

MEDIA STATEMENT
14th January 2010

**Closure of the Rockingham to Mandurah Rail Line –
“Tourism Plays Second Fiddle Again”**

The closure of the Rockingham to Mandurah Rail line, for up to 6 consecutive weekends in the height of the Peel Region tourist season, demonstrates the Government’s complete disregard for the role that the tourism industry plays in the State’s economy.

The Tourism industry in Western Australia is a major economic driver generating \$7 billion gross domestic product and employing some 82,000 people. It also plays a vital role in the social and economic fabric of regional communities in Western Australia.

Tourism Council WA CEO Graham Moss said today that “the total lack of communication by Government with the business community in the Peel Region, particularly the tourism industry, over the planned rail closures demonstrates once again that tourism is overlooked when it comes to decision making in Government.”

The Rockingham to Mandurah rail line is being closed, commencing this weekend, to carry out works associated with the construction of a new entrance road linking the Forrest Highway to Mandurah.

Mr. Moss said that “whilst the entrance road project is very important to the Region, the timing of the works will have a significant economic impact on a region which is already suffering badly from the effects of the global economic downturn and the opening of the new Forrest Highway which bypasses Mandurah.”

He said that “many businesses had committed thousands of dollars to advertising over the January/February period, incorporating the use of the Perth/Mandurah rail line. The weekend closures have come as a complete shock to businesses in the region and could lead to the closure of many businesses in the area.”

Mr. Moss said that “whilst the Government acknowledged that there had been a lack of consultation in this process they did not comprehend the economic impact that weekend rail closures would have in the region”.

The Peel Tourism Association has estimated that the damage to industry in the Region could be in the order of \$1.48 million.

He said that “the Department of Transport had committed some funds to promotional advertising on the weekends of the closures but what was needed was significant

funding for a marketing campaign following the closures to rebuild the industry in the region”.

Moss said that the Tourism Council was calling on acting Premier, Kim Hames, to gather the relevant Ministers together to consider the proposal prepared by the Peel Tourism Association for a post rail closure marketing campaign.

“Unless this campaign is put in place the Government’s decision to close the rail line, in the Peel Regions peak tourism season, will have a devastating effect on tourism businesses in the region.

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For further information please contact Tourism Council WA CEO Graham Moss on (08) 9416 0700 or 0419 851 140.