



Tuesday, 6 September 2011

Groups come together to keep freight on rail

The Wheatbelt Railway Retention Alliance met with Fremantle Road to Rail campaign organisers this week at a meeting hosted by Shadow Transport Minister Ken Travers.

Mr Travers said the groups discussed five areas of common interest and reinforced the need to keep freight on rail, not road, in metropolitan and regional Western Australia.

“Freight on Western Australian roads is no longer just a regional issue,” Mr Travers said.

“Support for the Fremantle Road to Rail campaign has grown significantly since a community rally last month condemned the Barnett Government’s lack of long-term planning to increase the volume of freight transported by rail from Fremantle Port.

“Both organisations are concerned about the environmental, economic, and amenity impact of more freight transportation on the State’s regional and metropolitan roads.

“The two groups are keen to work together to promote the use of rail over road while raising awareness about environmental impacts and road safety issues.”

Mr Travers said closing 700 kilometres of Wheatbelt rail lines was not only dangerous for other road users, it was also economically unsound.

“Grain growers have made it clear that rail is the cheapest option for getting their produce to port and they want to use rail.” he said.

Mr Travers said the WA Liberal Party had a long history of hostility towards rail. At the 2008 election the Mr Barnett and Brendon Grylls promised to:

- Build a railway to Ellenbrook;
- Build new stations at South Perth and Canning Vale;
- Re-open the Bunbury to Greenbushes railway; and
- Keep all grain rail lines open.

“The Liberal-National Government has broken all of these promises,” Mr Travers said.

“Labor is proud to have built the Joondalup and Mandurah rail lines and invested in regional rail.

“This week’s meeting will raise awareness that what is happening to our rail system in the Wheatbelt will have serious implications to Western Australia’s road network and road safety in the metropolitan region.”

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KEN TRAVERS MLC

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