



Regional rail and road networks inquiry

Public hearing in Canberra

A parliamentary inquiry examining the operation of regional road and rail networks and the way those networks connect with ports, will hold a public hearing at Parliament House in Canberra tomorrow (1 March).

The House of Representatives Transport and Regional Services Committee, which is conducting the inquiry, will be hearing from the Australian Rail Track Corporation. Chair Paul Neville said that the task of moving freight around this country is growing rapidly and that the Australian Rail Track Corporation has an important role to play in that growth.

“At the hearing, the Committee will be interested in future plans for rail infrastructure and how they link with planned developments for road access to the ports,” he said.

The Committee will also be discussing issues such as: the relative shares of the freight task being carried by road and rail; the transport arrangements for the grain harvest and the proposed Melbourne to Gladstone rail link. Of particular interest will be future plans for access to Newcastle and Port Kembla, which were recently raised at hearings in those cities.

“The ability of the regional transport networks to move Australia’s freight efficiently and quickly, will have a major impact on Australia’s pattern of growth,” Mr Neville said. “The business community recognises this and that is reflected in the fact that nearly 140 submissions have been received.”

The Committee has already visited NSW, Queensland, Victoria and the Northern Territory and will conduct five public hearings at important transport centres in Western Australia next week.

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 later this year.

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

PUBLIC HEARING:	1 March 2006, 9.05 am – 10.30 a.m.
WHERE:	Committee Room 1R4, Parliament House, Canberra
WITNESSES:	Australian Rail Track Corporation

For **media comment**, please contact: Paul Neville, House Transport and Regional Services Committee Chair, on (02) 6277 4940 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/