



UK Rail Freight Chairman Visit

The Tasmanian Freight Logistics Council (TFLC) today announced that one of the world's leading thinkers on transport policy and rail freight development is visiting Tasmania next week, as part of an Australia-wide visit hosted by the Australian Freight Councils Network.

Lord Tony Berkeley, chairman of the UK Rail Freight Group (RFG) and president of the European Rail Freight Association (ERFA), will visit Hobart on 26 April 2010 to meet with government and industry.

Lord Berkeley will share his 12 years of experience as chair of the RFG, the representative body of the UK and EU rail freight industry, but also his broader involvement across the road and maritime sectors. At the same time he is keen to see and understand the Tasmanian transport landscape and, in particular, the challenges facing the rail freight industry as it confronts modal competition, inadequate infrastructure and falling demand.

TFLC CEO Rob McGuire said there was a lot Tasmania could learn from the UK rail freight experience (which is basically short haul rail) and the opportunity to tap into Lord Berkeley's expertise was too good to miss out on.

"Tony is a compelling speaker and has a deep knowledge of his subject and the governance issues surrounding rail freight," McGuire said.

"Our industry is grappling with a host of challenges, such as the future of short-haul rail, the need for industry and government commitment to drive freight's rail use and the necessity of stripping out costs at the same time as investing in innovation.

"We know that while our issues are common the solutions are not necessarily transferrable. But we can gain valuable knowledge from Tony's leadership, and from his explanations of initiatives such as the RFG's manifesto of doubling rail freight in a decade."

The TFLC has organised a high-level in-camera session with the relevant minister, government agency heads and key industry key players, as well as a forum for a wider audience of rail industry suppliers, freight customers, peak bodies, government policy and strategy advisors, academics and the media.

Topics to be covered will include:

- Short haul rail – what makes it work and how can it compete as a transport solution?
- Lessons that can be learnt from the UK rail revival – which has seen a 60% increase in rail freight growth in the last ten years?

- Lessons that can be learnt from UK in regard to infrastructure investment both above and below rail?
- Lessons that can be learnt from UK economic and government regulation of rail and rail policy?
- How can we increase the volume and market share of freight carried by rail in Tasmania?

McGuire encouraged anyone with an involvement in the rail freight sector to take part in the exchange of ideas. “Please take the opportunity to hear about and participate in efforts to energise this industry as we formulate growth and development strategies for now and the future,” he said. “The TFLC wants the best result for rail freight and believes we can only benefit by tapping into one of its best minds.”

In Hobart the Tasmanian Freight Logistics Council is sponsoring an open presentation and forum with Lord Berkeley on Monday 26 April from 2 - 4pm at the Brighton Civic Centre, Green Point Road, Bridgewater. Anyone interested in attending should contact Rob McGuire on (03 6236 3663 or 0409 512 220 or email freightlogistics@tcci.com.au