MEDIA RELEASE

CHIEF MINISTER
MARSHALL PERRON

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The construction of the Alice to Darwin rail link is now a logical project to be included in talks on infrastructure development for Australia at the next Special Premiers Conference, according to Chief Minister Marshall Perron.

Following yesterday's meeting of all State and Territory Premiers and Chief Ministers in Adelaide, Mr Perron said the crisis of recession and record unemployment had caused a basic change of attitude in all Australian political leaders.

"Projects which are seen as purely 'make work' schemes do not get past first base. You have to put forward projects which make economic sense, create jobs in the short and long term and will help get the whole country moving - and the railway qualifies in all three areas," Mr Perron said.

"We have been working for a couple of years with the South Australian Government and Premier Bannon on the completion of the North-South railway link, and the Federal Government is fully aware of the benefits to Australia through regular exchanges of correspondence and the NT's presentation to the Economic Planning Advisory Council in April this year.

"The Premiers are now united in their call for the Commonwealth to address deficiencies in national infrastructure, fully supported by the ACTU.

"And I was particularly heartened by yesterday's call to the Prime Minister to re-examine the Commonwealth's tax rules, including depreciation provisions, for major projects such as the North-South railway.

"It was Commonwealth inflexibility in this area which derailed the Very Fast Train proposal on the eastern seaboard earlier this year. The fact that all the Premiers recognise that current tax laws effectively bar a range of major
projects will help us finally put together the mix of private and Government investment for the railway to proceed.

"I will bid for the rail project to be re-examined in light of the current economic climate at the Special Premiers Conference in Perth next month," Mr Perron said.

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