



Stakeholder Pulse Survey 2023

Summary of key findings

Port of Melbourne | January 2024



Key findings

- 1** Port of Melbourne's overall reputation remains healthy and trust in the organisation has strengthened. Around a third of stakeholders surveyed felt Port of Melbourne had improved its reputation over the past year.
- 2** The professionalism and expertise of Port of Melbourne's people continue to underpin its positive reputation, along with its commercial acumen and ongoing investment to improve port infrastructure and efficiency.
- 3** Most stakeholders acknowledge Port of Melbourne's increased engagement focus and feel it has improved in the past year - in terms of both the level and quality of engagement.
- 4** Stakeholders perceive a 'culture shift' resulting in a more proactive, open and transparent approach to engagement, and a genuine willingness to consult and listen to their needs and interests.
- 5** The *Port Development Strategy* is the most critical issue for ongoing engagement. Most stakeholders want more engagement on this topic, and it underpins the sustainability issues considered most important.
- 6** Closing the loop on engagement and sharing rationale for decisions will be key to driving further improvement in the perceived quality and effectiveness of Port of Melbourne's stakeholder engagement and its reputation overall.

Background and Methodology

Background

SEC Newgate was commissioned by Port of Melbourne to conduct a survey of its various external stakeholders to collect an up-to-date measure of its reputation and aspects of its stakeholder engagement

The survey followed a busy 12-month period in which Port of Melbourne:

- Released its Stakeholder Engagement Framework
- Undertook extensive stakeholder engagement and industry consultation in relation to the Port Capacity Expansion Program (PCEP), and its 2023-24 Tariff Compliance Statement (TCS), among other issues
- Expanded its Corporate Relations team to include more staff dedicated to implementing the stakeholder engagement framework
- Continued progress on major port development works, including the Port Rail Transformation Project, and the Webb Dock East extension.

Objectives

The objectives of the 2023 stakeholder survey were to:

- Collect an updated measure of reputation, factors underpinning reputation, and performance across a range of attributes
- Give Port of Melbourne's diverse stakeholders an opportunity to provide feedback on their experiences and perceptions of its engagement activity over the past year
- Identify the sustainability issues that are of greatest importance to stakeholders, and their perceptions of Port of Melbourne's impact on these issues, and to collect feedback on its sustainability reporting

Methodology

The 2023 survey was administered online between 30 May and 7 July 2023.

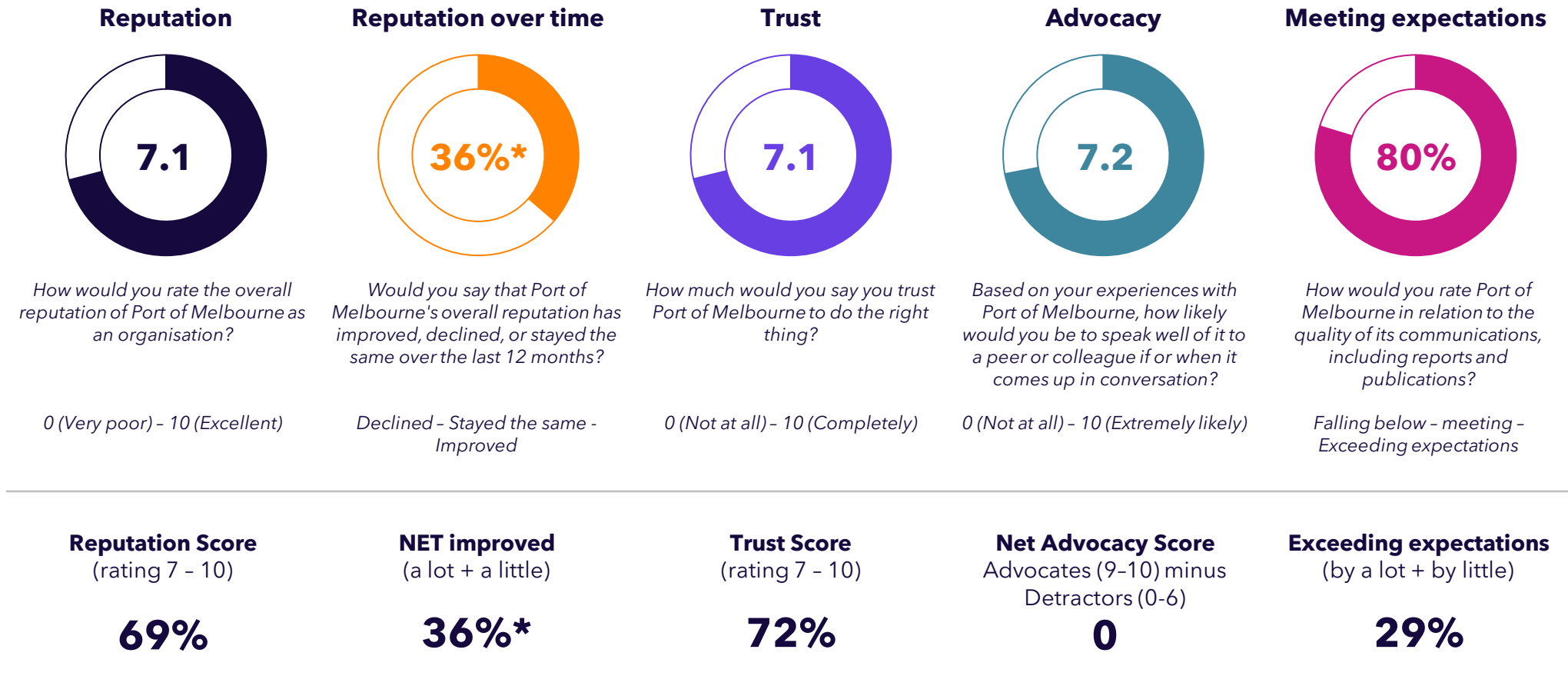
An invitation to participate in the survey was sent to 782 stakeholders, of whom 57 completed it - the table below shows the profile of the survey participants.

