

14 October 2022

Business Hunter Marks Latest Port Bill Milestone

The regions peak business industry group, **Business Hunter** has welcomed the passage of the second reading of Greg Piper's bill in the lower house yesterday.

It is understood the bill will now sit in adjournment and have every chance of being debated on one of the last 12 sitting days left for the lower house in 2022 before Parliament rises in the run up to the 2023 election.

Business Hunter CEO Bob Hawes said "I listened to Greg's speech and the message was very compelling and clear – provide a level playing field for the Port of Newcastle as a key initiative to reduce freight costs to businesses and communities across NSW."

"Greg Piper rightly put the issue in the perspective of the cost burden being placed now and into the future on an enormous number of businesses and communities across NSW if the matter is not addressed. This was reinforced in the recent Productivity Commission draft report which noted that inefficiencies are costing the nation more than \$605 million each year," said Mr Hawes.

"At a time when freight costs have skyrocketed and supply chains are stressed, it is clear the government has an imperative to do all it can to assist business and the community to reduce these pressures and set the scene for businesses to be as competitive as they can be."

"Greg acknowledged the commercial elements of the deal done in 2013 were an obvious impediment for the government to not move forward, but the long-term economic benefits for the Hunter Region, NSW and for that matter the nation cannot be ignored."

"Business Hunter is hoping that in the little time the NSW Parliament has left before it goes into recess for the March 2023 election, the bill is determined favourably, which will allow the Port of Newcastle to move ahead with the substantial investment to procure the project."

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