

\$15bn AusLink commitment and \$1.6m to ALC good news for logistics industry

THE FEDERAL government has given the Australian Logistics Council (ALC) a pat on the back - and a windfall of A\$1.6 million over the next four years.

The funding has been provided to enable the ALC to develop a new industry logistics strategy.

"It's an important development and needs to continue to ensure that the transition from a government established body to an industry-led forum is completed by 2010," said transport and regional services minister, Mark Vaile.

He was referring to the latest logistics industry strategy review that concluded that the 'Logistics Strategy' had gone as far as it could in its current form and that a new strategy - independent of the government's 'Action Agenda' program - should be developed.

"The Logistics Council has done a great job over the last four years and you are the right people to lead the next stage of the development of the logistics industry," the minister told the ALC's annual forum on the Gold Coast.

"I invite Australia's transport and logistics industry to get firmly behind the ALC in developing and implementing the new logistics strategy," he said. "I would encourage industry to pursue world's best practice aggressively to create a wave - not a ripple - of industry development and improvement."

"The transport and logistics industry needs to be an early adopter of new technology and modern work practices. It needs to seek out opportunities to innovate, pay close attention to attracting, training and retaining quality staff, and draw on developments in the sector from around the world."

For the government's part, Vaile said it was working to eliminate the regulatory impediments to the industry's efficiency. "We are also building better transport infrastructure to support your operations," he declared.

"We are working through the Australian Transport Council and the Council of Australian Governments to deliver a substantial new national reform agenda with important implications for future transport policy."

"Of particular importance is the agreement by ATC ministers on the direction of finalis-

ing the Heavy Vehicle Performance Based Standards (PBS) initiative. When it is fully implemented, this initiative will encourage the use of innovative vehicle configurations and designs to adapt to different circumstances and road conditions. It will result in significant efficiency gains for the industry."

Vaile claimed the government was building better roads and railways across Australia through AusLink - the biggest investment program of its kind in Australia's history. "We are spending A\$15 billion on AusLink over the next five years to 2009," he said.

"For the first time, transport infrastructure funding is being guided and underpinned by a five-year national plan with a 20-year horizon. In Conjunction with the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), we are investing A\$2.4 billion over the next five years to 2009

to upgrade Australia's national rail infrastructure.

"The primary focus of our investment is to upgrade the north-south rail corridor between Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane."

Vaile said the ARTC's work would reduce the Melbourne-Brisbane cycle time from 96 hours to 72 hours - a 25 per cent improvement. The Sydney to Brisbane cycle time should fall from 72 hours to 48 hours.

Among the projects to be funded in the second five years of the Auslink program - from 2009 to 2014 - included planning for the proposed inland railway from Melbourne to Brisbane.

"We are working to clear away the regulatory impediments that are stopping the logistics industry from reaching its full potential," the minister added.



Emirates honours top cargo agents

EMIRATES SkyCargo honoured its top cargo agents for 2006, at an award ceremony held at Mina Al Salam in Dubai. The awards were presented by Ram Menen, Emirates' divisional senior vice president cargo, Peter Sedgley, Emirates vice president cargo commercial operations and Jassim Saif, Emirates manager cargo sales UAE. The annual agent awards are an important part of the Emirates SkyCargo award calendar and an opportunity to recognise all cargo agents for their tremendous contributions in supporting the ongoing success of the award-winning carrier. Jassim Saif said: "We recognize our cargo agents for their hard work and commitment to Emirates SkyCargo. Through the years, we have developed strong relationships with the top agents in the country. Our valuable network is integral to our success as an airline and our ability to provide outstanding services to our discerning customers." The awards went to: **Abu Dhabi Top Cargo Agent:** 1) National Air Cargo Middle East

Fze, 2) Airline Cargo Resources FZ Co, 3) Swift Freight International LLC, 4) Globelink West Star Shipping LLC, 5) Omeir Travel Agency, 6) Salim Al Toki Cargo Forwarding & Clearing, 7) Expolanka Freight FZ CO, 8) Devcon Shipping and Clearing, 9) MICCO 10) Salem Freight International. **Dubai Top Courier Company:** 1) DHL Worldwide Express, 2) TNT Express Worldwide, 3) Federal Express, 4) Aramex Courier Co. **Special Recognition Award:** 1) Swift Freight International. **Top Cargo Agent:** 1) Barwil Dubai, 2) Aramex International, 3) Danzas-AEI Intercontinental, 4) Hawk Freight Services, 5) E-Freight International, 6) Reliance Freight Systems, 7) Gulf Agency Co. Dubai LTD, 8) JPSK Cargo LLC, 9) Dubai Express Freightworks LLC, 10) Freight Systems Co.; **Most Improved Agent Award:** 1) Expeditors International; **Top Agent for Valuable Business:** 1) Transguard and Northern Emirates. **Top Cargo Agent:** 1) Sharjah National Travel & Tours Agency, 2) Umm Al Quwain National Travel Agency, 3) Orient Travel & Tours Agency,