

21 May 2010

STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDING PARTNERSHIP UNDERPINS UPGRADE OF WA GRAIN RAIL NETWORK

WestNet Rail today welcomed the funding announcement for the WA grain rail network.

The state and federal funding package underwriting the first stage \$60m rail upgrade, now means works can commence on the \$164.5m narrow gauge grain rail resleepering program recommended by Strategic Grain Network Committee.

The \$30m state funding matched by the federal government will meet the cost of the first year of a proposed program and will see around 370 km of grain rail lines resleepered from Northam to Albany and Northam to Koorda.

“WestNet Rail supports the Western Australian state and federal government’s allocation of these funds to provide essential investment in the grain rail network. This funding provides certainty to Western Australia’s grain producers going forward that they will be able to continue to transport their grain to market via the rail network,” Paul Larsen, Chief Executive Officer of WestNet Rail said.

WestNet Rail has worked closely with both the state and federal government to achieve this outcome which will provide certainty for rail users of those lines receiving investment.

The state and federal governments are continuing to assess the business case to invest in the remainder of the overall grain rail resleepering program, and for managing the Tier 3 lines whose long term future is under further consideration.

“Through the Strategic Grain Network Committee, we have worked closely with the state government, industry, grower groups and local government on the changes to the rail system that will be required to meet industry’s medium term needs over the coming 10-15 years.

“Meeting industry’s immediate and medium term needs is of fundamental importance, but so too is ensuring that WA’s growers have access to a sustainable grain freight system over a 40-50 year long term horizon, which we are working towards,” Mr Larsen added.

WestNet Rail operates around 5100km of rail infrastructure throughout the southern half of Western Australia and is responsible for all aspects of the railway including rail construction and maintenance, network safety and capacity allocation on one of the State’s most important pieces of transport infrastructure.

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