



TRANSPORT

NOW

ASSET PRIVATISATIONS DON'T WORK: BIG BUSINESS

While Federal Treasurer "Sloppy Joe" Hockey tells his state counterparts to sell off everything that isn't nailed down, some of his mates in big business are breaking ranks to point out that selling off vital infrastructure assets isn't always a great idea.

Global mining giant Glencore and international shipping company Maersk aren't exactly renowned as friends of the worker, but they know plenty about how to maximise profits.

So when Glencore and Maersk say that privatising economic infrastructure like ports and rail allows the private operators to hold export industries to ransom, they know what they're talking about.

Glencore submission to the Federal Government's Competition Policy Review stated that:

“Glencore has experienced the consequences of privatisation across the East Coast of Australia in terms of infrastructure asset sales ... the results are not mixed, they are almost always negative.”

- Glencore



Similarly, shipping company Maersk criticised the sale of NSW ports, saying that it has created an unhealthy monopoly that will cause long-term damage to the Australian economy.

These sharp criticisms from big business will ring alarm bells for the Federal and Queensland Governments.

While not flagged in the Federal Budget, the sale of ARTC still remains a possibility, while the Queensland Government announced the long-term lease of the 1,000km Townsville-Mt Isa Rail Line (as a package with the Port of Townsville) in its recent State Budget.

Nanva Fires Up Labor Conference

The debate about union involvement in the ALP took centre stage at the recent NSW Labor Conference.

National Secretary Bob Nanva threw down the gauntlet to critics like Mark Latham, who have argued that unions should have no say in the pre-selection of Labor candidates.

Bob told the Conference that union members deserve to have a voice in the party they founded.

“The RTBU will not sit back in silence and allow opportunists to degrade the party’s ties with the union movement,” Bob said.

“The Labor Party without the Labor Movement would stand for nothing and represent no one.

“We’re not going to sit back in silence and allow this garbage about the party breaking its ties with the union movement drive a wedge between us.”

For a full transcript of Bob’s speech go to <http://rtbuexpress.com.au/rtbu-national-secretarys-nsw-labor-conference-address/>



Rail Safety Regulator to Leave

Australia’s first National Rail Safety Regulator, Rob Andrews, has announced that he will leave the position at the end of the year.

National Secretary Bob Nanva said Mr Andrews has made a significant contribution to workplace safety in the Australian rail industry and will be sorely missed,

“Getting everyone in the rail industry on the same page is never an easy job,” Bob said.

“Rob Andrews has gone about this task respectfully and pragmatically, but he has also been firm and forceful when required.

“The Australian rail industry owes him a debt of gratitude for his work as the inaugural National Rail Safety Regulator.”

Mr Nanva said there was much work still to be done, and therefore it is vital that the best person be found to succeed Mr

Andrews in the National Rail Safety Regulator position.

“Western Australia and Queensland are still operating under their own state-based regulators, so there’s plenty of work left to be done before we can have a truly national rail safety system.”



Aurizon Slash Jobs, Buy Mine

Queensland-based rail giant Aurizon is also crying poor, axing over 100 jobs, capping investment in two Queensland coal ports, and launching an outrageous legal action to extinguish 13 EBAs and force workers onto awards.

Despite all this gloom and doom, Aurizon CEO Lance Hockridge found enough spare change down the side of his leather armchair to buy out a massive Western Australian iron ore project in conjunction with Chinese company Baosteel – just as the iron ore price is plummeting.

National Secretary Bob Nanva said Aurizon shareholders must be confused by the mixed messages coming out of company HQ in Eagle Street, Brisbane.

“Aurizon bosses would be better off focusing on core business, and cutting back overblown executive salaries, rather than fantasizing about being mining magnates.”



Concern Over In-Cab Recording Devices

The RTBU is extremely concerned about the introduction of in-cab recording devices in freight locos. One company is already using audio recording devices, and another has plans to introduce video cameras into cabs.

Assistant National Secretary Allan Barden said the RTBU believed that the use of in-cab recording devices may be illegal under Federal communications law, and was seeking legal advice on the matter.

