

Six pages comprising a chronology of events in the slow decline of the South Australian Railways, taking particular note of inefficiencies associated with the gauge problem. The end for the South Australian Railways came on 1 March 1978.

**PRIME SA
MINISTER PREMIER**

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>William Morris (Billy) HUGHES National Party to 9 Feb 1923</p> | <p>A PEAKE 1920 Henry Newman BARWELL</p> | <p>Death of Archibald Peake. A Uniform railway gauge is an Australian necessity, and Australia should pay the cost, said Mr Hughes. No State should bear a disproportionate share of the whole cost. The first step therefore should be the appointment of an expert commission. (<i>Register</i>, 28 May 1920). Appointed on 8 February 1921, the members of the Royal Commission on Gauge Unification. (Harrigan). The Royal Commission. The engineering commissioners drew up a solution in a matter of weeks during a handful of closed hearings, solving the infrastructure problem at the lowest possible cost by recommending that every state convert the lines to the New South Wales gauge, splitting the cost evenly. When the report was handed to the Premiers, it came with a brief but incisive objection penned by a frustrated Garvan. The main problem, he wrote, was that the Commission hadn't bothered to investigate whether the social and economic benefits were worth the enormous cost, even though their terms of reference had suggested it. (<i>Inches Apart: Railways and Federation</i> - An essay by History major, Patrick Gigacz, University of Melbourne 2022). The Federal Public Works Committee supported a 4 ft 8½ line from Newcastle Waters (NT), through Camooweal(Qld) to southern states which would open up the country (<i>Voice of the North</i>, 1 October 1922). Sir Henry Barwell appoints W A Webb as Chief Commissioner of Railways, 16 August 1922 (Jennings p87). Webb arrived in South Australia 22 November.</p> | |
| | <p>1921 8 APRIL 20 TO 16 April 24</p> | <p>1922 Sir Richard Butler had written to the Prime Minister (Mr Hughes) regarding a plan to convert from 5 ft 3 in to 4 ft 8½ in gauge the lines to Terowie and Serviceton, "would be a serious blunder". (<i>Register</i>, 31 May 1922). The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways (Victoria), Publication of paper on uniform railway gauge - how it will affect Victoria. 25 July 1922. Gauge Unification. Prime Minister Stanley Bruce proposed two new railways. He would put these to the Premiers conference in Melbourne next month. There would be a standard-gauge railway from Pt Augusta to Salisbury and a railway from the Northern Rivers district of NSW to Brisbane. (<i>The Transcontinental</i>, Port Augusta, 27 April 1923). Premiers Conference in May-June 1923, Sir Henry Barwell declared that South Australia would never consent to 4 ft 8½ in lines before the Commonwealth honoured its North-South Agreement of 1910. (Jennings p124 and end notes). This was when there was consideration of a direct standard-gauge line from Port Augusta to Hay (NSW). Barwell promptly put a stop to that idea. Sir Henry Barwell declared the transfer of the Northern Territory to the Commonwealth had been a mistake. <i>Observer</i>, 21 July 1923 Conference in Canberra on 6 October 1923 with both New South Wales and Queensland agreeing to construct the