

Tasmanian Shipping Inquiry
Productivity Commission
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Presiding Commissioner

Tasmanian Shipping and Freight Review

The remit of your enquiry as commissioned by the Australian Government into Tasmania's shipping costs and the competitiveness of Tasmania's freight industry does not address the fundamental issue that disadvantages Tasmanians compared to the rest of their Australian counterparts by dint of geography.

The Productivity Commission and, for that matter, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, are not the appropriate bodies to deal with a political and legal matter relating to states' rights under the Australian Constitution.

I argue that it is the responsibility of the Australian Government to deal with the issue of Tasmania's unique geography that disadvantages Tasmanians compared to other Australians in other states of the Commonwealth because of the Bass Strait. The main issues are of a political and constitutional legal nature that lies outside the scope of your enquiry. May I refer you to Article 117 of the Australian Constitution:

117. A subject of the Queen, resident in any State, shall not be subject in any other State to any disability or discrimination which would not be equally applicable to him if he were a subject of the Queen resident in such other State.

By way of background, I was the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade State Director in Tasmania, 2007-2010. In that capacity I was an ex-officio member of the then Tasmanian Freight Logistics Council and knowledgeable of the "blue water" issues that Tasmanians of all walks of life face when interacting with the rest of the country, be it passenger movements, commerce or exports.

Yours faithfully

Phil na Champassak

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