

Thursday 15 January 2004

### ADELAIDE TO DARWIN RAILWAY : THE FUTURE STARTS HERE

Premier Mike Rann says that he expects South Australians to hop on board and take advantage of the great opportunities offered by the new \$1.3 billion rail line - when the very first train from Adelaide to Darwin pulls out of Regency Park this morning.

“This train will be leaving 100 years late, but right on time.

“From today, we must begin to unlock the opportunities this rail line offers our economy. It’s potential is as wide open as the continent over which this rail line extends.

“It must be about more trade, more tourism, more jobs and a larger economic base for South Australia.

“That is what makes today so historically significant and exciting.

“This very first train will haul 1.3 kilometres of freight containers, carrying everything from Ingham Chickens to Electrolux goods, over 3000 kilometres to the brand new state-of-the-art Port of Darwin facilities.

“There have been many historic markers along the way to getting this rail line built, but none compares to today – because this is when the action begins. The future starts here.

“Today is the realisation of the first SA Labor Premier Tom Price’s dream – his vision – back in 1907.

“I’ve always been a proponent of the railway – travelling the country to lobby for it. (*See attached*)

“Labor in Opposition supported the former Government every step of the way, including agreeing to the \$176.4 million South Australian contribution to its construction.

“This really is an example of what we can achieve when we work together – Labor, Liberal, Federal, State, Territory, public sector and private sector. Thousands of South Australians and Northern Territorians have invested so much time and effort into this.

“The heroes of this new railway are the hundreds of workers who built the line – those that have toiled in the desert, hammered away in the workshops of Port Augusta and Whyalla, those who erected bridges and welded line after line together in the heat of the tropics. They have put in a magnificent effort to get this rail line built ahead of time, and within budget.

“Today’s inaugural train journey marks the beginning of five freight-train services a week between Adelaide and Darwin.

“While freight contracts have already been signed with South Australia’s trucking magnate Alan Scott to carry 350 000 tonnes a year on this track, the volume is expected to more than double in the first five years to around 800 00 tonnes a year.

“Rail is a mode of transport that is safe, reliable, fuel-efficient, environmentally-friendly, it helps ease maintenance costs on our highways associated with the enormous volume of heavy truck movements, and it lessens the risk and cost of traffic congestion and traffic accidents.”

Mr Rann says he is now also looking forward to taking the very first Ghan passenger trip from Adelaide to Darwin on February 1.

Ticket sales on future Ghan trips have already outstripped predictions with more than \$10 million tickets sold to date.

For further information contact Jill Bottrall on 8463 3362 or 0419 99 01 60.
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# **The Hon Mike Rann MP**

Leader of the Opposition

Parliament House, North Tce, Adelaide SA 5000

## **News Release**

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26 May 1995

### **RANN CALLS FOR ACTION ON ALICE-DARWIN RAILWAY**

State Labor Leader Mike Rann has called for action from Federal, State and territory Governments on the Alice Springs to Darwin railway.

Mr Rann has written to the Chairman of the Darwin Committee, Neville Wran, calling for his support to facilitate construction of the rail link.

The Darwin Committee was formed by the Federal and Northern Territory Governments to help foster the development of Darwin and northern Australia as a gateway to Asia.

Mr Rann says the building of the railway would signal that Australia is committed to a dynamic presence in Asia leading into the next century and millennium.

“The Alice Springs to Darwin railway will improve the competitiveness of our existing exporters to Asia and encourage new exports.

“The project would deliver substantial job opportunities, especially in the Upper Spencer Gulf area, literally down line from Alice Springs.

“The Spencer Gulf cities are suffering at present from high unemployment and almost no economic growth.

“The Brown Liberal Government is ignoring them, scrapping the previous Government’s policy of creating Enterprise Zones in the area to kickstart growth.

“During the year to December 1994 the NT economy grew by 14.3% (compared to SA’s growth of just 0.1%).

“A new rail link to the North would link in to that economic growth.

“I pledge bi-partisan support to efforts to make the Alice Springs to Darwin rail link a reality.”

**A copy of Mike Rann’s letter follows (three pages)**

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