

ECO Design Foundation

24.9.98

Productivity Commission
Melbourne

Progress in Rail Reform Inquiry - Submission by the EcoDesign Foundation

Our comment is directed at the following items of the Scope of Inquiry:

- 4(h) international best practice, and
- 5(c) environmental objectives of government

In our professional view there is a substantial commercial and environmental opportunity to be gained by the Australian Rail industry working toward a leadership position in world best environmental practice. This means to do this are available in the form of the instrument of environmental management plans (EMP's). Briefly the scope of the application of EMP's to the industry could centre on a overall plan for a fixed period (20 years with a review each 5 years is the kind of period that would be regarded as appropriate). Subordinate to this plan would be EMP's for:

- the management of all land, building, plant and equipment
- day to day operations in relation to all consumables
- all construction project from concept design to operation

This approach would deliver uniformity of standards and understanding across a rail system in mixed public/private ownership. It would not make a significant contribution to the reduction of the environmental impact of rail operations but also create the means for a major communication/promotion of rail to advance industry and the public perception of rail as a progressive and environmentally responsible mode of transport. The objective of the exercise could be framed in such a way to be income generative rather than as just a cost.

We would of course be willing to supply further information if there were interest in our comments.

Yours Faithfully

(Dr) Tony Fry, Director