



PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP
SPEECH FOR ARRIVAL OF *ONE NATION* TRAIN, ADELAIDE FREIGHT
TERMINAL, ADELAIDE, 6 JUNE 1995**

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Thank you very much, Ted [Butcher], Premier, my colleague Laurie Brereton, Leader of the Opposition, Minister for Transport, Mayor, distinguished guests, and ladies and gentlemen.

One can't but help feel the sense of history in this - the poignancy of it - coming down through the hills. It's amazing how gentle those things are - you can pull the dynamic adjuster back, and slightly on the brake, and a little bit up one, and it just sort of moves along for you as you like. But it gives you an idea of what it's like to be a railway person - railway men and women. And the great job that railways have done in binding all sorts of nations together, including this one. And it was, of course, the extension of the rail system around Australia that brought the country together, and as Ted said, we read in our schoolbooks about the broken gauge - it's really a quite remarkable thing that the gauge was broken, and we never had this a century or so ago. But at any rate, under *One Nation*, we had the chance to do this, and I wanted to make that point - particularly when the nation was really feeling the pinch of the recession, to know that we could come out of it with a strategy, and also by doing things that would stand the test of time - that we were not simply throwing money at the problem, but doing things with it that would stand us in good stead over time. Solid real things - changing and binding the country together, pulling together, and I thought the concept of the national rail highway was the one to adopt at that time.

And this is the first train that will go from Brisbane to Perth, via Melbourne and Adelaide. And in doing this, it will not only link the continent, but I think bind South Australia more fully into the Eastern States of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, and I think this will have a tremendous impact upon South Australia - material as well as psychological. Important to know that those linkages are there.

Laurie is with me and, of course, he is the one who has principally been involved in putting together the new construction through the Adelaide Hills, up the Mount Barker Road, and I travelled through the Devils Elbow this morning seeing what a dreadful problem it is, particularly those big trucks, and the extension of the runway, so that by road, by air and by rail, the linkages for South Australia will be better and stronger. And as a consequence, I think the whole of this state will feel as though it is much more part of *One Nation* than perhaps ever before. But, it does, I think, more than that - it does give South Australia a chance to become one of the freight hubs of Australia. Because we will see containers brought across the country, and I think the port of Adelaide will be given the opportunity to compete with the port of Melbourne, and indeed the port of Sydney. And it will mean more investment over time by national rail in the track, and to getting that track into place, and keeping the stock up, getting the time down, smoothing out the bends, and getting the maintenance into it, particularly in some of the states where the track has run down. But by and large in the doing of it, we ought to be able to see some real competition between these ports, and see a new services and freight industry for this country.

So, I said this morning on a radio station - people always ask me about elections - I said well give me the choice between an election and building a railway around Australia, I'll take the building of a railway around Australia, because it will be here when the elections are long gone. And it is the solid things...I mean, belief in ourselves, belief in what we can do together, and filling in the gaps - which is what *One Nation* sought to do, both those gaps by distance and gaps by psychology - it is important to believe that we go together as a nation inclusively, and that we can do things together. And I think that in a cooperative sense, national rail is about as good as that gets, and we are really just on the threshold of seeing a much better rail service.

This means, of course, that a lot of those containers that are on the roads will be off the roads, and onto rail. And a lot of the accidents, and problems of safety that we are having with basically too many trucks on roads doing long distance hauls are better done by railway. This is going to change that, too. I think the railways are going to come of age as a result of this. I said yesterday, it is going to be a trains spotters paradise. And, of course, with our proposal to have Track Australia - have one company owning the track - and then any number of railway companies operating it, well if you are really keen about it, you can get into the railway business yourself - you don't even have to muck around with models any more. So, there we are - it can't be better than that. If you want to go and hire one of these things, you can go and do it. So, that's the brave new world of the modern railway, and it has started here with this single track coming through Australia, and through here to Adelaide.

I'm delighted the Premier could join us this morning, and the Leader of the Opposition, and the Minister for Transport, the Mayor, for what is a real occasion, I think. And the fact is that this state has got tremendous opportunities with the growth of Australia's economy into Asia, but it always

needed those material linkages - let's hope that this *One Nation* railway is providing them.

Could I conclude my remarks by thanking Ted Butcher and his team at National Rail for a job well done in taking up the *One Nation* challenge - it is one thing getting money available, it's another thing to use it. They have used it, and used it effectively, and I'm sure it will be just another one of the jewels in the crown of Ted's quite illustrious career in Australian transport, and I thank him for it. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you one and all.

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