

from the

# PRESIDENT'S DESK

## NO MORE BROKEN PROMISES

Since 1998, the Western Australian public have been 'promised' by various governments that livestock exports would be moved out of Fremantle. This 'promise' has been welcomed by the livestock industry, the transport industry, and the residents of Fremantle.

Over 14 years later, this 'promise' still has not been kept.

It would be easy to laugh off the latest conflict between the State Government and the James Point Private Port Consortium as just another example of the games politicians play. Too easy, in fact. For underlying this drama are some important issues of political morality.

Most politicians play games with the public. We know that many of the promises politicians make before elections have to be taken with large doses of salt. We know that, once elected, each new government will discover that the state's finances are far worse than they were led to believe. We know a "non-core" promise when we see one - even when we are assured that it is a "core" promise. But the fact that we, the general public, recognise these political rituals as games implies that we can also hold our politicians to account.

When we put aside the game of core and non-core 'promises', we expect our Ministers to tell us the truth about matters of public importance and to act responsibly when the actions of their Departments are questioned.

The PGA and other industry groups have had numerous 'promises' by various Ministers and Department officers that livestock exports would be moved out of Fremantle to the new Private Port Facility at James Point.

Western Australia is in desperate need for additional bulk port facilities in Cockburn Sound. This includes new facilities for livestock exports, and for the bulk loading of grain.

If the State Government is not going to proceed with the James Point Private Port, then the alternative needs to be presented, before the ones who truly suffer - the livestock and grain producers of WA.

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