MEDIA RELEASE

CHIEF MINISTER
MARSHALL PERRON

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The Chief Minister, Marshall Perron, has confirmed the Alice Springs to Darwin rail link could be commenced quickly once a financial package is settled.

The Australian managing director of giant Japanese construction group Kumagai Gumi, Mr Tony Mitani, said this week the package could be in place by the end of the year.

While Mr Perron said suggestions that construction could begin this year were 'optimistic', he said extensive design work had been undertaken.

Construction from Alice Springs could begin at short notice once finance is determined.

Mr Perron also confirmed that where the Territory Government had the flexibility to do so it would be prepared to consider trade deals to increase the project's viability.

"At this stage the project doesn't stack up without a government contribution, and that contribution could be anything from land to mineral rights along the way," Mr Perron said.

"It's all subject to negotiation. I'm not locking anything out, because this would be the greatest infrastructural development seen in Australia since the Snowy Mountain Scheme, and we are very keen to see it come to fruition."

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