



Regional rail and road networks inquiry

Public hearings in Canberra

The House of Representatives Transport and Regional Services Committee will hear from Freight Link, which is the owner/operator of the rail line from Tarcoola in South Australia to Darwin, at a public hearing in Canberra tomorrow (14 June). 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.

The line operated by Freight Link Pty Ltd includes the new 1,420km line from Alice Springs to Darwin.

Committee Chair Paul Neville said the inquiry is examining the operation of regional road and rail networks in handling the rapidly growing task of moving Australia's freight. An important part of the inquiry is consideration of the way those networks connect with the ports.

At the hearing tomorrow, the Committee will be interested in the progress made in increasing the levels of freight carried on the Adelaide to Darwin rail network. An important issue will be whether any substantial freight contracts have been attracted away from road transport to use the rail connection.

The inquiry has so far attracted over 170 submissions. "This is an indication of the importance of Australia's freight networks to the future of the Australian economy," Mr Neville said.

He said that the Committee is looking for ways in which greater efficiency can be achieved in the freight transport task, and how the three levels of government can co-operate to achieve this outcome.

"The current resources boom has heightened the need for the more efficient use of our transport infrastructure and port operations. Free flowing access and port efficiency add to our export outcomes," Mr Neville said.

The Committee is seeking the widest possible cross-section of views on the matters covered by the inquiry and is continuing to accept submissions. It expects to table its report later this year.

Members of the public and the media are most welcome to attend the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING:	Wednesday 14 June 2005, 9.05 am – 10.30 a.m.
WHERE:	Committee Room 1R4, Parliament House, Canberra
WITNESSES:	Freight Link Pty Ltd.

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/