

The WA Government's Freight Rail Buyback Announcement — September 2026

The Western Australian Government's announcement on 15 September 2026 regarding legislation to progress the proposed freight rail buyback represents a significant development in the strategic policy context for Western Australia's rail infrastructure.

The Cook Government announced the introduction of the Rail Freight System (Acquisition and Reorganisation) Bill 2026, establishing a legal framework for the potential acquisition of the State's freight rail operation and the return of the freight rail network to government control, subject to economic, financial, legal and technical assessments. Commercial negotiations with Brookfield continue, and Arc Infrastructure remains responsible for operating the network under existing arrangements during the ongoing process.

The announcement identifies the strategic importance of the freight rail network to regional communities, local jobs, economic development and supply-chain resilience. It also recognises the potential for greater public control to support targeted investment, increase rail network utilisation and improve the movement of commodities between regional industries and markets.

Of particular relevance to the objectives pursued by BRG and the Balingup Progress Association is the Government's stated interest in reducing truck movements and the wear and tear caused by heavy vehicles on local roads, while strengthening regional infrastructure and supporting future employment.

The announcement provides a broader policy context for continued consideration of the future of the South West rail corridor. It does not, in itself, determine the future of the Bunbury–Bridgetown passenger railway or establish a commitment to reopening the line for passenger services. However, it reinforces the strategic significance of rail infrastructure in addressing freight efficiency, road safety, regional connectivity and long-term economic development.

For BRG, the announcement creates an opportunity to continue presenting the potential relationship between freight rail, zero-emissions passenger services, commuter mobility and cultural tourism. The feasibility work and prospectuses developed by BRG and BPA provide a foundation for consideration of how existing rail infrastructure might contribute to a more integrated, sustainable and accessible South West transport network.

See WA Government media release: <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/media-statements/Cook%20Labor%20Government/Legislation-introduced-to-progress-WA-freight-rail-buyback--20260915>