

RAIL FREIGHT - EXPANSION IN SOUTH WEST

**455. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:**

Can the minister please advise the house how the Labor government is promoting and expanding rail freight in the south west?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:**

I thank the member for his question and for his very strong support for rail in the south west and for his support for the government's rescue of the previous government's failed rail privatisation.

The government has been concerned for a long time about the decline of rail freight transport, and it has been moving to address the imbalance. Indeed, the government has been very concerned that the whole promise of the privatisation of Westrail freight has not been met. However, we have managed to work through these issues with WA Plantation Resources and WA Chip and Pulp Co Pty Ltd and with WestNet Rail and part of the ARG Group. We have been working together over four years to get this project up and running. We have been very pleased to sign the contracts today that commit the government to contribute in excess of \$14 million for the development of a new intermodal rail terminal at North Greenbushes. The government will also contribute towards the upgrade of the rail infrastructure to Bunbury and it will build a new rail facility at the Bunbury port. Contributions of a similar scale will be made by both WACAP and WestNet Rail. In all, over the next 10 years, approximately seven million tonnes of logs and woodchips will be taken off road and carted by rail. For the first time, on a consistent basis, logs - other than the logs from here seen on the *Australind* recently - will be carted by rail in the south west. It is very good news. It means that about 144 heavy haulage trucks a day will be taken off the South Western Highway, and that will be a very good result for the south west.