standard-gauge railway from Kyogle to South Brisbane (Harding). Western System Gauge conversion of the South Australian Railways commenced. Port Augusta to Broken Hill railway sought. <i>Dubbo Dispatch and Wellington Advertiser</i>, 26 August 1924. John Gunn commenced negotiations with the Commonwealth with the result that an agreement was reached on 18 September 1925 that the Commonwealth would complete the railway from Oodnadatta to Alice Springs. South Australia's part of the deal was to complete the direct line from Port Augusta to Adelaide. An English visitor's opinon. Mr C Travis, Secretary to the Fay-Raven Royal Commission on Railways ...break of gauge problem was a very serious problem for Australia...too much state rivalry and too many parochial interests... for example the line connecting Pt Augusta and Hay. (<i>Advertiser</i>, 28 January 1925). The Commonwealth took over the operation of the Port Augusta to Oodnadatta line. 1 January 1926. Terowie to Peterborough. A case for conversion to broad gauge. It was quite usual to wait from 5 to 8 days and up to 12 days. (<i>Observer</i>, 18 September 1926).</p> | |
| <p>Stanley BRUCE National Party to 28 Aug 1926</p> | <p>1923</p> | <p>1924</p> | |
| | <p>John GUNN 1925</p> | <p>1926 to 28 Aug 1926</p> | <p>Gauge conversion of the SAR Western System was complete on 1 August 1927. Condobolin to Broken Hill line open. Thus establishing direct rail communication between Sydney and Broken Hill. The ceremonial turning of the first sod at Oodnadatta on 21 January 1927. Railways in war time. Giving evidence before the Constitution Convention, SAR Commissioner, Webb said as far as unification of railways re military movements, it had been found necessary to detrain troops in America every thousand miles because of train weariness. (<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>, 3 February 1928). Lionel Hill tried to get the Port Augusta to Redhill railway built, fearing that the completion of the Alice Spring line would swell the number of unemployed. Webb had already stated that he would put down a third rail to bring the standard -gauge trains into Adelaide. Premier Butler gave no support.</p> |
| <p>Lionel HILL 1927 to 8 April 27</p> | <p>1927 8 April 1927</p> | <p>1928 Richard Layton BUTLER</p> | <p>Regarding the proposal for a railway from Port Augusta to Broken Hill, which South Australia claims has neither strategic nor economic reasons. State governments are being more and more of an anachronism and encumbrance. (<i>Bunyip</i> Gawler, 19 April 1929). The narrow-gauge railway to Alice Springs was opened without ceremony on 4 August. 1929. Within a few days there was the crash on Wall Street and crises in the Australian Parliament that would see Stanley Bruce ousted. South Australia reneged on the deal to complete the direct line to Port Augusta. (See entry in 1935).</p> |
| | <p>1929</p> | <p>1929</p> | <p>Retirement of Norris G Bell, first Commissioner of the Commonwealth Railways on 7 Nov 1929. Across Australia - the Trans-Continental line - Impressions of an Ipswich traveller. We journeyed across Australia on rail manufactured in this country, on timber grown in this land, an engine constructed in Queensland and in the care of men born in Australia <i>Queensland Ipswich Times</i>, 28 December 1929.</p> |
| <p>Scullin</p> | | | |

