MEDIA RELEASE

MINISTER FOR THE AUSTRALASIA RAILWAY
HON BARRY COULTER MLA

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COMPTON PROPOSAL: COMMENTS

An inland rail proposal linking Melbourne and Darwin had little connection with the established Adelaide to Darwin railway project, Territory Railway Minister Barry Coulter said today.

"There should be no confusion between our project and the plans put forward by Mr Everald Compton," Mr Coulter said. "The $1.2 billion Adelaide to Darwin rail project is expected to start construction early next year, following announcement of a successful consortium to build, own and operate the railway in November or December this year.

"All economic, environmental and feasibility studies have been completed. We have $300 million in public funding assured - $100 million each from the Territory, South Australian and Commonwealth governments. Three capable consortia have been shortlisted to bring the project to reality with a railway happening by 2003.

"In contrast, Mr Compton’s proposal has yet to undergo a feasibility study and it has not attracted any level of public funding."

Mr Coulter said he wished Mr Compton well, but the fact was the Melbourne to Darwin plan had a long way to go.

"As we know too well, you can’t cut corners," he said. "We’ve spent 10 hard years putting our project together.

Northern Territory Government

Contact: Neil Dibbs 89 996552
"At his request, I plan to meet Mr Compton shortly to hear further detail about his plans.

"The only connection with our project at this time is the suggestion that the Compton rail should join our railway line at some place in the Territory.

"I would be happy to discuss such a meeting point with Mr Compton and access to our railway line if and when it occurs."

ENDS