

Re: The Road Rail Freight Infrastructure Pricing

As the road infrastructure is fully funded by the road transport industry and the general motoring public by fuel and registration surcharges it is only fair that the Australian taxpayers should fully fund the rail networks of Australia (which the road transport industry and motoring public also contribute by way of tax).

The rail system in the state of WA is so run down and in an extremely dangerous condition that the state government sold out to private organizations, but with no proviso for them to at least partly contribute for ongoing refurbishing of the tracks, thus we have rail lines in a dangerous state with extreme speed restrictions and in the case of the Goldfields, mid west and south west lines unable to cope with heavy loads that industry, both mining and agriculture require, and with the case of some lines in the south west closed as they are unable to cater for the wood chip industry, thus all chips have to be carted to port by road.

It is ludicrous that if a rail line is in situ it is not used so that bulk freight or minerals can be freighted by fuel efficient rail and not by a vast amount of cost inefficient road transport.

The road transport industry does not wish to compete with rail as it is quite happy to deliver and distribute all goods to and from rail as long as rail is reliable and efficient. As it is in Russia, China and Eastern Europe, trains are on time all the time to the minute over vast distances with dual lines as there is no delay at passing loops for trains to pass as is the case on Australian rail.

Parts of the main east west line should be dual line especially the Koolyanobbing to Kalgoorlie section as there are 18 trains per week to Esperance port to cater for iron ore. This causes delay on inter-state goods services as trains have to pass on loops.

The Esperance line also has many nickel and fuel trains and is in very poor state with many derailments with vast losses to industry. In the mid west iron ore is transported by road alongside the rail as the rail is not able and won't do the job. At Bunbury the government closed the rail line and wood chips are now transported by road, on busy and dangerous roads through many small towns and bypasses. This is an extremely dangerous and unacceptable situation.

As the motoring public are heavily levied to pay for road systems we think that all of these funds be put in to roads, but the rail must urgently be refurbished to first class by government funding out of taxation revenue and all bulk goods, and fuel and dangerous goods go to rail heads, not by road transport alongside existing poorly maintained rail networks. Good reliable rail is the most cost and environmentally friendly way of transporting these goods, but is has to be reliable.

We urge the productivity commission to advise both state and federal governments to upgrade all rail networks and duplicate some rail lines as a mater of extreme urgency, as if the rail system is in good shape the existing road systems would be adequate for the current amount of traffic, as even gain and fertilizer are being carted by road alongside rail as the rail cannot cope with the volume. As the main line is single an empty train takes up as much line space as a loaded unit causing big delays on through traffic. The mining, grain and wood chipping industries have to be commended for upgrading their loading facilities at rail sidings, but the governments' neglect of rail infrastructure has sadly not increased. The rail lines have not kept up with Australia's financial and industrial growth and productivity.

If this is not rectified Australia's financial and industrial growth will stagnate.