



## WESTERN AUSTRALIA PORT OPERATIONS TASK FORCE

### Peak season has begun at Fremantle

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The peak container season has begun at the Port of Fremantle and it is the prime time for the import supply chain to think outside the box and save time and money.

Importers are being asked to complete outstanding product orders now.

John Park, Chair of the WA Port Operations Task Force Peak Season Working Group, said importers needed to ensure container pick-ups and returns were not left to the last minute.

“Pick-ups and returns should be organised for out-of-peak daylight operating hours.”

He said there were already disruptions in the IMEX supply chain.

‘There have been system issues causing shutdowns at terminals, truck turnaround time concerns at heavy-volume times at key empty container parks, and stop works at key container transfer nodes at the port.’

‘While there is work being undertaken to address these challenges, it highlights the importance of importers making preparations early to avoid these types of issues.’

‘Even though container volumes at Fremantle Port have been down this year, it doesn’t mean the peak season won’t be busy,’ he said.

‘With the good winter rains, a strong grain crop is expected this year with a resultant boost in export container volumes.’

### Communication the key

Industry had indicated that key efficiency gains experienced this year had resulted from increasing the level of regular and early communication with key facilities, he said.

‘However, one of the main causes of delay and ensuing costs was when clients (customs brokers/ freight forwarders and importers) failed to provide early advice to the transport operator of upcoming imports.’

‘Even if clearances are not fully completed, I urge customs brokers/ freight forwarders and importers to advise a transport company of expected work so it can plan its activities, particularly now that peak season has started. This applies equally to imports and empty returns.’



Choapa Trader arriving at Fremantle on 13 October 2016

## Empty return slots at a premium

Mr Park said that importers and customs brokers/freight forwarders must ensure transport operators had the right information early to ensure empty return slots could be scheduled as early as possible.

He said transport operators ideally should plan their empty return slots in the same way they planned their full containers, that is, the previous day. They needed importers and their agents to be proactive in providing this information.

‘As empty container parks will be open until late in the evening, no-one should miss out on slots.’

## Public holidays and business closures

The prospect of storage/container detention at this time of year increases with the raft of consecutive public holidays and businesses closing for the Christmas-New Year period.

Mr Park recommended that the import industry should consider alternative delivery sites and discuss the extension of detention-free periods with shipping lines.

‘Acting now can save the industry extra expenses post-Christmas,’ he said.

## Consider triangulation

Mr Park urged customs brokers/freight forwarders and importers to speak to their transport operators about triangulation opportunities.

‘Truck operators returning an empty container to the port may be able to help identify opportunities to coordinate with local exporters to save time and money through container triangulation.

‘For each hire and dehire from an empty container park there is a Containerchain fee.

‘Reusing an empty import container for an export job reduces truck trips to the port and Containerchain fees.’

1-Stop now has Container Control to allow triangulation, making the process relatively simple.

Shipping lines are also looking to save costs and are keen to talk to clients and transport operators about reusing containers.

It is estimated that more than \$100 in total transport costs per container move can be saved if coordination between importers and neighbouring exporters can be achieved to reuse a customer’s empty container.

For more information about triangulation, contact 1-Stop on 1300 881 055, or consult the [Fremantle Ports Peak Season Guide](#).

