

MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP

Minister for Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Local Government



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REVIEW ANNOUNCED INTO AUSTRALIA'S SHIPPING FUTURE

The Rudd Labor Government will ask a bipartisan House of Representative Standing Committee to inquire into the Australian coastal shipping industry.

This Inquiry fulfils Labor's election commitment to review the shipping industry and will make important recommendations on the future of this key domestic transport sector.

Between 1996 and mid-2006 the number of Australian registered trading vessels fell from 75 to just 46.

I have today written to the newly-formed House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government asking it to conduct the inquiry and report back to Parliament.

The Committee will also assess measures for developing an adequate skilled maritime workforce in order to facilitate the sector's growth.

The Inquiry is a response to repeated requests from industry for action. Industry stakeholders have told of their reluctance to invest in replacing an ageing fleet while existing policy arrangements remain in place.

They are also concerned by the industry's ageing workforce and the limited training opportunities for young people.

Our ambition is for a viable coastal shipping industry in a competitive domestic transport sector - an outcome critical to Australia's economic future and long term national security.

As an island continent with a population spread along a vast coastline, shipping can be an efficient transport mode when it comes to transporting large quantities of cargo from one part of the country to another.

Between 2007 and 2020 the volume of freight needing to be transported around the country is predicted to grow by 40 per cent - that's an average of 14.9 billion tonne kilometres of additional domestic freight each year.

The outcome of the review will inform our broader reform agenda which has already seen the establishment of *Infrastructure Australia* and work started on a National Transport Plan.

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URL:
http://www.minister.infrastructure.gov.au/aa/releases/2008/March/AA018_2008.htm