



National voluntary guidelines

for landside stevedore charges

Part A: Introduction



Background

The national [container supply chain](#) ('the supply chain') is inherently complex and is characterised by a network of interconnected and interdependent entities, processes, contracts, charges, and money flows. It stands to reason that an efficient and transparent container supply chain can deliver improved productivity outcomes.

Within this context, the introduction and setting of [landside stevedoring charges](#) ('the charges') at Australian [container terminals](#) has flow-on effects throughout the supply chain.¹ Improved communication on the setting of charges can help the supply chain better understand and manage any such downstream effects.

These guidelines establish clear protocols for notification and communication on increases to existing, or the introduction of new, charges levied on transport operators for access to pick up or drop off containers, and for the associated handling of containerised cargo. To this end, the guidelines are designed to promote enhanced communication

and transparency across the national containerised freight supply chain when changes are made to corresponding charges.

A nationally aligned approach provides consistency, greater certainty, and predictability on what changes are to occur, the timing of changes, and the requisite notification and communication protocols, while continuing to encourage ongoing investment in terminal facilities.

Interrelated arrangements

Some states and territories have existing provisions in place that aim to deliver similar outcomes to those envisaged under the guidelines²³⁴. To the extent that they align with any existing arrangements, the guidelines aim to complement, build on, or replace⁵ these provisions. Once followed, the guidelines are administered by the relevant state or territory authority and may form part of a broader suite of measures designed to monitor and review existing arrangements (including the guidelines), port related charges and

¹ [Shipping lines](#) and [stevedore companies](#) enter into contracts regarding the Australian container terminals where vessels will berth to load and unload containers. [Land transport operators \('the transport operators'\)](#) are charged by stevedore companies to access, among other things, landside services at these terminals. These charges are either absorbed by the transport operators or passed on to importers and exporters. When prices in excess of the cost of supply are passed on, volume and prices along the supply chain are at risk of being adversely affected, leading to reduced export competitiveness or higher domestic prices for imported goods.

² For NSW see <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/freight-operators/mandatory-standards-for-carriers-and-stevedores>.

³ For VIC see <https://transport.vic.gov.au/ports-and-freight/commercial-ports/voluntary-port-performance-model/voluntary-pricing-protocol-for-stevedore-landside-charges>.

⁴ For WA see <https://www.fremantleports.com.au/news/fremantle-ports-signs-container-terminal-leases-with-patrick-and-dp-world>.

⁵ The NVGs do not alter existing commercial agreements.

port performance. These additional measures can take various forms, including legislated periodic reviews or discretionary reviews as deemed necessary by the relevant Minister.

Commencement

Once published on the National Transport Commission (NTC) website, these guidelines apply to any proposed changes to charges, as defined in this document, from the commencement date specified by each participating state and/or territory government.

Application

These guidelines apply to charges levied on transport operators as defined in [Schedule 1: Dictionary \('the dictionary'\)](#).

