

SOUTH WEST REGION - RAIL FREIGHT TRANSPORT

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

Can the minister please outline for the house what actions the government is taking to get freight onto rail in the south west?

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

I thank the member for this question. I know that the member has been a very powerful advocate for reducing the freight on South Western Highway. We acknowledge the very genuine concern that the member for Collie-Wellington has about the amount of freight that is travelling on our roads.

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** I am sure the member for Capel will be very interested in this answer. We have been endeavouring for a number of years to do what was promised would happen with the privatisation of the rail; that is, get more product onto rail. In fact, when we came to government, we found that the amount of freight that was travelling on rail was diminishing dramatically. As members will know, we committed to a \$14.5 million rescue package that involved the development of an intermodal terminal and the re-sleepering of the rail track between Greenbushes and Bunbury and then to a train unloading facility at the Bunbury port.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** How long ago was that, minister?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** We did commit to it some time ago and it has been to our regret that we have not been able to get WA Plantation Resources and the rail company to finally reach a commercial agreement. The problem has been that more and more of the transport task has been taken over by other companies and, indeed, put onto road.

Today, I am pleased to announce that I have taken a radical step to address this issue and signed off on an order under the Transport Co-ordination Act to regulate the haulage of all woodchips and logs in the south west, to take effect on 1 December 2007. We had to take this action in the mid-west to ensure that we got the iron ore off the road and onto rail. All else having failed, we believe that we had to take this rather dramatic step to achieve the same thing in the south west.

It is absolutely crucial that we ensure that that rail infrastructure is used and we provide proper protection for the people of the south west. The plan that we have in place will take seven million tonnes of wood product off the road and onto rail, and that equates to about 144 road train movements a day. We needed to take this dramatic but very important step to ensure that we have a triple bottom line outcome for the people of the south west.