

## **Australian waterfront productivity close to international benchmark: new study**

A new analysis of waterfront productivity by the Australia Institute concludes that Australia is close to the world benchmark and that the Government's target of 25 container movements per hour is unattainable.

The Australia Institute analysis is based on a new study by Drewry Shipping Consultants, one of the world's foremost shipping consulting firms, which has found that the most important determinant of productivity at container terminals is the proportion of a ship's container capacity handled. The higher the percentage handled the higher the productivity achievable. This result is explained by the fact that vessels are loaded for stability rather than for ease of port operations.

The analysis of Australian data shows that the average percentage of containers handled at Australian ports is 40%, although the percentage varies from port to port. This is relatively low by world standards because each ship loads and unloads at several ports in Australia. The Drewry report indicates an international benchmark of 19.1 containers handled per hour for terminals at which only 40% of containers are exchanged.

The current figure for the five main container ports in Australia is 18.5 containers per hour. Therefore Australian productivity levels at container terminals are very close to the international benchmark. The benchmark of 25 movements per hour recently proposed by the Federal Government is unattainable without radical changes in the structure of stevedoring in Australia, changes beyond the control of Australian stevedores.

Commenting on the new analysis, Australia Institute Executive Director Dr Clive Hamilton said: "This study shows that productivity on the Australian waterfront is not nearly as bad as the Government claims it is, and that a more sophisticated approach to waterfront policy is called for."

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