



1. Is the 'Penrice' line in operational condition? Could it run trains again from Gawler to the Barossa (within a fortnight), if required?

GWA: The Penrice line could be operational within a fortnight, with minor track and signals maintenance. However, for this to occur, a commercial case would first have to be demonstrated, through scoping studies that justified reopening the line.

If not, what maintenance is being scheduled to bring the line up to standard and when will that work be undertaken?

GWA: See above answer.

2. Does GWA acknowledge the total state of disrepair of Mid North rail lines under its control?

GWA: For context, please recall that the mid-north lines have not had substantial revenue service for the better part of 20 years and, generally for most of the line segments, the remaining light services terminated more than eight years ago. GWA understands the current condition of the infrastructure, which is driven by the lack of viable and sustainable freight demand for these lines. Further, please note we have been in regular discussions with the State Government on the continued use and viability of the corridor for rail traffic. There is recognition and consensus among all parties that such investment in the absence of any sufficient and sustainable commercial traffic is poor business practice and does not reflect or meet the intent of agreements between GWA, stakeholders and the State Government.

3. Many parts of the lines through the Pinery fireground were damaged by the fire (ie: burnt sleepers and warped track). Will GWA be re-sleepering these lines and re-laying track to repair the fire's damage, as it is obligated to do under its Lease? If so, when will remedial works be carried out?

GWA: Given the lack of demand or viable business case to remediate the damage, GWA has no immediate plans to perform any maintenance or upgrade work on this fire damaged dormant rail infrastructure. We have assessed our obligations under the Ground Lease and believe we have responded practically.

4. When were the lines last inspected by GWA?

GWA: January 2016

5. What were the recommendations of that inspection?

GWA: No formal recommendations; we have assessed and documented the findings.

6. What plans are in place to conduct track reconstruction so that the lines can be made operational within a fortnight of a request, as per the Lease Agreement?

GWA: Please see the answer to question number 3.

7. It is understood that one of the conditions to the lease agreement was that GWA had to run a light engine over the lines at least once per year to show that the line/s are being kept in operational condition and that if this does not occur, then the lines would revert to the State. Does GWA concur with this statement?

GWA: GWA does not concur with the above statement with respect to light engine operations on these dormant rail lines.

8. In any event, given the patently obvious breach of contract by GWA, when will GWA hand the lines back to the State?

GWA: All parties remain committed to investing in, restoring and maintaining any rail corridor within this mid-north footprint that attracts regular and viable customers. However, over the past 20 years, there unfortunately have been no such customers on these lines. GWA rejects the assertion of a “patently obvious breach” or other such failure as suggested by the questions. GWA and the State have had regular discussions regarding these lines over the past several years, with no definitive recommendation made by either party. We would expect a continued dialogue prospectively.

9. What discussions, if any, have been had at public service/Ministerial level about the state of the tracks?

GWA: GWA and the State have had a number of discussions about the lack of freight demand on the tracks with no formal conclusion about their future. GWA and the State have a long history of a positive working relationship to foster economic development in South Australia. Both parties will continue to work towards that mutual goal of developing sustainable and economic rail freight solutions.

10. Has the State/Minister raised with GWA its clear failure to meet its obligations?

GWA: See above answer in 8.

If not, will GWA call a meeting with the Minister forthwith to discuss its contractual failure and make arrangements to hand control of all rural lines back to the State?

GWA: See above answer to 8.