| PRIME MINISTER | SA PREMIER | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| JAMES SCULLIN 22 Oct 1929 to 6 Jan 32 | BUTLER 1930 | Departure of W A Webb, with a valedictory banquet on 8 May 1930, attended by SAR staff. Charles B Anderson is the new SAR Commissioner (Jennings). Mr Butler will oppose uniform gauge. Because we can ill afford it. (<i>Observer</i> , 25 January 1930). Mr J H Scullin (Prime Minister) said 'it is superfluous to emphasise further the need for a uniform gauge he said. It is now being realised that the main evil of the break-of-gauge is not the handling charge of goods transhipped, but the serious detention of rolling stock at every place of trans-shipment. The economic waste through this cause is much greater than the public probably realises. (<i>News</i> , 21 February 1930). Kyogle to South Brisbane standard-gauge railway opened, 27 September 1930. | |
| | 1931 Lionel HILL 17 April 30 to 13 Feb 1933 | 1932 | Promoters had put forward a case for a transcontinental railway connecting Bourke (NSW) with the Darwin railway, with an estimated cost of £15M. (<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> , 2 December 1932.) |
| Joseph LYONS 6 Jan 1932 to 7 April 1939 | <small>ROBERT STANLEY RICHARDS 13 FEB TO 18 APRIL 1933</small> | | |
| | 1934 | Broadening the gauge of the line to Mount Gambier, Mr T McCallum of the Legislative Council suggested that certain broad-gauge lines in South Australia that were not paying their way, be dismantled (he did not say which ones) and the rails and sleepers used on the Mount Gambier line. His reasoning was that this would be a means of providing employment. (<i>Border Watch</i> , 2 August 1934). Mr Butler protested to Mr Lyons regarding the Commonwealth proposal for a new railway section between Redhill and Port Augusta which he contends, would cause loss of passenger and freight business with Quorn. (<i>Recorder</i> , Port Pirie, 9 February 1935). Redhill to Port Augusta Mr Butler said he had not advocated the building of a 5 foot 3 inch railway from Redhill to Port Augusta but if the Commonwealth was determined to go ahead with the proposal he preferred the 5 foot 3 inch gauge. The Commonwealth desired to vary the agreement for the third rail to Adelaide. (<i>Advertiser</i> , 21 February 1935). | |
| | 1935 Richard Layton BUTLER 18 April 33 to 5 Nov 1938 | 1936 | The South Australian Government , in a letter to the Acting Prime Minister (Dr Page) suggested a 5 ft 3 in line from Redhill to Port Augusta. Negotiations between South Australia and the Commonwealth were re-established regarding the direct railway to Port Augusta, This was for the meeting of the broad and standard gauges at Port Pirie. The Commonwealth agreed to pay South Australia £20,000 per annum for 20 years to compensate for loss of business over the narrow-gauge line via Quorn. (29 November 1935, Harding). The Melbourne Age on 15 February 1936, reported on some aspects of gauge conversion and referred to the 4 ft 6½ in gauge. The Port Augusta to Broken Hill Railway League propoosal for a standard-gauge line to be part of the trans-continental railway. <i>Laura Standard and Crystal Brook Courier</i> , 9 December 1938. The Advertiser of July 1937 ran headlines 'Step Towards Rail Gauge Unification' and 'Object Lesson in Co-operation'. But S A had its event at Redhill, and the Commonwealth had one at Port Pirie. The Recorder (Port Pirie) 23 July 1937, noted the three-gauge railway yard was unique in the world. |
| | 1937 | 1938 | The suggestion put forward by the railway engineer of the South Australian Railways (Mr R H Chapman) was that the 4 ft 8½ in gauge from Port Pirie to Kalgoorlie be broadened to 5 ft 3 in. Mr Butler was inclined towards Mr Chapman's scheme. (<i>Sun</i> , Sydney 28 October 1938). Port Augusta to Broken Hill Railway. The Premier (Mr Playford), said it was most laughable that the agitation for this line would be successful (<i>Barrier Miner</i> , 8 June 1938). Mr Playford said South Australia was not wed to any particular railway gauge and if the Commonwealth provided the money, any State objections would be withdrawn. The Commonwealth however wanted the adjustment of State gauges to be done at the States' expense. (<i>News</i> , 27 November 1938). |
| | <small>Earle PAGE 19 days</small> | 1939 Thomas PLAYFORD 5 Nov 1938 | Iron ore being sent from Whyalla via Broken Hill to Newcastle. |
| Robert MENZIES | | | |

