MEDIA RELEASE

MINISTER FOR THE RAILWAY
HON BARRY COULTER MLA

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BIDS LODGED FOR ADELAIDE TO DARWIN RAILWAY

All three short-listed consortia today lodged submissions to build, own and operate the Adelaide to Darwin Railway.

Northern Territory Railway Minister Barry Coulter welcomed the strength of private sector commitment to the project, representing a major milestone in the AustralAsia Railway Project.

"It's pleasing to note all the short-listed consortia have proceeded to this stage and lodged their submissions," Mr Coulter said.

"The Corporation now has the difficult task ahead of working through 1.9 tonnes of paperwork — or about 65 packing boxes of detailed documentation, reports and proposals — to assess each bid against set criteria."

The bids were lodged today by the Asia Pacific Consortium, the Southern Cross Consortium and the Northlink Consortium.

AustralAsia Railway Corporation Chief Executive Paul Tyrrell said the bids represented many millions of dollars worth of work.

"Putting together a project of this size is an involved task, and to get this far the consortia have had to put in a great deal of effort," Mr Tyrrell said.

Submissions are expected to include detailed information such as:

- Detailed operating proposals;
- Economic and financial assessments;
- Engineering and technical proposals;
- Regional development proposals;
- Opportunities for participation by Aboriginal people;
- Local industry participation;
- Proposals for integration with the new East Arm Port;
- Economic development opportunities for the Northern Territory and Australia as a whole; and
- Detailed business plans including development of the AustralAsia Trade Route.

Assessment will take place under tight security, given the competitive nature of the bids.
The assessment phase will take two to three months before the Corporation recommends a preferred consortium to the Northern Territory and South Australian governments around mid year.

Mr Coulter said the historic nature of the day was inescapable.

"The Northern Territory has been waiting for this railway for close to a century," he said. "It's not there yet, but certainly the closure of the bids is a significant date in the history of the project.

"I have spent 13 years on this railway roller coaster. In that time there have been plenty of low moments and disappointments. Today is definitely one of the high spots."

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