Stakeholder type / segment	(n)
Port users	13
Supply chain	10
Tenants	8
Government	16
Industry bodies & Unions	10
Total	57

Each of the five segments was allocated equal weighting for survey results calculated at the total sample level.

Dashboard: Reputation Metrics

Port of Melbourne's average overall reputation rating is virtually unchanged since 2022 and remains at a reasonably high level. While the advocacy measure is also unchanged, stakeholders' trust in Port of Melbourne has improved since last year.



Dashboard: Engagement and Communications

At least half of all stakeholders feel Port of Melbourne’s engagement has improved, and the same proportion reported an increase in the level of engagement, which around two thirds feel is about right. Ratings for quality of relationship and communications remain at a high level.

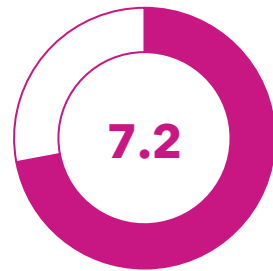
Relationship



How would you rate Port of Melbourne in relation to the quality of its relationship and interactions with you?

0 (Very poor) - 10 (Excellent)

Communications



How would you rate Port of Melbourne in relation to the quality of its communications, including reports and publications?

0 (Very poor) - 10 (Excellent)

Engagement improved

(a lot + a little improved)

54%

Would you say that Port of Melbourne's stakeholder engagement and communications has improved, declined, or stayed the same over the past 12 months?

Change in level of engagement

(a lot + a little more)

54%

Would you say that you have had more, less, or about the same level of engagement with Port of Melbourne over the past 12 months, compared to previous years?

Right level of engagement

(About right)

65%

Would you say the level of engagement you have currently with Port of Melbourne is too little, too much, or about right?

Relationship Score

(rating 7 - 10)

72%

Communications Score

(rating 7 - 10)

75%*

Strengths and reputation drivers

Port of Melbourne's reputation is bolstered by positive views of its personnel, its expertise, professionalism and governance. Those who perceive Port of Melbourne to have strengthened its reputation attribute this largely to an uplift in its stakeholder engagement.

Factors that contribute to a positive reputation rating:

- Personnel – there were favourable mentions of Port of Melbourne's senior management, its Business Development team, and staff in general
- Its professionalism
- Its industry knowledge
- Being commercially-minded
- Its investment in infrastructure improvement
- Its provision of good information and advice

Those who felt Port of Melbourne's reputation has improved over the past year mostly attributed this to a concerted effort to improve its stakeholder relationships and communication:

- More engagement overall
- Proactive outreach on issues relevant to stakeholders
- Greater frequency of interactions and communications
- Notifying stakeholders of upcoming works
- Openness and transparency
- Greater opportunity for stakeholders to engage, interact and contribute
- Willingness to listen and to demonstrate understanding and consideration of stakeholder interests
- Approachability and responsiveness

Some perceived the uplift in stakeholder engagement as a 'culture shift' which they felt was being driven by Port of Melbourne's senior leadership.

