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Title:

Statement: Joint press release from the Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam, and the SA Premier:
South Australian Railways

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STATEMENT

from the Premier

Date April 4, 1975

Embargo.....

State Administration Centre,
Victoria Square, Adelaide,
South Australia 5001
228 4811

JOINT PRESS RELEASE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. WHITLAM, AND THE
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN RAILWAYS.

The Australian and South Australian Governments have agreed on the terms for the transfer to the Australian Government of the non-metropolitan rail systems of South Australia.

They have also agreed that South Australia will now cease to be a claimant State before the Grants Commission.

The announcements were made jointly today by the Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, and the South Australian Premier, Mr. Dunstan.

The agreements were concluded at discussions in Sydney on Wednesday between Mr. Whitlam and Mr. Dunstan, the Australian Treasurer, Dr. Cairns, and the Australian Minister for Transport, Mr. Jones.

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

The Australian Government will assume responsibility for the financial operations of the country and interstate systems.

It will also assume the burden of the appropriate portion of the railways deficit as from July 1, 1974.

The metropolitan railways system will remain the property of South Australia and will be operated by the State Transport Authority.

There will be a cash adjustment involving a substantial payment to the South Australian Government this financial year and an appropriate adjustment to the level of financial assistance grants in future years.

The agreement to transfer the South Australian non-metropolitan railways resulted from the offer contained in the Prime Minister's policy speech in November 1972 for the Australian Government to accept responsibility for the railways in any State.

"This agreement is a most significant event in the development of Australian railways and represents the first major step toward the creation of a truly national railway system", the Prime Minister and the Premier said.

"This agreement will benefit South Australia and Australia as a whole by enabling integration of Australian National Railways and S.A.R. systems; encouraging greater through-running of trains; fostering uniform purchasing and design programmes enabling the better utilisation of capital funds; and removing unnecessary duplication between two of Australia's major railways".

The decision to transfer only the non-metropolitan portion of South Australian Railways resulted from the recognition of the need to co-ordinate all Adelaide's urban transport modes under a single authority. However, the major freight terminals and key freight and country lines in the metropolitan area necessary for the efficient operation of interstate and country trains will be transferred to the Australian Government. Where lines are jointly used by urban and non-urban trains, these lines will remain with the State but running rights will be granted to non-urban trains.



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