machine time to adequately service the increased landside volumes through the Terminal.”

“Transport operators are willing to work the shifts allocated, including weekend and night operations. However, it’s extremely frustrating if they are unable to meet the cargo demands of their customers due to a lack of VBS slot availability and poor Terminal landside performance.”

“Every time the pick-up of an import container or the delivery of an export container to meet vessel receival windows are delayed, it compounds the workload of container transport operators. That delayed volume needs to be moved on top of the volume scheduled for the following day, and the day after, etc.”

“CTAA will be looking towards leadership from the Port of Melbourne and Freight Victoria within the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) over the coming weeks to foster discussions between all container logistics stakeholders to plan for peak season demand.”

“As mentioned previously too, transport operators already pay high Terminal Access Fees and Vehicle Booking System (VBS) charges directly to Terminals and face penalties for non-performance, without any mechanism for countervailing penalties due to terminal non-performance.

“Transport operators, and ultimately their customers, expect and deserve better service.”

If not, it might be time for CTAA to mount a campaign following the outcome of the Victorian State Election in November for the implementation of mandatory performance standards in the container logistics terminal interface similar to the legislation that exists in NSW.

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Queries about this Media Release should be directed to Neil Chambers, Director, CTAA, 0413 662 263 / neil.chambers@ctaction.com.au

About CTAA: Container Transport Alliance Australia (CTAA) is strong Alliance of leading businesses engaged in the container transport logistics industry. CTAA Alliance companies account for the majority of containerised freight handled in capital city ports in Australia.