PRIME
MINISTER

Robert
MENZIES
United
Australia
Party
to 29 August
1941

Arthur
FADDEN

John
CURTIN
7 Oct
1941
to 5 July
45
Died

Francis
FORDE
6 days.

Ben
Chifley
12 July
1945

TO 10 DEC
1949

Robert
MENZIES

PREMIER

1940
1941
1942
1943
1944
Thomas
PLAYFORD
1945
1946
1947
1948
1949

Port Augusta urges railway link to Broken Hill and Whyalla.

The Commonwealth strongly favoured conversion to 4 ft 8½ in of the railway from Port Pirie to Broken Hill which would provide transport of iron ore to the Newcastle steelworks and transport of troops to the west.

In military circles, however it is pointed out that despite a certain amount of official apathy in the pastregarding the Port Pirie to Broken Hill conversion..... military leaders are now pressing for an adequate railway defence system on a national basis to give them the maximum ability needed to enable their plans for an emergency to be put into operation speedily and effectively. (*News*, 19 December 1940).

The Premier (Mr Playford) said that the Attorney General and Minister for the Navy (Mr Hughes) was confused and probably “a little at sea” in making the suggestion that a strategic railway of 4 ft 8½ in should be constructed immediately from Port Augusta to Broken Hill to provide the first step towards railway gauge unification. Mr Hughes said that drastic steps were necessary to expedite delivery of coal supplies by overland routes. (*West Australian*, 6 January 1941).

SA, whose consent is necessary as part of the line passes through its territory, has consistently opposed the project on the plea that it would divert a certain amount of overland passenger traffic to Broken Hill instead of its passing through Adelaide. (*Barrier Miner*, 8 January 1941).

The Federal Parliament that opened yesterday is the seventeenth since the foundation of the Commonwealth. Yet we have not seen a beginning of the unification of railway gauges which was promised by the candidates for the first. (*Recorder*, Port Pirie, September 1942).

Act to convert narrow-gauge in South-East of South Australia.

‘**A Hundred years from now**’ was the title of a talk given by Mr Norman Cook, the President of the Canberra Division of the Institution of Engineers. He spoke of a railway from Darwin via Camooweal, to Bourke with branches to Sydney and to Adelaide, and via Broken Hill, thence to Perth. There would also be conversion of lines in Victoria and SA. After this conversion was done Ireland would be the only country in the world with 5 ft 3 in gauge. (*Cairns Post*, 28 April 1944).

The Minister of Transport, Mr Ward...The war had shown how foolish it was to allow a railway system with varying gauges to remain. (*Sydney Morning Herald* 8 September 1944).

Clapp Report released on 24. March. Sir Harold Clapp had been appointed to this role in 1944.

Transport Minister, Ward had negotiations with NSW, Vic and SA following the Clapp Report. *Age*, 2 August 1946 and Laird ARHS *Bulletin* 1995.

In Canberra on August 20, the Premiers’ Conference discussed the standardisation of railway gauges. Thomas Playford declared that South Australia was not prepared to overlook the Commonwealth’s moral and legal obligations to construct a railway between Alice Springs and Darwin. (*Advertiser* 21 August).

Premiers’ Conference in January 1946 considered the offer by the Commonwealth to increase contribution to two parts and the states three parts, but this was not acceptable to eastern states and Queensland. Playford made it clear that SA would have no part of a scheme that had the Northern Territory line connecting with Queensland. But with Queensland’s withdrawal from negotiations the Commonwealth entered into negotiations with SA and Victoria because NSW had dropped out. Playford had an ally in Senator George McLeay, a fellow Liberal from South Australia who was the Commonwealth Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister of Shipping, Fuel and Transport. He evidently had access to large amounts of money. Much of that money was handed to Tom Playford for his standardisation schemes, and the suspicion is that few questions were asked. The Commonwealth had separate talks with SA and Vic. (Harding).

With the coming of atomic energy it was not possible to predict if the railways would become obsolete. Mr Anthony in the South Australian House of Assembly. (*Advertiser* December 1946).

Retirement of G A Gahan, Commissioner of Commonwealth Railways on 7 November. The new Commissioner was P Hannaberry.

There had been an agreement struck in 1946 between the Commonwealth and South Australia and it was about this time that Playford struck a deal with Senator Collings, Federal Minister for the interior, for an extremely low rate for the carriage of coal from Telford (Leigh Creek) to Quorn - and this rate was to apply in perpetuity.

Commissioner Hannaberry recommended a standard gauge line between Stirling North and Leigh Creek. Senator George McLeay was new Commonwealth Minister for Shipping, Fuel and Transport. Playford found him easy to deal with.