Other positive perceptions of Port of Melbourne included:

- Forward planning around port development to meet future demand
- Improved efficiency in the movement of goods within port, due to delays and blockages being addressed

The main reasons given for having trust in Port of Melbourne focused on its relationship and interactions with stakeholders:

- People are good to deal with – professional, informative, courteous
- Communications are felt to be open, honest and transparent
- Giving stakeholders a 'heads up' of potential issues
- Authentic and respectful engagement
- Willingness to share information
- Increased interaction, including the Executive team getting out to meet with stakeholders
- Following through on commitments

Areas for improvement

Criticism of Port of Melbourne centres around three main issues – fewer or lower quality interactions, a perceived lack of pace in its processes, and cost increases. A commitment to open, transparent and authentic engagement and communications can build the foundations of a trusting relationship.

Stakeholders noted the following issues that detract from Port of Melbourne’s overall reputation:

- Need for continual improvement in response to historical ESC findings
- Interactions are felt to be “too clinical”
- Some feel Port of Melbourne can be “slow moving”, in terms of:
 - Overly complicated systems and processes
 - Being unresponsive
- Inconsistency / contradictory messages from different parts of the organisation

Among the small number of comments describing reasons for a lack of trust, there were a few different themes:

- Poor communication, not being kept informed of changes
- A feeling that some stakeholders (smaller port users and non-tenants) do not get as much interaction or consideration as others
- Feeling that PoM doesn’t always share all information or is selective about what it shares
- Need to rebuild relationship after staff departure from Port of Melbourne
- A feeling that Port of Melbourne is focused on profitability

The relatively small number of stakeholders who felt Port of Melbourne’s reputation had declined ascribed this to:

- Having less contact with Port of Melbourne
 - Reduced face-to-face interaction due to remote working
 - Due to PoM personnel leaving the organisation
- Poor responsiveness – difficulty getting through by telephone
- Timeframes inadequate to enable meaningful participation or response – feels too short-notice
- Increased costs being forced upon stakeholders with insufficient engagement around rate increases

Engagement topics of interest

There is broad interest in engagement about port development - including traffic flows, PCEP, tariffs and planning. Port users and Supply chain stakeholders are also interested in engagement on tariffs and pricing; and Government stakeholders are interested in local community issues and decarbonation.

Topics stakeholders want more engagement on

All stakeholders (%)



Topics of relatively higher interest: By segment

	Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community Decarbonisation Environment
	Industry bodies & Unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rail Planning Trade and geopolitical trends
	Port users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment Tariffs and pricing Rail
	Supply chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic flows in and around the port Tariffs and pricing Rail
	Tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and safety Decarbonisation Port capacity enhancement program





Stakeholder interest in sustainability issues

The primary interest of all stakeholders is heavily weighted towards sustainability issues in the *Prosperity* pillar – specifically port capacity and cargo transport efficiency. Some other issues skew more to certain stakeholder segments.

Stakeholder interest in sustainability issues - All stakeholders (%)



The issues of highest interest overall tended to have high interest among all segments. However, there were some notable differences between stakeholder segments:

-  Adequate port capacity (88%) and Border security (50%) were both considered especially important to *Tenants*
-  Cargo transport efficiency (90%) and Job creation (40%) were both considered especially important to *Industry body / Union* stakeholders
-  Climate change mitigation (46%), Biosecurity (46%) and Water and air quality (23%) were all considered especially important to *Port users*
-  Port resilience was considered especially important to *Government* stakeholders (24%)

Stakeholders' closing advice

The main message from stakeholders to 'keep doing what you're doing' reflects a perceived uplift in Port of Melbourne's engagement approach and activity - something they hope to see continued and finetuned to reflect their varied and unique interests.

Keep doing...

- Maintain recent improvements to stakeholder engagement and communications, through:
 - Timely and consistent engagement
 - Consulting with a broad and diverse range of stakeholders
 - Demonstrating understanding of stakeholder concerns and interests
 - Utilising a range of engagement forums, including one-on-one interactions (appreciating commercial sensitivities)
 - Articulating how stakeholder feedback has influenced decisions and activities
 - Transparency and openness - share information that is relevant to stakeholders
- Continuing to promote and implement strategic plans
- Focusing on supply chain efficiency and being flexible where possible

Do more...

- Engagement on specific issues:
 - Green shipping initiatives
 - Tariffs and pricing - engage before implementing price changes
- Stronger community engagement to build social license
- Build public profile
- Listening to and supporting smaller tenants and port users
- Targeted engagement for different types of stakeholders



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