



## **Rees demands action on rail maintenance**

20 October 2008

Premier Nathan Rees drew a line in the sand today saying he wanted rail maintenance procedures fixed by early in the new year or else he would privatise maintenance operations and sack management.

Premier Rees said RailCorp and the Unions have been unable to reach agreement on a path forward towards maintenance reforms since 1998.

“Two weeks ago the Transport Minister instructed RailCorp and Union leaders to put the interests of commuters first. They have one last opportunity to agree on a way forward,” Premier Rees said.

“On Friday I am pleased to say that common sense finally prevailed and an agreement was struck between RailCorp and the Unions.”

- Both Unions and RailCorp agreed that maintenance must be carried out to at least the same standard as in the private sector. Therefore RailCorp maintenance will be compared to the private sector to ensure standards are lifted.
- The comparison will be by an independent auditor appointed by Government who will begin the analysis within two weeks of being appointed.

“Implementation of this agreement will begin immediately and will include a clear, detailed blueprint of how maintenance will be delivered and a training program for staff,” Premier Rees said.

“It is now up to the Unions and RailCorp to continue to move this work forward with a view to staff starting training early in 2009.

“I said two weeks ago when we began the process of changing RailCorp's structure that I expected reform to commence swiftly. Today is the next step,” Premier Rees said.

“The Boston Consulting report identified that while only 25% of maintenance was done in-house it contributed to around 50% of maintenance related incidents.

“Inflexible work practices at RailCorp mean something as simple as getting a light bulb changed has led to delays, and even caused services to be cancelled.

“Clearly that's ridiculous.

“If these reforms are not achieved quickly by the Unions then we have no other choice but to look to the private sector.

“At the same time if RailCorp managers are not doing their part to work constructively with unions then I will replace them with management who will.

“As I have said public transport is the number one issue people raise with me and they are right to expect their trains to be clean and reliable.”

Minister for Transport David Campbell said this agreement is about getting more flexible and efficient work practices that will deliver carriages onto the tracks, cleaner and more reliable, especially in peak periods.

“Right now if there was a spate of vandalism or higher than average breakdowns, RailCorp has limited ability to mobilise workers to get the carriages back on the tracks as soon as possible,” Mr Campbell said.

“People who catch trains every day deserve better.