



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

November 29, 2018

**The South Australian Regional Rail Alliance (SARRA) has condemned the Marshall Government's decision to cease funding The Overland train service, calling it 'stupidly short sighted' and an insult to train travellers and rural South Australians.**

SARRA's Convenor, Paul Henley says SARRA's supporters and followers are 'livid' with the decision and claims the Marshall Government has only confirmed again that it doesn't care about regional train services.

"This from a political party with its roots deeply in regional South Australia. It's a disgrace," Mr Henley said.

"The Overland provided a vital service to those who can't travel by air and for those local, national and International tourists for whom travel by rail is an immersive experience – something they just can't get at 35,000 feet.

"Marshall has just thumbed his nose not only to commuters who used The Overland as an inter-regional commuter service, but to all Australians who valued this service as a unique means of enjoying SA's unique countryside.

"It further shows disregard to South Australians who do not – or cannot – easily board aircraft or buses, or who don't want to – or can't – sit in cramped conditions.

"This will only further isolate South Australians for whom other means of travel are not possible.

"And it must be remembered that it is governments' social responsibility to provide acceptable public transport services for all. Taking The Overland away means the Marshall Government has abjectly failed its Charter to the people of this State.

"It also further reduces the State's attractiveness to tourists who love train travel. SA GREAT be damned."

SARRA also recognises that Great Southern Rail (GSR) has also played a contributory part in The Overland's demise.

'GSR's interest in Australian rail journeys is sadly restricted to long-haul and expensive rail travel. Providing 'needed' rail services as opposed to 'experiential' rail services does not seem to suit its *modus operandi*," Mr Henley said.

"In the view of SARRA's supporters, GSR could have – and should have – put more marketing effort into The Overland service.

“GSR are great promoters of seeing camels in the Outback, but failed dismally in promoting The Overland ‘experience’. This has contributed to its demise.”

But, Mr Henley said, the end of The Overland service can be firmly sheeted home to the Marshall Government.

“This shines a further light on this Government’s total disregard for rural South Australians and their desire to see regional train services returned.

“The Premier be warned: SARRA’s supporters will not forget this snub and look forward to wreaking retribution at the next State Election. We remind the Premier again that South Australia does not end at Gepps Cross, nor Mount Barker, nor Seaford.

“As a famous Australian once said: *Maintain your rage ....until polling day*. THIS is what rural South Australians will be doing, with SARRA’s help,” Mr Henley said.

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