



BLOCKADE BRINGS PORT OF MELBOURNE TO A STOP

Businesses have allegedly incurred losses in the multiple millions of dollars amid multiple disputes at several major Victorian ports. Across a four day period, pro-Palestinian protesters blocked the Victorian International Container Terminal (VICT) and the Port of Melbourne where an Israeli-owned shipping company, ZIM, was trying to unload cargo. The protesters succeeded in their goal of preventing the ship from unloading and it was forced to anchor in the bay.

The protester’s escalated activities saw the Victorian International Container Terminal requesting for police assistance. They reportedly used pepper spray and had more than 200 police at the terminal at the peak of the protests. Nine people were charged with trespassing and one person is expected to be charged with criminal damage.

“I work in the freight industry and we currently have one effective port in Melbourne now that VICT has been blocked by protest,” a shipping employee said, “all of these issues combined stretching into next week will have (a) very debilitating impact. There should be rules where you can’t shut down major infrastructures in Melbourne. The police wouldn’t put up with this if they blocked major roads in the CBD. This (is) costing business(es) millions of dollars.”

In a statement, the group behind the port protests, Free Palestine Melbourne, said its aim was to stop workers from unloading a ship carrying containers belonging to Israeli-

owned cargo company ZIM, as part of an international protest movement “to interrupt Israeli shipping”. The activist group intended to “block worker shifts from entering the terminal and stranding four ships with 30,000 containers”.

Bruno Porchietto, the terminal’s chief executive, said the demonstration had prevented six vessels from different countries from operating out of the port. Roughly 50,000 containers had been stopped from leaving since Friday, and delays would be ongoing for some time, Porchietto advised. “We have to recover, those three days are lost”, he said.

Police offered to assist workers at the VICT and the Port of Melbourne to enter the terminals “to and from work via alternate routes”. At first their offers were declined but on Sunday afternoon, employees took them up on their offer. The industry insider pointed out that this is just the latest setback for Australia’s shipping ports, amid industrial action as workers push for better pay in several major cities across the country.

Cohen, A. (2024). Port of Melbourne brought to a stop from pro-Palestine protesters. Retrieved from <https://www.news.com.au/finance/work/at-work/port-of-melbourne-brought-to-a-stop-from-propalestine-protesters/news-story/59f63aab0c24deb24d69a11f39e9f594> on 24th January, 2024.

Crowe, A. (2024). Terminal boss backs police intervention at ports, says Palestine blockade has hurt economy. Retrieved from <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/delays-expected-after-police-intervene-to-remove-demonstrators-from-port-20240122-p5ez2w.html> on 25th January, 2024.

DP WORLD AUSTRALIA INDUSTRIAL ACTION UPDATE

DP World Australia has received additional Protected Industrial Action notices from the CFMMEU (Maritime Union of Australia division) for each of their Australian terminals at the following ports until the 3rd February 2024.

Brisbane: 22/01/2024 to 03/02/2024

Sydney: 22/01/2024 to 03/02/2024

Melbourne: 22/01/2024 to 03/02/2024

Fremantle: 22/01/2024 to 03/02/2024

Based on the updated dates above, the following will be affected by the planned Protected Industrial Action:



Service/Terminal	Schedule Impact
Sydney DP World	Stoppages of work for 2 hours duration commencing at 05:00, 13:00 and 21:00 on Friday 2nd February. All receipt and delivery stoppage from Friday 2nd February 06:00hrs through to Saturday 3rd February 06:00hrs. Stoppages of work for 2 hours duration commencing at 05:00 on Saturday 3rd February.
Melbourne DP World	Stoppages of work for 2 hours duration commencing at 04:00, 12:00 and 20:00 on Friday 2nd February. All receipt and delivery stoppage from Friday 2nd February 06:00hrs through to Saturday 3rd February 06:00hrs. Stoppages of work for 2 hours duration commencing at 04:00 on Saturday 3rd February.
Brisbane DP World	Stoppages of work for 2 hours duration commencing at 05:00, 13:00 and 21:00 on Friday 2nd February. All receipt and delivery stoppage from Friday 2nd February 07:00hrs through to Saturday 3rd February 07:00hrs. Stoppages of work for 2 hours duration commencing at 0500 on Saturday 3rd February.