MEDIA RELEASE

MINISTER FOR THE RAILWAY
HON BARRY COULTER, MLA

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Legislation to establish the AustralAsia Railway Corporation was introduced in the Northern Territory Parliament today.

It follows the signing of an historic inter-governmental agreement between the Territory and South Australia in Adelaide on 13 November 1996. The agreement deals with arrangements between the governments relating to the development of the Alice Springs to Darwin railway.

Complementary legislation will be introduced in the South Australian Parliament soon.

NT Railway Minister Barry Coulter said today the Corporation would have a five-member Board – two from the NT (including the Chair), two from SA and a Chief Executive Officer nominated by both governments.

He said the Corporation would provide an authority to progress the railway project through the next vital stages, including inviting submissions from the private sector to build, own and operate the railway, issuing a project brief to pre-qualified parties and evaluating subsequent submissions.

SA Premier Dean Brown and NT Chief Minister Shane Stone are scheduled to meet with the Prime Minister before the end of the year to discuss possible Commonwealth participation in the Corporation, in addition to a number of Commonwealth-related issues affecting the future status of the railway project. These issues include:

- transfer of the existing Tarcoola to Alice Springs line;
- access to the national rail network;
- infrastructure bonds; and ...
- Commonwealth participation in the Corporation.

Mr Coulter said the Bill should be seen as the next logical step towards securing the Alice Springs to Darwin railway.

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