



**For immediate release**

## **CARS ARRIVE AT NEW PORT KEMBLA TERMINAL**

**October 2007**

AAT has welcomed the first RoRo vessels to its new Port Kembla Terminal – marking the beginning of a year-long transition that will see the Illawarra replace Sydney as the gateway for motor vehicle imports into NSW.

NSW Premier Morris Iemma and Wilhelmsen's global CEO Ingar Skaug simultaneously cut a red ribbon draped across the stern loading ramp of the 240-metre, 67,000 tonne 'Tarago' to celebrate the first motor vehicle imports to roll onto the Port Kembla wharves.

They were among more than 200 guests and dignitaries who attended the ceremony including NSW Ports Minister, Joe Tripodi, Minister for the Illawarra, David Campbell, the Ambassadors from Sweden and Norway, as well as other local MPs and industry leaders.

The 'Tarago' was joined by another Wilhelmsen car-carrying vessel, the 200-metre 'Taipan', and together discharged 836 vehicles across Port Kembla's new Berth 107.

Premier Iemma said the arrival of the first RoRo vessels at Port Kembla represented a giant boost to the region with the estimated 400 ships which would soon call at the Port annually each bringing \$1 million worth of economic activity.

"Today is as important to the Illawarra as the opening of the first coal mine and the commissioning of the Port Kembla steelworks," the Premier said.

AAT Chairman Andrew Cridland said it was very satisfying to be part of such a historic day for the region.

He said motor vehicles sales and import volumes continued to break all previous records with sales in 2006-07 topping the 1 million mark for the first time – 70% of which were imports. The new Port Kembla Terminal would handle a large portion of those.

"We have invested more than \$80 million in this project and are very proud of the facilities we are able to offer to the industry here today," Mr Cridland said.

"This is a world class vehicle handling terminal which, given it occupies a massive 40 hectare site, now gives the automotive industry certainty and capacity to continue growing here for many years to come," he said.

The arrival of the Wilhelmsen vessels at Port Kembla signaled the closure of Darling Harbour to shipping. By late next year, the remainder of car-carrying vessels still calling at Port Jackson will also transfer to Port Kembla and AAT's Glebe Island facility will close.

As well as general cargo, the new Port Kembla terminal will then be handling approximately 300,000 vehicle imports annually.