



**THE COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENT**  
**HOUSE TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**  
**PAUL NEVILLE MP, COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

ATT: National Media

*Report of the House Transport Committee into progress in rail reform*

**After 100 years of talking about rail reform ...  
Commonwealth must take over interstate rail**

The House of Representatives Transport Committee has called for direct and forceful Commonwealth intervention to advance reform in the interstate rail network.

Releasing a report today on progress in rail reform, the House Transport Committee Chair, Paul Neville MP, said it was clear that reform benchmarks set by the Commonwealth for States and industry in April 2000 would not be met unless direct Commonwealth action was taken.

"After 100 years of talking about interstate rail reform it is time for direct and forceful Commonwealth intervention," Mr Neville said.

The Transport Committee recommends:

- declaration of the existing standard gauge rail network from Brisbane to Perth as a 'National Track';
- establishment of a National Rail Network Manager to ensure a consistent access regime;
- establishment of a National Rail Transport Commission to ensure coherent planning; and
- funding of a significant Infrastructure re-development program to overcome chronic deficiencies in rail infrastructure.

"This is all about providing a stable and consistent regulatory and operational framework for rail operators and businesses using the interstate rail network and thereby allowing the industry to reach its full potential," Mr Neville said.

"The debates that took place in the Constitutional Conventions of the 1890s are full of exhortations about the need for colonial railways to be extended, upgraded and better integrated. It is quite an indictment that the calls for action are much the same now.

"After 100 years State Transport Ministers and the Commonwealth must display political courage and political will to finally cut through the parochial concerns, vested interests and red tape that bind the industry to its past," Mr Neville said.

"The result will be better outcomes for the community (less congested roads, cleaner air and more dispersed employment opportunities) and better outcomes for business (quick and reliable deliveries at cheaper freight rates)."

*A Background paper (2 pages) is attached/follows.*

Melbourne  
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