



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Transport and Regional Services

MEDIA ALERT

Issued: 18 November 2005

Chair: Paul Neville MP

Regional rail and road networks inquiry ***Public hearings in Sydney***

The House of Representatives Transport and Regional Services Committee will hold a public hearing in the Darling Harbour Room, at the Novotel Rockford Darling Harbour, on Monday (21 November). The hearing is part of its inquiry into the operation of regional rail and road networks and the way those networks link to the ports.

On Monday the Committee will hear from a range of witnesses including the Australian Council for Infrastructure Development, P&O Ports, the Association of Australian Ports and Marine Authorities and Shipping Australia.

Committee Chair Paul Neville said that Sydney was chosen for the hearing because the movement of freight into and out of Sydney is a vital part of the national network.

“We will be asking witnesses about the future needs of Australia’s transport infrastructure, the growth in container shipments, competition in the stevedoring industry and the future development of Australia’s ports. A matter of particular interest to the Committee is the condition of the branch rail lines used to move the grain harvest,” Mr Neville said.

“At the hearing, the Committee will also be interested in future plans for rail infrastructure, planned developments for road access to the ports, and how the transport system will cope if the expected record grain harvest is achieved,” he said.

“The importance of this inquiry can be seen from the fact that so far, 125 submissions have been received.”

The Committee is planning to conduct more public hearings at important transport centres around Australia over the next few months. It is seeking the widest possible cross-section of views on the matters covered by the inquiry and is continuing to accept submissions. The Committee expects to table its report around the middle of next year.

Members of the public and media are most welcome to attend the public hearing, details of which appear below.

PUBLIC HEARING:	21 November 2005, 10.00 am – 5.00 p.m.
WHERE:	Darling Harbour Room, Novotel Rockford Darling Harbour, Sydney

For **media comment**, please contact: Paul Neville, House Transport and Regional Services Committee Chair, on (07) 4152 0744 or 0419 704 767

For **background information**, including the full terms of reference and copies of submissions, please contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 2352 or visit the Inquiry website at

www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/trs/networks/