MEDIA RELEASE

THE HON SHANE L. STONE MLA
CHIEF MINISTER

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Date: Tuesday, 22 July 1997

Chief Minister Shane Stone leaves for Sydney today for a round of appointments, including a proposed meeting with the Prime Minister, the Hon John Howard MP, on Thursday, July 24.

The Prime Minister has been ill and has reportedly been confined to bed over the last few days however, at the time of departure, the appointment was still in place.

Mr Stone will be holding a number of business meetings in Sydney on Wednesday, July 23, including with the Chief Executive Officer of Nabalco, Mr Ed Notter. Issues to be discussed include the normalisation of the Nhulunbuy township, including the feasibility of local government.

Matters to be discussed with the Prime Minister include whether the Adelaide-Darwin rail link meets the criteria of the Federation Fund announced by the Federal Government, the extent of the financial contribution by the Commonwealth Government through the Federation Fund and issues of land acquisition, particularly relating to Aboriginal Freehold land, land that had been claimed under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act at the expiration of the sunset clause and land that might ultimately be claimed pursuant to the Native Title Act.

Mr Stone said that all issues were inter-related, including funding and land acquisition and, required resolution.

The very same issues confront any alternate project, including the one that has been mooted for the East Coast linking into Katherine and Darwin.

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