The Premier, (Mr Playford), accompanied by the leader of the opposition, (Mr R G Menzies) paid a brief visit to Port Augusta while on the way from Whyalla to Leigh Creek. Mr Playford took the opportunity to confer with the Commissioner of the Commonwealth Railways on the conversion of seven more NM class locomotives to enable 28 train loads of Leigh Creek coal to Adelaide each week.

PRIME
MINISTER

Robert
MENZIES

PREMIER

1950

Broad gauge railway open to Naracoorte.

South Australia and the Commonwealth were in dispute in discussion on 29 May 1950 over the route of the Leigh Creek line. Further talks failed to reach an agreement and the matter was referred to a Royal Commission.

1951

Thomas
PLAYFORD

The Royal Commission on the Brachina Railway first sat in June. **Diesel-electric locomotives** 900 of the SAR, and GM1 of the CR were the first mainline units on the Australian mainland . September 1951.

1952

The 1949 standardisation agreement was declared non-enforceable. (Fitch in address to ARHS).

South Australia wants to convert the Port Pirie to Broken Hill line to 5 ft 3 in and the Commonwealth wants to convert it to 4ft 8½ in. (*Northern Mail* 1 March)

In July 1952, the Royal Commission supported the standard-gauge railway via the western plains from Stirling North.

1953

First broad-gauge train to Mount Gambier, 23 June 1953.

Death of SA Railways Commissioner, Robert Chapman. Ron Fitch suggested that the Royal Commission had taken a toll on his health. The new SAR Commissioner was John Fargher.

1954

Coal cartage loss. SA Railways Commissioner, (Mr J A Fargher) said that Leigh Creek coal was being carried at a loss. Mr Playford said there was no plan to lift the charges and that the new Commonwealth Railway line would carry the coal

The Federal Minister for Transport (Senator McLeay) announced that the Government had approved the Leigh Creek to Marree standard-gauge railway which would mean more and better meat for consumers (*Chronicle* 6 May 1954).

1955

In March 1956, a committee of Government members of the Commonwealth Parliament..the Wentworth Committee...Mr W C Wentworth was the great grandson of William Charles Wentworth, Australian explorer and statesman. The committee recommended standard-gauge connections, which, if carried out, would link all mainland capital cities. This item introduced (with cartoon) of the politician, to be successful sitting on the fence with one ear to the ground. (Harding).

1956

Another intrusion to the standardisation debate was Mr W C Wentworth, MHR for the Federal seat of Mackellar and something of an amateur railway buff...Brilliant but unconventional...However Wentworth took the job seriously...unfortunately his committee was so obsessed with intercapital working and passenger travel that they ignored completely any consideration of local and bulk traffic which constitute by far the greater part of rail business in this country. (Fitch p182).

17 May 1956 Rail head to Telford.

1957

Sir
Thomas
PLAYFORD
Knight Grand
Cross of
St Michael and
St George

The Leigh Creek line was extended to Marree on the pretext of getting the cattle to market but it was done with standardisation money. Senator George McLeay facilitated the finance.

1958

Eric Harding's Uniform Railway Gauge was published in 1958. It closed with the following:
Without a continuous Commonwealth policy of rail gauge standardisation this development will be attended by chaos and confusion which will be nothing less than a national calamity.

1959

Rail Standardisation Agreement, 10 Oct 1958 for the standard-gauge line to be extended from Wodonga to Melbourne.

