



Parley 1006

PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 56
23 April 1975

JOINT PRESS STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR WHITLAM,
AND THE TASMANIAN PREMIER, MR NEILSON

The Australian and Tasmanian Governments have agreed on the terms for the transfer to the Australian Government of the Tasmanian rail system.

The announcements were made jointly today by the Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam and the Tasmanian Premier, Mr Neilson.

The agreements were concluded at discussions in Canberra on Tuesday between Mr Whitlam, Mr Neilson and the Australian Minister for Transport, Mr Jones and the Acting Treasurer, Mr Stewart.

The Prime Minister and Premier emphasised that all employees of the Tasmanian Railways will be employed in the Australian Railways service or the Tasmanian Transport Commission and that the terms and conditions of employment would be no less favourable than those presently applied.

The Australian Government will assume responsibility for the financial operation of the system as from 1 July 1975. It will also assume the burden of the appropriate portion of the railways deficit.

There will be a cash adjustment to the Tasmanian Government this financial year, and an appropriate adjustment to the level of financial assistance grants in future years.

The agreement to transfer the Tasmanian Railways resulted from the offer contained in the Prime Minister's Policy Speech of November 1972 for the Australian Government to accept responsibility for the railways of any State.

"This agreement, which follows on the agreement reached for the transfer of the South Australian non-metropolitan railways, represents a significant further step towards the creation of a truly national railway system," the Prime Minister and the Premier said.

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"It should provide opportunity for the improved functioning of the Tasmanian rail system through better co-ordination with other elements of the expanded Australian National Railways and also with the operations of the Australian National Line."

CANBERRA, A.C.T.