

**Simon O'Brien
Minister for Transport; Disability Services
WA Media Release**

Fri 18 December, 2009

North-West shipping service contractor announced

Transport Minister Simon O'Brien today announced the State Government would contract major Norwegian shipping company, Jepsens to provide shipping services to the State's North-West.

"Communities and industry in the remote North-West will continue to enjoy the benefits of a State-assisted shipping alternative to road transport for the movement of vital freight supplies," Mr O'Brien said.

The Minister said the Government had been presented with compelling evidence that moving goods by ship helped limit freight costs into remote regions.

"Having a Government-assisted shipping service to the North-West can deliver significant savings in the cost of living and the cost of doing business for communities, industry and Government," he said.

Mr O'Brien said Jepsens had presented an exciting and innovative proposal, which involved integration with other new international and coastal operations.

"Jepsens' approach will benefit users of North-West shipping services through better delivery times, more shipping capacity and cheaper freight rates," he said.

The Minister said Jepsens was a long standing and successful shipping company with vast experience in coastal shipping services in Australia and overseas.

"The continuation of the assisted North-West shipping service is timely, given the exciting development taking place in the region," he said.

"Already, key cargo interests have shown faith in the new contract with in-principle commitments of significant future freight to the service."

Mr O'Brien said the shipping service also helped make North-West roads safer by taking trucks off the network, especially those carrying over-sized and dangerous freight.

He said Jepsens would commence the new service as soon as a vessel was secured and associated arrangements put in place.