Prime Minister SA Premier

| | |
|---|---|
| Sir Robert Menzies | 1960 |
| Sir Robert Menzies | 1961 |
| Sir Robert Menzies | 1962 |
| Sir Robert Menzies | 1963 |
| Sir Robert Menzies | 1964 |
| Sir Robert Menzies | 1965 |
| to 26 January 1966 | Frank WALSH |
| Harold HOLT 28 Jan 1966 to 18 Dec 1967 | 1966 10 March 1965 to 1 Jun 67 |
| John McEwen | 1967 |
| John GORTON 10 January 1968 | 1968 Don DUNSTAN |
| John GORTON 10 January 1968 | 1969 Raymond STEELE -HALL 17 Apr 68 to 2 June 70 |

From the left-wing Tribune. The Playford Government has issued a writ in the High Court demanding that the Federal Government honour the agreements it has made regarding unification of railway gauges - the capitalist system which gave rise to chaos and inefficiency of broken railway gauges is still wrangling. Last year. Playford announced that work would begin immediately. Now he is angry because his Liberal friends in Canberra have let him down. (*Tribune* ,Sydney, 28 March 1961).

Agreement to proceed with standard gauge from Koolyanobbing to Perth. South Australia was advised by the Commonwealth that finance was not available to proceed with the standardisation of the Broken Hill line. **The first** freight train from Albury to Dynon (Melbourne) on 3 January 1962. (Harrigan). Southern Aurora commenced March 1962.

The Commonwealth-South Australian agreement of 1949 did not include a time clause. South Australia's anxiety to correct its historic break-of-gauge mistakes led it in 1961, to challenge the Commonwealth Government in the High Court to secure conversion of the Port Pirie to Broken Hill route. A High Court judgement in February 1962 found that the Commonwealth was under no obligation to implement any work at or within a specified time. (*The Long Haul* p65).

Playford's war with the Commonwealth. His view was that Federal politicians were fair game because they had violated the balance of the Constitution by building up central power at the expense of the state government. (Howell in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry on Playford).

Port Pirie - Broken Hill standardisation co-incided with the 1963 Grey by-election following the death of Mr Edgar Russell. (Ron Fitch 1970 address to the ARHS).

The Broken Hill mining companies in 1964 made yet another of their periodic attempts to achieve a reduction in the rail freight charges...when they threatened to divert the traffic to road...Playford accepted a recommendation that a road maintenance tax be imposed....but in so doing he took steps to free intrastate freight traffic from any controls whatsoever. (Fitch

Bogie Exchange at Port Pirie 1 November 1965 (Luke).

Loss by railways more than \$1M. In his Annual Report, the Railways Commissioner (Mr R J Fitch) says the 1965-6 year was not an easy one. The railways felt the effects of the first full year of unrestricted intrastate road transport following the amendment to the Road and Rail Transport Act... which removed virtually all control over transport of goods. (*Advertiser*, 18 November 1966).

Freight row as threat to Pirie's future. Unless the freight charge by the railways was reduced the companies could rail their ore to Newcastle (*Sunday Mail*, 25 February 1967).

Kwinana to Kalgoorlie open 1 July 1968.

South Australian Road Transport Association held a dinner on 9 Feb 1968...Dunstan caused something of a sensation when he announced that his Government would not reintroduce transport control... at odds with his party's avowed policy...greeted by tumultuous applause...subsequent discussions with some members of the Government revealed that they too were dumbfounded. (Fitch p163).

Gough Whitlam (Leader of the Opposition) announced his plan for a national rail network to Department of Civil Engineering at Melbourne University (*Advertiser* 11 April 1968).

The Australian Post Office announced that it would issue a special stamp next year featuring rail standardisation.

Murray Hill, Minister of Transport announced cuts to country passenger services. The *Advertiser* 8 May 1968.

PRIME MINISTER

John GORTON
to 10 March 1971

William McMAHON
to 5 Dec 1972
Defeated

Gough WHITLAM
5 Dec 1972 to 11 Nov 1975
removed from office by order of the Governor General

Malcolm FRASER

PREMIER

1970
Raymond Steele-Hall
30 May

1971

1972

1973

1974

1975
Don DUNSTAN

1976

1977

1978
TO 16 FEB 1979

1979
Des CORCORAN
16 Feb to 18 Sept 79

David TONKIN

The **1970s** began with the commencement of standard-gauge operations from east coast to west coast in January. There had been a plan to have an opening ceremony, at Peterborough, on 12 January, at which Doreen Fitch was to cut the official ribbon. But there were industrial issues which resulted in a pair of very unused scissors having a home at the National Railway Museum as one of its most historic artifacts. The *Indian Pacific* commenced regular services on 2 March 1970 (Fitch p200).

