We’ll go it alone on rail link: Premier

By Political Editor

GREG KELTON

The $1.2 billion Darwin-Alice Springs rail line will be built — even if the Federal Government fails to provide funds.

The Premier, Mr Olsen, has given his clearest indication yet that South Australia and the Northern Territory are prepared to go it alone on the 1410km project.

"We are going to do it," Mr Olsen said. "It is time to do it."

"At the end of the day this railway line is going to happen."

Asked if this meant SA and the NT proceeding even if federal funds were not forthcoming, Mr Olsen said: "We are going to make it happen."

But the Opposition Leader, Mr Rann, said it made "no sense at all" to insist on federal payments.

"You don’t give yourself a fallback position," he said.

"This is a project clearly in the national interest and John Howard knows that."

"He is in the room with Mr Howard knowing that he doesn’t have to put up the money, then he’s going to say ‘go it alone’.

Mr Olsen’s comments came after the Prime Minister, Mr Howard — who had been expected in Adelaide next week for talks on the rail line — was forced to cancel the visit because of ill-health.

It is the second meeting with Mr Olsen and the NT Chief Minister, Mr Stone, in just over two weeks that Mr Howard has missed.

Both Mr Olsen and Mr Stone are keen to have an early decision on the rail line because they both have elections looming with the project likely to be the key element of any campaign.

Federal Cabinet is expected to decide on August 5 whether the Darwin-Alice Springs project qualifies for funding from the $1 billion Federation Fund.

The fund was established in this year’s Federal Budget to provide funds for special employment-generating projects to mark the centenary of federation.

The main competing proposal for the Darwin-Alice Springs line — a $10 billion super-fast freight service from Melbourne to Darwin — was launched in Melbourne yesterday.

The chairman of the Australian Transport and Energy Corridor, Mr Gerald Compton, said the group had begun a $1 million feasibility study into its 3850km route.

He said the line would run through Shepparton, Griffith, Parkes, Dubbo, Moree, Tenterfield and Mt Isa through to Darwin.

Unlike the Darwin-Alice Springs proposal, his plan would tap into Victoria’s and NSW’s rich food production areas.

Mr Olsen said he was concerned that the eastern States were trying to thwart the SA-NT plan.

"They will not succeed," he said.

Mr Olsen said SA and the NT had a serious, well-balanced application before the Commonwealth and it deserved financial support.

"We will continue to pursue the Federal Government for funding and the Prime Minister has indicated he will give it serious consideration," he said.

"I would welcome any federal funds for the line. But we are going to do it."

"We are going to make this happen."

Little pomp hosts, the medmen had to carry the London hc with Adel’s rector in 1901 to Australia where the Anglican Melbourne an

On the first day of the Adelaide, Dr Lowenberg of bishop of Adel on the wide range.

ARCHBISHOP Dr Ian George, left, and the Archbishops

By PAUL LLOYD

It was a stark contrast with the Pope’s visit of 11 years ago, when his Anglican counterpart arrived in Adelaide yesterday.

While the Pontiff drew a Catholic throng of thousands, the Most Reverend Dr George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury, leader of an international flock of 160 million Anglicans, landed on a commercial flight from Melbourne.

The fleet of white cars on the tarmac was the only sign of pomp for the arrival of the person who in the English hierarchy has precedence second only to the monarch.

The only people there to greet Dr Carey and his wife, Eileen, were his