



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Transport and Regional Services

MEDIA ALERT

Issued: 8 November 2005

Chair: Paul Neville MP

Deputy Chair: Steve Gibbons MP

Proposed North-South rail link under scrutiny *Public hearings in Canberra*

The House of Representatives Transport and Regional Services Committee will be hearing from the Australian Transport and Energy Corridor at a public hearing at Parliament House in Canberra tomorrow (9 November).

The public hearing is for a parliamentary inquiry examining the operation of regional road and rail networks and the way those networks connect with ports.

Committee Chair Paul Neville said that the task of moving Australia's freight is growing rapidly.

"Given that the east coast coastal corridor has a potential capacity of around 35 per cent of the freight task, the proposed rail-link from Melbourne to Brisbane and Gladstone could play a vital part in future rail freight movements. The Committee will want to test this proposition," Mr Neville said.

At tomorrow's hearing, the Committee will be inquiring about the various options that have been proposed for the route of this inland rail link. It will also discuss the prospects of the proposed line capturing a substantial proportion of the freight being carried north-south in the eastern states.

The inquiry has so far attracted over 120 submissions. "This is an indication of the importance of Australia's freight networks to the future of the Australian economy," Mr Neville said.

The Committee has already visited Queensland, Victoria and the Northern Territory and 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:	9 November 2005, 9.05 am – 10.15 a.m.
WHERE:	Committee Room 2R1, Parliament House, Canberra
WITNESSES:	Australian Transport and Energy Corridor.

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 <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/trs/index.htm>