

Dr Ken Michael
Acting Rail Access Regulator
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Thursday December 20 2001

Dear Dr Michael

**Request for Public Submission
Proposal Which May Affect Capacity
Kalgoorlie to Esperance Railway**

I am writing in response to your recent public notice inviting submissions in regard to proposals by Portman Mining and others to significantly increase train services as a result of higher tonnages that may preclude access to this section of railway by other operators.

By now you will have received a submission from West Travel/RAC in regard to the operation of annual chartered passenger services and in that submission there is reference to my involvement in co-ordinating those rail tours that access the above section of railway.

The purpose of this submission is to record my interest independently of the submission provided by the RAC as the nature of my business is that I am in a position where it is possible for me to be approached by any number of parties to operate rail tours over this section of railway.

Whilst I am not an accredited third party operator in the sense of the Rail Access Code 2000, the situation is that I co-ordinate my rail tours through to Esperance by arrangement with organizations like WAGR (Westrail) or South Spur Rail Services whereby in the case of WAGR (or Westrail in the past) they provide the equipment, train crews etc as a complete package or under the new regime South Spur Rail apply for the access as the accredited operator using their locomotives and crews towing passenger vehicles provided by another company.

By way of example, we are presently finalising a service to Esperance in May 2002 with South Spur Rail utilising their motive power and crews, hauling two WAGR Prospector trailer coaches.

I have been operating these tours on a regular basis since 1984 and with the changes in the rail industry enabling third party access the situation for me in respect to the future of these tours is that they will be able to be operated with a far higher level of certainty in the future than they have in the past where their operation was dictated by the availability of equipment based on the prevailing attitude of the Government operator (WAGR/Westrail) at the time.

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With the change in Government in February 2001, the previous ban by the Government operator to allowing these tours was lifted by the Transport Minister who strongly supports these types of services that as well also enjoy the wide support of the towns of Kalgoorlie, Norseman and Esperance.

With the opportunity for me to now access various operators and different sources of rollingstock etc I see these tours being able to run on a consistent 3 to 4 times per annum basis, which would be, May, September and November.

Whilst I know that 3 to 4 services per annum is hard to factor into the equation of calculating track capacity, it is important none the less for me to be assured that as a tour operator who has accessed the route since 1984 that I will be able to do so in the future.

Whilst not a railway industry professional in the technical sense, I do understand that issues of train lengths, spacing and length of crossing loops and track speed are part of the formula that can determine track capacity. Because of the importance of the Kalgoorlie to Esperance Railway to my business I have watched the developments associated with its fortunes rise and fall over time, and I am aware that as part of the Westrail freight sale that the issue of major track upgrading on the line was an important part of the sale.

As I understand it the upgrading of the line will enable speeds on the line for certain classes of train to be lifted to 100km/hr from the current 50 and 60 km/hr. As well, I understand that additional crossing places are also to be activated. On that basis wouldn't track capacity increase, and couldn't further capacity be provided by running longer trains.

For me my rail tours have consistently operated on a daylight schedule leaving Kalgoorlie on a Monday morning and returning from Esperance to Kalgoorlie again in daylight on a Wednesday.

Having had the support for my rail tours re-affirmed by the Government of Western Australia it is vital that I be able to secure access through whatever accredited operator is able to develop a package for me as the client in the future, so that I can plan future departures with a far higher level of certainty enabling me to then market and promote these tours to an even greater audience both domestically and internationally. There are developments emerging in rail tourism that in the future that could see the number of rail tours increase beyond the 3 to 4 I operate and this possibility should also be considered in your deliberations.

I would be grateful if you would kindly acknowledge of my submission and confirm in due course the availability of future track paths on the schedule I have outlined.

I would be happy for any of your staff evaluating submissions to contact me if so required.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Pearce

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