

Rail Rescue Bandaid
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Retiring CBH chief executive Imre Mencshelyi has described a \$400 million rescue package for the State's deteriorating rail and road network as a "bandaid solution".

The usually reserved Mr Mencshelyi pulled no punches speaking at the PGA conference last week when he demanded that State and Federal governments needed to stop the talk and produce the cheques after the WA Government failed to respond to a March 1 industry deadline.

Westnet Rail has already indicated it will, in consultation with industry, start to roll out plans for track closures.

Mr Mencshelyi said the current network was woefully inadequate to meet present, let alone future, needs when there might be a 20 or 25 million tonne crop.

"We are talking about a \$400 million rescue package," he said.

"I make no bones about the fact that \$400 million is a bandaid for WA. It's a drop in the ocean of what is needed out there."

He also admitted CBH had got its sums wrong regarding shipping.

With a backlog of ships waiting for grain at port, he said CBH had applied assumptions used in a regulated market, where shipping was over 12 months.

That was not the case in the new market, and he also said the diameter and state of the existing pipeline to port was inadequate to do the job.

"Last week we had 200 road-trains on the road and shifted more grain by road than rail and had more breakdowns by rail than we have in two years.

"We were losing a ship a day of carrying capacity."