

# Media release



## **FROM THE MINISTER FOR ROADS AND PORTS**

**DATE: Thursday, February 28, 2008**

### **NATIONAL LIBERAL COALITION PROVE OPPOSITION TO VITAL CHANNEL DEEPENING PROJECT**

The National Liberal Coalition today voted against channel deepening and the importance it has for the economic prosperity of Victorian families, Minister for Roads and Ports, Tim Pallas said today.

“In voting to tie up the Port of Melbourne’s business case for the channel deepening project in further reviews by extra committees, the Coalition has confirmed its opposition to the project,” Mr Pallas said.

“More than \$120 million has been spent on studying the effects of this project, including the economic and environmental impact.

“Independent assessment shows this project adds more than \$2 billion to the national economy over 30 years.

“How much more study do we need? The Standing Committee is not more qualified to assess the economic impact of this project than the independent assessors and the independent panel who have already assessed it!

“What do they expect to gain through this process, that hasn’t already been covered comprehensively?”

Mr Pallas said there was wide spread support for the project from business, industry, union and community groups.

“VECCI, Victorian Farmers Federation, Australian Industry Group, Maritime Union Australia and the Committee for Melbourne have all come out publicly and said enough is enough - it is time to get on with the job,” he said.

“The Leader of the National Party needs to explain to the Victorian Farmers Federation and to regional Victorians, how he can sell out on an issue of such

significance to the lives of Victorian families.

“Deeper channels protect our export and import industries – dairy and grain farmers, manufacturers, winemakers – from facing higher costs on their products because of depth constraints in the bay.

“What are Mr Ryan’s reasons for undermining this vital project?

“Even though the National Party has previously supported the channel deepening project, they have now confirmed they are once again silent slaves to their Liberal masters.

“The Brumby Government’s position on channel deepening had remained steadfast.

“We are delivering this project to grow our economy, protect our industries and encourage job growth and it is time to get on with the job.”