“We’re also taking this issue up with other transport unions from around the world via the International Transport Workers’ Federation,” Allan said.

“It will be useful to get an international perspective on how other unions are dealing with the trend of employers using modern surveillance techniques to monitor staff under the guise of safety.”

Next month’s edition of Transport NOW will include a comprehensive report on the outcomes of the 2014 ITF Global Congress in Bulgaria.

AROUND THE GROUNDS

NSW

MTR Consortium Snatches North West Rail Contract

Hong Kong-based passenger rail operator MTR will extend its Australian business into Sydney after picking up the contract to run services on the new North West Rail Link.

MTR won the Melbourne passenger rail franchise in 2009, replacing former operator Veolia.

MTR's successful consortium partners include John Holland, Leighton Contractors, UGL Rail Services and Plenary Group.

The North West Rail Link will initially operate as a stand-alone service to Chatswood, but the NSW Government plans to extend the privatised line under Sydney Harbour, and join it up with the current Bankstown line, which will be handed over to the private operator.



VIC

V/Line Worker Reinstated

Action by the RTBU has resulted in the reinstatement of sacked V/Line conductor Dervin D'Costa.

Dervin was initially shown the door after getting involved in a scuffle with two racist young thugs who were hassling other passengers.

The RTBU took his case to V/Line management and the public, including a high-profile protest at Southern Cross Station.

Dervin is now back at work, doing the job that he loves.

QLD

Gold Coast Light Rail Up and Running

The Gold Coast's long-awaited light rail system is finally up and running, moving passengers between Southport and Broadbeach.

The service is being marketed as 'The G', and is operated by the GoldLinQ consortium - comprising KDR, Bombardier Transport and McConnell Dowell.

The Queensland Government is yet to commit any funding to the planned expansion of the light rail north to Helensvale or south to Coolangatta.

ACT

Coolio back Capital Metro

Canberra's light rail project, Capital Metro, has received a huge boost with a surprise public endorsement from US rap star Coolio.



In an interview with the Canberra Times, Coolio (who's most well-known hit is 'Gangsta's Paradise') confirmed that he was a big fan of trams.

"I think a light rail system is dope," Coolio said. "It's a very inexpensive form of transportation and very easy to get around, so yes, it's dope."

For more of Coolio's insights go to <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/lightrail-dope-or-nope-coolio-says-yes-20140722-zvosj.html#ixzz38LhAbUit>



AROUND THE GROUNDS continued..

SA

SA Rail Freight Hit By Mine Closure

The early closure of the Ciarn Hill iron ore mine has had a negative impact on rail freight volumes in South Australia.

The mine was expected to continue operating until 2015, but a 34 per cent drop in the iron ore price this year saw the mine placed into administration and then shut.

Meanwhile the SA State Government has announced another delay to the long-awaited Gawler electrification.

The project is now scheduled to being construction in 2017-18.

WA

Closure of Tier 3 Lines Pushes Roads to the Limit

The recent closure of 550km of Tier 3 rail lines in the Western Australian wheatbelt is already causing damage to local roads, according to at least one local council.

Quairading Shire President Darryl Richards told ABC that the additional truck movements caused by the closure of the rail lines were affecting the condition of the main road between Quairading and Cunderdin.

The closure of the lines will see around 24,000 extra truck movements on western Australian roads a year.

For more see <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-07-15/railway-closure-p pressures-roads/5598646>

TAS

Toll Moves In To Transport Hub

The long-awaited Brighton Transport Hub is finally starting to take shape, with Toll Holdings opening its new \$24 million freight terminal on the site.

Toll says the using the terminal will remove 42 B-Double trucks and 100 semi trailers from Hobart roads every day, while also increasing the amount of freight it moves by rail.

The relocation of Toll from Macquarie Point to Brighton means that TasRail will no longer take trains into central Hobart. The last freight train pulled out of Hobart on 22 June, signaling the end of 136 years of rail in the city.

For more see <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-06-23/train-driver-celebrates-family-links-in-the-last-hobart-freight/5542478>

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