

INLAND RAIL PROJECT AND REGIONAL NSW

Organisation: New England Joint Organisation

Date Received: 22 December 2020

The Hon Justin Clancy MP
Chair
Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Tuesday, 22 December 2020

Dear Mr Clancy,

Re: Inquiry into Inland Rail

Thank you for your email to the New England Joint Organisation seeking a submission in relation to the impacts of Inland Rail.

The New England Joint Organisation, covers the LGAs of Armidale, Uralla, Narrabri, Moree, Tenterfield, Inverell and Glen Innes Severn Councils. The population of the JO is over 100,000.

a) Economic development opportunities arising from the project

- Inland Rail requires additional workers to construct the project. Due to population decline in 6 out of 7 NEJO LGAs (excluding Armidale), there is a good opportunity to incentivise city residents to move to rural and regional areas to meet the demands of Inland Rail construction. For example, the government could provide a \$10,000 incentive to move to a rural area, which could be paid after 1 or 2 years. The Government could promote the agricultural and health sector job opportunities to encourage city residents to move to rural areas. There is a decline in Doctors in rural and regional areas, so promotion to health care workers and Doctors would be advantageous.
- There will be an extensive array of opportunities that will present themselves with the construction of Inland Rail including new and diverse industries into the New England area.
- With Narrabri and Moree LGAs having a Special Activation Precinct (SAP), the State Government has also recognised regional opportunities and is putting in place a blueprint to create jobs, attract and diversify business and investors and support local industries ultimately fueling economic growth. Therefore, seamless access to Inland Rail will be a big selling point when endeavouring to attract business and industry to rural and regional areas.
- Broad industry sector groups looking to be attracted to the Narrabri Shire to benefit from land, energy and Inland Rail include the following:
 - o Fertilizer manufacturing
 - o Meat processing
 - o Plastics recycling and manufacturing
 - o Cement operations
 - o Insulation
 - o Heavy industry

- Distribution and logistics
- Cotton and grain value adding
- There are tourism opportunities for inland rail such as luxury trains providing a rural tourism experience to domestic or international travellers. Tourists could travel to Narrabri and Moree to visit cotton farms, cotton gins and artesian bores (heated pools).
- Government could support affiliate tourism opportunities such as art projects, including silo art.
- b) Infrastructure required to ensure regional communities benefit from the project**
- It is important that the road infrastructure is of a high standard in and around the inland rail corridor because trucks may carry goods to various hubs such as Narrabri and Moree. The Government needs to make sure major freight corridors (as highlighted in the New England Road Network Strategy available from www.nejo.nsw.gov.au) are updated to a high standard, to ensure that the road network supports the Inland Rail project. By doing so, road and rail will be complementary to each other in building the NSW economy.
- Narrabri Shire Council is committed to ensuring that the community maximises the benefits from the construction and operation of Inland Rail. To enable this to happen, Council continues to work on its substantial 374- hectare premier industrial development titled the Northern NSW Inland Port (N2IP).
- For the community to take full advantage of the construction of Inland Rail, it is imperative that there is direct access from the Walgett Branch Line onto the Inland Rail infrastructure in both a northerly and southerly direction.
- Apart from direct access to Inland Rail, consideration should be given to surrounding road and bridge infrastructure. By increasing road and bridge capacities, it will accommodate higher mass vehicles and correspondingly the freight volumes able to be transported within the Shire and to the import/export destination point.
- c) Engagement with regional communities to identify opportunities**
- In order to engage with regional communities, Government should Contact Council's Economic Development Managers to obtain a list of relevant businesses who are likely to utilise inland rail.
- Develop a community survey, with a good incentive for community members to complete the survey.
- Other stakeholders to engage include:
 - Department of Regional NSW
 - Regional Development Australia
 - Narrabri Chamber of Commerce
 - Boggabri Chamber of Commerce
 - Boggabri Business Promotions
 - Wee Waa Chamber of Commerce
 - Narrabri Industrial Network
 - Narrabri Shire Council
 - Moree Chamber of Commerce

d) Alignment of the project with the NSW Freight and Ports Plan 2018-2023 and State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2038

- The NSW Freight and Ports Plan 2018-2023 aligns with a range of NSW Government plans. It is also a document written to achieve the following objectives:
 - a. Achieve economic growth
 - b. Increase efficiency, connectivity and access
 - c. Increase capacity, safety and sustainability
- These objectives tie in with NEJO's strategic direction which is to establish a progressive and diverse economy.

e) Any other related matters.

- The inquiry should consider alignment with the Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDs).
- The inquiry should consider the potential impacts on the NEJO Road Network Strategy and the NEJO Strategic Plan.
- The inquiry should consider alignment with the 20 year economic vision for Regional NSW.
- The inquiry should consider how Inland Rail can upskill young people and businesses near inland rail so they can take advantage of future opportunities for growth.
- The inquiry should consider how it can support economic growth in key sectors such as agribusiness, secondary education, tertiary education and health care.

Thank you for consulting with the New England Joint Organisation. Should you have any questions, please contact the NEJO Executive Officer Brooke Southwell, on [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

Mr Michael Pearce
Chair