

Adelaide to Darwin

July 2009

Nick Squires of the Telegraph reported in the week prior to 16 Jan 2004 that the Adelaide to Darwin rail link aims to capture £350,000 tonnes per year initially and double that thereafter. Chris Corrigan (of a large stevedoring company) was quoted as saying that the returns would be “smaller than a tick’s testicles”.

Tom Ryke, Manager, FreightLink Services Adelaide confirmed to us that the 350,000 tonnes was correct going on to say that they expected to run 5 trains **per week** between Adelaide and Darwin. The maximum length of a train would be 1,800 metres. The weight per train was expected to be approx 1,500 tonnes with a maximum of approx 3,750 tonnes. The weight per load would vary depending on the commodity with the average currently 16 tonnes

We comment – 350,000 tonnes per year at 16 Tonnes per (wagon) load amounts to a trivial 63 lorries per day. If the weight per train is 1500 Tonnes that is nearly 100 lorries per day. The two numbers are broadly consistent. The cost of construction was some £400 million. The system was then leased **for a peppercorn** to Freightlink, showing that Chis Corrigan’s “tick’s testicles” were unduly optimistic.

Why do they do these things?