

FREO HEAVE-HO

Sale plans for port and TAB loom in today's State Budget

EXCLUSIVE

■ Gareth Parker, Phoebe Wearne
and Andrew Probyn

Historic Fremantle Port will be put up for sale to reduce debt as part of today's State Budget, which will also enshrine a no-fault third-party vehicle insurance scheme to begin on July 1 next year.

Treasurer Mike Nahan is expected to confirm the port sale in a Budget headlined by record debt and deficit numbers.

WA motorists will be charged \$99 per family car for no-fault insurance, with a smaller fee for tractors, mopeds, vintage cars and farm firefighting vehicles, and no charge for trailers and caravans.

No vehicle will be charged more than \$99 in the first year of the scheme, which will cover all people catastrophically injured in a crash, regardless of fault.

The scheme, to be run by the Insurance Commission of WA, will take the annual compulsory third-party insurance premium for a family car to about \$415.

It will not be retrospective and crash victims who prove someone else was at fault can still seek lump-sum compensation.

Victims who cannot prove someone else was at fault will get continuing reasonable and necessary support for their injuries.

Treasurer Mike Nahan said the Government had picked so-called Option 3 from the Government's no-fault Green Paper because it was the most cost-effective.

It gives crash victims who could assert fault the choice between long-term care and a lump sum to manage their own care.

Dr Nahan said he believed the public would support the no-fault scheme despite the "modest impost" on them.

"It is a small price to pay to ensure people involved in a catastrophic motor vehicle accident where fault cannot be attributed receive long-term care," he said.

National Disability Services Australia WA manager Julie Waylen said the scheme was a positive step forward but it was disappointing cover would not start until mid next year.

"We urge the Government to backdate the scheme from when it is announced," Ms Waylen said.

As well as the port sale, it is understood this Budget will confirm plans to sell the TAB.

It is unknown how much Fremantle Port could be expected to fetch. Based on the recent sales of Newcastle and Botany ports and forecasts for Melbourne Port, \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion was conceivable, sources said.

The Government previously offered the Kwinana Bulk Terminal owned by Fremantle Ports for sale but it is believed the market

response for a single asset was underwhelming.

Premier Colin Barnett has previously said the State does not plan to sell the TAB this year but its future came under new focus in GST negotiations with the Federal Government, which wants more WA privatisations.

Last month, Finance Minister Mathias Cormann said it was "indefensible" that the State Government owned a TAB business.

Senator Cormann, who helped steer a \$499 million one-off payment to compensate WA for its low GST share, believes selling the TAB could raise \$1 billion. *The West Australian* understands Dr Nahan believes the TAB will fetch no more than \$120 million.

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The State Government plans to sell Fremantle Port in a bid to reduce its debt.
Picture: Mogens Johansen