Jodeen Carney
Shadow Attorney-General,
Shadow Minister for Justice, and Women's Policy

Rail crossing must be upgraded now
12 February 2004

A local woman's frightening brush with the Ghan in Alice Springs reinforces the need to make improvements to railway crossings in Alice Springs CLP Member for Araluen Jodeen Carney said today.

Ms Carney said the Labor Government has ignored her campaign to have the Ilparpa railway crossing upgraded preferring to put people's lives at risk instead.

Ms Carney has added calls for improvements to other railway crossings in Alice Springs, following the incident earlier this week.

"I recently received a letter from the Transport Minister advising that the Ilparpa railway crossing will not be upgraded due to 'best practice' throughout Australia," Ms Carney said.

"People don't give a toss what happens elsewhere in Australia, people want the Territory Government to respond to their concerns."

Ms Carney pointed to inconsistencies in the approach taken by Government in relation to rail safety across the Territory. In particular, she pointed to the Government's railway crossing education campaign.

She said that if it was necessary to have an education campaign all through the Territory, then it shows that there are concerns in Alice Springs - otherwise, the campaign would only exist in the Top End.

Ms Carney also said that the underlying message from Government was that since Alice Springs has had a train for many years, and everyone was used to it, Alice Springs did not need any special attention.

"That does not take into account the highly transient nature of the population of Alice Springs, nor does it take tourists into account", Ms Carney said.

"The recent accident shows that the Government cannot ignore the fact that the crossings need to be upgraded and it could be a matter of life and death. The Government has objected to upgrading the Ilparpa Road crossing for a number of reasons, but the arguments just don't stack up."