Passenger service tipped for railway

Renae makes Ralph's sexy top 50

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The 183cm 25-year-old will feature in the magazine when it is released nationally tomorrow.

Ms Sterling was singled out by Ralph editor after her Darwin modelling agent, Claire Vokes of Belle Models, sent in several photos of NT models.

By JOHN LOIZOU

The man who worked almost 14 years to ensure the building of the Darwin-to-Alice Springs railway is confident that it will carry passengers.

But Barry Coulter - former Territory MLA and holder of numerous portfolios, including responsibility for the railway in several NT governments - said yesterday: "It won't be a regular, daily service stopping at all stations.

"So don't expect to be able to get off at Adelaide River for Devonshire tea."

The former member for Palmerston and now Port Authority chairman was responding to speculation that the new railway would provide a freight only service.

Mr Coulter conceded that the speculation sprang from the worldwide failure of passenger trains to make money.

Livestock

He quoted a veteran railwayman from Porte, Idena, who told him a railway should not carry anything with legs - people, livestock or furniture - if owners wanted to make a profit.

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Ms Sterling was singled out by Ralph editors after her Darwin modelling agent, Claire Vokes of Belle Models, sent in several photos of NT models.

Ms Sterling, who has modelled all over the world, said she was "surprised" the magazine had found her "sexy".

She said: "Growing up I was teased for being tall and lanky - having frizzy hair on top of that didn't help."

Naomi

Ms Sterling - who has catwalked with models Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell - flew into Darwin from London three years ago as a stowaway en route to Sydney.

But she said she "fell in love" with the Top End, met her boy-

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He quoted a veteran railwayman from Boise, Idaho, who told him a railway should not carry anything without legs - people, livestock or furniture - if owners wanted to make a profit.

But Mr Coulter believed the intended Darwin-to-Alice Springs line would become one of the world's great train journeys.

He expected any passenger service to be provided by charter similar to the Great Southern Railway that now runs the Ghan between Alice Springs and south-eastern Australia.

A survey done for the NT Government by Australian consultants Boone, Allen and Hamilton had forecast that a typical train on the line would be about 1.6km long. Axle loadings would be 25 tonnes.

It would travel about 115km/h.

Mr Coulter expected the railway to carry about 1.2million tonnes of freight each year.

Prime Minister John Howard sealed the rail's destiny on Thursday evening after confirming that the Commonwealth, NT and SA governments would pay $488 million of the $1.230 million project cost.

2-hour blackout