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Picket continues at robo-terminal

Monday, December 04, 2017, 10:57am

The Port of Melbourne's new stevedore has warned that continuation of a picket will increase the size of its planned damages claim, with 24-hour CCTV monitoring being reviewed for possible "criminal conduct".

On Friday, [Victoria International Container Terminal Ltd](#) (see [video](#) of its operations) won an [interim injunction](#) against the MUA and its members over the picket at Webb Dock (see [Related Article](#)).

But the protest continued over the weekend, with the MUA claiming it was supported by the community.

VICT chief executive Anders Dømmestrup emphasised yesterday that the orders applied indefinitely to the MUA.

"The MUA must not stop access for people and vehicles to our terminal and must not arrange for other people to picket the terminal.

"The court also saw the need to require the MUA not to breach a 'no-go zone' of 100 metres around our site.

"The court's injunction spells a clear warning for anybody else who thinks it is OK to prevent VICT going about its ordinary business of serving the needs of Victorians and our State's exporters and importers.

"We expect to be able to resume work and to enter our site in the normal way", he said.

"If there is any illegal picketing preventing us doing so we will commence further legal proceedings and have briefed the federal government on the matter.

"VICT is reviewing 24 hour CCTV footage for criminal conduct which may already have occurred.

"We will also continue to monitor the cost impact of past and any future illegal picketing, we are measuring those costs and they will become part of any damages claim we decide to make."

The MUA [said on its website yesterday](#) that it "has complied as required" with the court's injunction.

Ship stranded by blockade

The blockade is preventing the unloading and loading of the almost 300-metre [Glasgow Express](#), which is operated by shipping line ASAL and owned by Hapag-Lloyd (one of three partners in the ASAL consortium).

In an outline of argument presented to the court on Friday, VICT said it received about \$300,000 in revenue for each vessel "call", while the Port of Melbourne also received fees as high as \$118 per standard 20-foot container loaded or unloaded at its facility.

The VICT Webb Dock facility is handling just one ship a week before moving to full-scale operations, involving eight ships a week and would need to do so to become financially viable.

It said it was at a "critical stage" in negotiating a permanent contract with ASAL, while it was also conducting talks on similar deals with other shipping lines.

"Those contracts are typically long term, meaning that opportunities do not come up often in the market," VICT said.

It said that losing ASAL and other possible contracts "will have serious financial consequences for VICT and may threaten its viability".

VICT in its outline of argument said that Hapag-Lloyd had told it that it would seek compensation for the delays to exports and the vessel.

It said the picket went beyond "merely persuasion or protest", extending to "obstruction and sabotage".

The blockade was "relevantly tortious" and provided a basis for suits based on the economic torts of interference in contractual relations and unlawful interference with trade or business.

It also provided grounds for a suit based on nuisance.

Victorian International Container Terminal T/A VICT v MUA & CFMEU, S CI 2017 04871



Maritime Union of Australia - MUA

last Wednesday

The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) says an ongoing dispute at Webb Dock at the Port of Melbourne is indicative of labour rights abuses regularly adopted by notorious global stevedoring giant International Container Terminal Services (ICTSI).

A community protest has been underway outside the Victoria International Container Terminal (VICT) for some days after a casual employee was denied shifts after taking action against management over workplace bullying and harassment.

"... [See more](#)



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