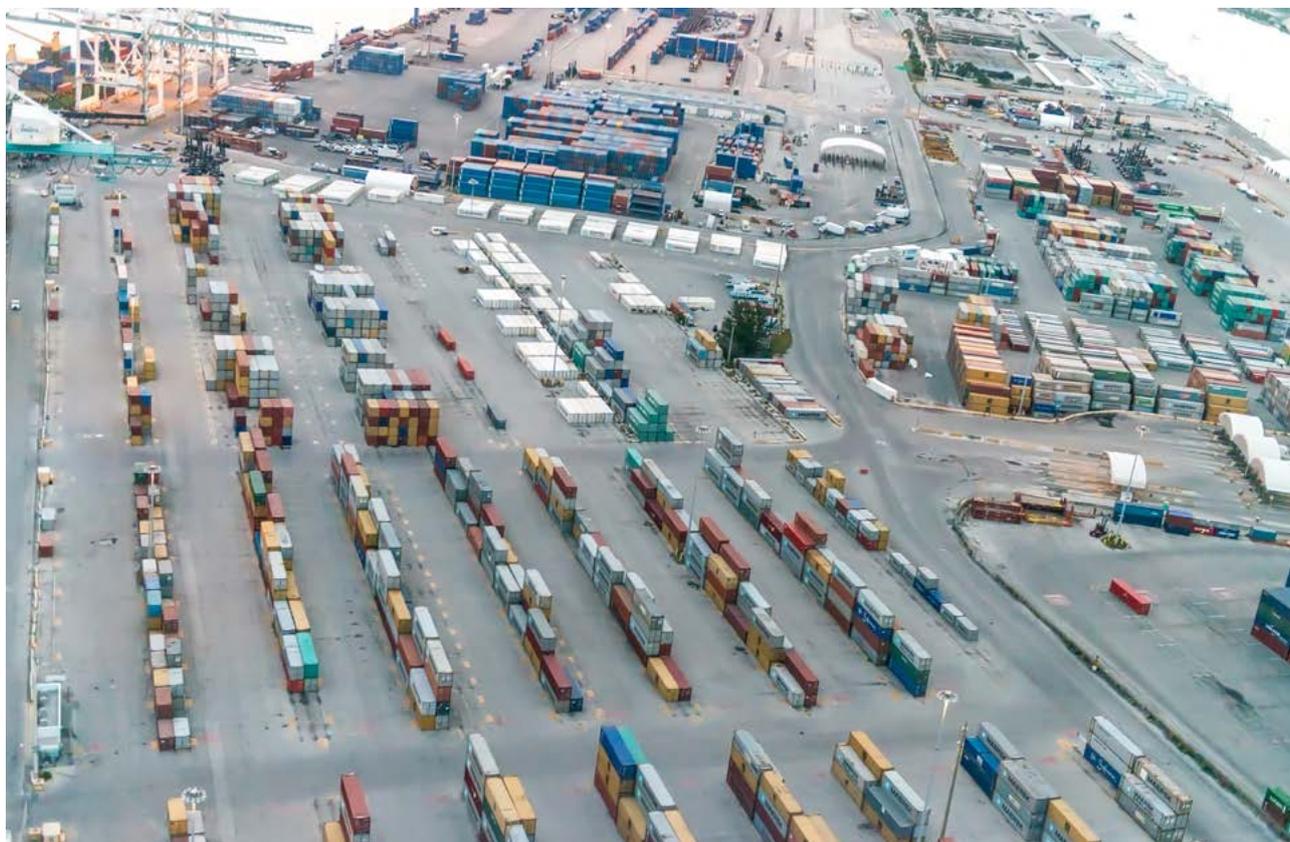
Overview of this document

This document is divided into the following parts:

- a) [Part A: Introduction](#), provides the background and introduction to the document.
- b) [Part B: Guidelines](#), sets out the protocols for notification and communication that relate to price increases of existing, or the introduction of any new, charges levied on transport operators.
- c) [Schedule 1](#): Includes definitions for terms and expressions with specific meaning in the context of this document.

Dictionary and interpretation

- a) A term or expression that is defined in the dictionary, has the meaning given to it in the dictionary.





Part B: Guidelines

The guidelines for notifications regarding changes to charges are as follows (also refer to [Figure 1](#) on page 5):

Voluntary protocol: Notifications regarding the charges

1. Stevedore companies that levy charges to access their terminals have voluntarily agreed to adhere to this protocol to enhance the communication, transparency, and predictability of charges.
2. The charges will only be changed once per annum⁶ on an [Annual Review Date \(ARD\)](#) nominated by the individual stevedore company.
3. Stevedore companies must issue a [Notice of Intention \(NOI, 'the notice'\)](#) to the department⁷ and publish the notice on their website 60 calendar days prior to the proposed date of change of an existing, or the introduction of a new, charge.
4. The Notice must detail the [rationale](#) for the change, including any relevant supporting information, and excluding any such details deemed to be commercially sensitive.⁸
5. The department will also publish, and/or publish a link to the notice, on its website.
6. Stevedore companies will receive feedback from the department and broader supply chain on the proposed change, and where necessary, respond directly.
7. Stevedore companies must publish a [Final Confirmation Notice \(FCN, 'the confirmation'\)](#) of changes on their website 30 calendar days prior to the proposed date of implementation.

