



Regional rail and road networks inquiry

Canadian expert to speak on rural rail infrastructure

The House of Representatives Transport and Regional Services Committee has arranged a special public hearing for its inquiry into the integration of regional rail and road networks and their connection with ports, in Canberra, on Wednesday 14 February.

“Industry sources estimate that the national freight task will double within 20 years,” says Committee Chair Paul Neville. “The Committee has been examining Australia’s ability to meet this challenge.”

“One of the significant problems facing Australia’s rail system is the poor condition and low efficiency of rural branch lines”, he said. “The effect has been the transfer of a large proportion of seasonal traffic, particularly grain and wool shipments, onto road transport.”

“The Committee has been fortunate”, Mr Neville said, “to take advantage of the presence in Australia of Mr Ed Zsombor, the Director of the Rail Services Unit of the Saskatchewan Department of Highways and Transportation, in Canada.

Mr Zsombor has agreed to share his experience in rural railway issues with the Committee at this public hearing.

The Committee has received 192 submissions, and will continue to accept submissions for as long as possible, in an effort to get a comprehensive cross-section of views.

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

PUBLIC HEARING:	Wednesday, 14 February 2007, 9.15 am – 10.30 am
WHERE:	Committee Room 1R4, Parliament House, Canberra
WITNESSES:	Mr Ed Zsombor, Director, Rail Services Unit, Saskatchewan Department of Highways and Transportation, Canada

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/