The **Dunstan Government** was returned to office in 1970 and made substantial cuts to the budget allocations for the railways but at the same time directed that there should not be reductions of staff numbers, train services or track rehabilitation. But when Commissioner Fitch told Transport Minister Geoff Virgo about possible cuts to poorly patronised service on the Mallee lines, the Minister responded "but the Tailem Bend boys would not stand for that."

Amendment to the South Australian Railways Commissioners Act in 1971. Prior to that time the Commissioners had possessed a substantial degree of freedom. The amendment brought in by the Dunstan Government provided for the Commissioner to comply with the directions of the Minister. (Fitch p166)

The **quarterly newsletter of the SAR**, Dec 1971 and Feb 1972 reported a serious drift in railway finances. Mr Fitch advised that in October 1971 he had reported to the Minister that the railways proportion of the State's local transportation task had reduced substantially. He reminded us that interstate movements have been free of control since 1954. The railways proportion of the movement of the following, in the five years since the lifting of controls in South Australia was a decrease: wheat 67% to 50%, barley 69% to 42%, wool 55% to 24%. He closed the report to the Minister with the comment 'if the community wants these lines to be retained, it must be prepared to patronise them'.

Whyalla railway opened 4 October 1972.

Gough Whitlam was a man in a hurry. His dream of a national rail network with central control was commendable but was to go dreadfully wrong. Just 8 days into his term as Prime Minister, and with only Lance Barnard as Cabinet, he made the offer to the states to take over their railways. Don Dunstan was at the head of a very short queue.

Ron Fitch could only assume that the eagerness with which the State Government sought to hand over South Australia's non-urban services and facilities was indicative of either a lack of determination to tackle the problem itself, or a fear of union disapproval. (Fitch p165).

Ron Fitch opted for early retirement on 30 June 1973.

The **Festival Theatre** opened in 1974 but "not without one or two railway tribulations ... a heated and acrimonious confrontation between Dunstan and me." (Fitch p165).

Agreement to construct a new standard-gauge line to Alice Springs. 4 April 1974.

State Transport Authority to integrate South Australian commuter services. 18 April 1974.

Gough Whitlam announced on 3 May 1974 that a standard-gauge line would be built from Crystal Brook to Adelaide. He reiterated that in the 1975 pre-election campaign. (Fitch p195).

Turning of the first sod of the Tarcoola to Alice Springs railway by Prime Minister Whitlam, 12 April 1975 (Luke).

Australian National Railways Commission established 1 July 1975.

Following recent legislative changes in South Australia, the South Australian Railways...has been placed under the control of the State Transport Authority... chairmanship of Mr A G Flint...subject to the general control and direction of the Minister of Transport...the South Australian Railways will henceforth be known as the "State Transport Authority Rail Division. M. L Stockley General Manager (*Weekly Notice* 50/75 of 15 December 1975).

Mr A G Flint, mentioned above, was a highways administrator.

1977

Gough Whitlam, writing in *A Perspective*, which was an introduction to *The Long Haul*, produced by the Australian National Railways Commission said that Federal Ministers, however, took refuge in the rhetorical question 'Who would want to take over the worst managed railways in Australia?' The obvious answer is that constitutionally and economically the Federal Government had the power and duty to act'.

The **end** to South Australia's ownership and operation of the railways on 1 March 1978. The assets that were transferred were the non-metropolitan lines that were taken over by the Australian National Railways Commission. Almost overnight the Piping Shrike emblem was removed from all the locomotives.