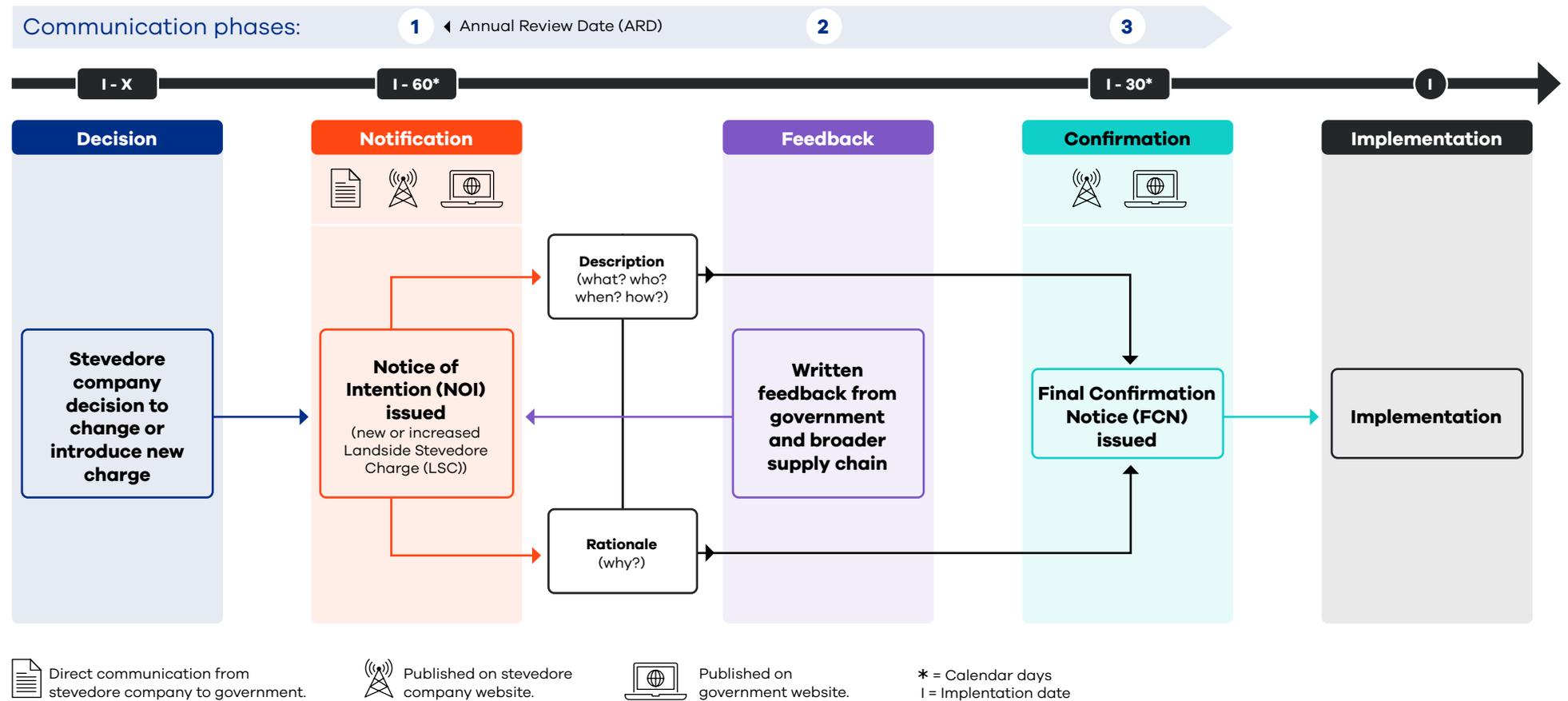
⁶ If additional increases are necessary within a twelve-month period, this protocol should be followed.

⁷ As designated by the relevant state or territory government.

⁸ The stevedore company may, at its discretion, decide to provide information of a more sensitive or commercial nature in its disclosure to government.

Figure 1: suggested process flow

PROCESS FLOW





Schedule 1: Dictionary

- **Annual Review Date (ADR):** the date that is independently nominated by each stevedore company for the once per annum changes to the charges.
- **Container terminal:** refers to the sea transport terminal that handles containerised cargo, providing services to shipping lines and landside customers.
- **Container supply chain (the ‘supply chain’):** refers to parties involved in the movement of import and export containers from the origin to destination.
- **Final Confirmation Notice (FCN, ‘the confirmation’):** a confirmation of the change outlined in the notice. The confirmation should include a statement of engagement summarising formal issues raised by affected stakeholders with the stevedore company.
- **Landside stevedoring charges (‘the charges’):** these guidelines apply to all landside charges levied by stevedore companies at Australian container terminals on transport operators for the handling of containerised goods – e.g., infrastructure charges, terminal access charges, vehicle booking fees.
- **Land transport operator (‘the transport operators’):** a transport company contracted to collect and deliver containerised cargo, full, partially filled, or empty containers, from stevedore operated terminals.
- **Notice of Intention (NOI, ‘the notice’):** a publicly communicated intention from a stevedore company to change an existing, or introduce a new, charge. The notice must detail the rationale for the change, including all relevant supporting information and data.
- **Rationale⁹:** a detailed and transparent explanation by the stevedore company on:
 - *What* the change is and how it will be applied,
 - *Why* the change is being proposed, and
 - *If* the change will have an adverse effect on container supply chain productivity.
- **Shipping line:** an organisation that coordinates the sea transportation leg of containerised cargo and can be contracted by cargo owners or intermediary logistics companies.
- **Stevedore company:** an organisation contracted by shipping lines to coordinate the transference of containerised cargo from and to ships.

⁹ The stevedore company may, at its discretion, decide to provide information of a more sensitive or commercial nature in its disclosure to government.