

Still No Decision on North West Shipping Service

Alannah MacTiernan MLA, Shadow Minister for Regional Development

The last ship providing an alternative freight service to the North West has sailed and still no decision has been made on a replacement service, Shadow Regional Development Minister Alannah MacTiernan said today.

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"The Barnett Government has still not made a decision about the future of this critical service which reduces freight rates to the Pilbara and Kimberley by 20 to 30 per cent," Ms MacTiernan said.

"The current contract is due to expire in a matter of days, the last ship has sailed and there will be no alternative to road transport to deliver goods to the North West during the cyclone season.

"Business owners and residents in the North West need certainty and the Barnett Government must act on this as a matter of urgency."

When questioned in Parliament last month, Regional Development Minister Brendon Grylls said the Government was looking at the "cost-benefit analysis of supporting Stateships" and would make a decision "in due course".

"The clock is ticking and the Barnett Government is running out of time," Ms MacTiernan said.

"It is already too late for the current ship to continue and the contract expires next week.

"The Barnett Government must commit to continuing this vital service for some of our State's most remote communities."

Ms MacTiernan said the subsidised shipping service also helped improve road safety by taking the equivalent of 65 road trains off the North West road system for every voyage.

"The shipping service offers a competitive alternative to road transport and ensures that hazardous and oversized cargo is taken off our roads," she said.

"The Barnett Government must act immediately to ensure that there is an early restoration of this service for the Pilbara and the Kimberley."