

**Submission
No 23**

INLAND RAIL PROJECT AND REGIONAL NSW

Organisation: Parkes Shire Council

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**Parkes Shire Council
Submission
Investment, Industry and Regional
Development
Inland Rail project**

Introduction

Parkes Shire Council would like to thank the Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development for the opportunity to make comment on the Inland Rail project and regional New South Wales.

Parkes' strategic location is like no other. It stands at the intersection of the N-S Newell Highway road freight corridor and E-W freight rail, linking Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney and Perth as well as Adelaide and Darwin. Parkes' position has been further enhanced by the announcement of the nearly \$10b Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail project which received one of the largest investments ever seen in regional Australia. The Inland Rail will change the way freight moves around Australia and at its centre is Parkes where it intersects. Parkes will connect to global markets via the major ports of Australia, with significant economic advantages.

Inland Rail has been part of Parkes Shire Council's long-term vision our community and is clearly set as an objective in our Community Strategic Plan and Integrated Planning and Reporting documents - it also forms part of our community vision which is for Parkes to be by 2030 *"a progressive and smart regional centre, embracing a national logistics hub, with vibrant communities, diverse opportunities, learning and healthy lifestyles"*

The promise of such a project propelled Council to be proactive in planning for our future to ensure that diversity in our economy and linkages to markets is paramount. In 2006 Parkes Shire Council, with approval from the State Government, has rezoned 516 hectares for the development of the Parkes National Logistics Hub with an additional reserve of over 100 hectares.

The site has been designed for 24 hour, seven days per week operation of a multi-modal transport facility. Currently 16 million people or over 80% of the Australian population can be reached in less than 12 hours by road from Parkes. The National Logistics hub boast three main investors Linfox, SCT Logistics and Pacific National.

Despite the trying times of drought over the last 4 years, and now the impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic, the Parkes Shire economy has been afforded some reprieve thanks to significant government and private sector investment.

Council believes that much of this investment has happened as a direct consequence of the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail project. When Australia Rail Track Corporation's (ARTC) announced that the first stage of Inland Rail would be from Parkes and Narromine, this gave private sector the confidence to invest in Parkes, with companies such as Pacific National investing in a \$35 million Parkes Logistics Terminal (opened in [October 2019](#)) and the recent approval of a \$23 million advanced food manufacturing facility (currently under construction due for completion mid 2021).





Pacific National Intermodal terminal under construction 2019

In addition to this, Council is very proud of the fact that Parkes was named as NSW's first Special Activation Precinct. Council believes the State Government's investment in the Precinct will leverage the exceptional transport connectivity of Parkes, which will be further enhanced by the construction of Inland Rail and attract more businesses to regional NSW.



a) economic development opportunities arising from the project

Apart from attracting significant investment from the private sector and Government - the construction phase of Inland Rail has had a direct impact on the Parkes Shire economy and we believe that this impact can be replicated along the length of Inland Rail.

During the construction phase, Parkes Shire's unemployment rate reduced from 7.6% in December 2018 to 4.6% in June 2020 which is well below the national average. Parkes' GRP (gross regional product) was 5.2% higher in the September quarter 2020 than the same quarter in 2019. ([source id.](#)) This increase contrasts with that experienced by the rest of NSW as a whole. ([source id.](#))

Parkes was among 23 local government areas according to a recent [domain](#) article, who recorded double-digit percentage year on year increase in 2020, with a median house price climb by 24.1 percent to \$335,000. Interestingly, Parkes still sits as one of the most affordable regional markets on the list, experiencing steady growth over the past few years because of major developments including Inland Rail and the growth of the Parkes National Logistics Hub and the SAP.

ARTC have worked closely with Council and the community to utilise many local businesses from the construction industry to coffee shops which were often a sea of hi vis first thing in the morning - they have even sponsored our local festivals and events such as the Parkes Elvis Festival.

Council and the Parkes Chamber of Commerce worked with ARTC and their contractors to host a number of procurement workshops (or speed dating workshops) with local businesses and suppliers. The aim of the workshops was to allow the lead Inland Rail contractors to meet local businesses, to understand the types of business and level of skills available in the local community and so that



ARTC staff in local café

local business could understand how to get involved with the project and what was expected of them.

Below is an infographic from ARTC regarding their impact of the region between December 2018 to August 2020





b) infrastructure required to ensure regional communities benefit from the project















Parkes Shire Council had long been exploring opportunities to expand the 600ha [Parkes National Logistics Hub](#) to capitalise on its location at the axis of the east-west rail line and the \$10 billion north-south Inland Rail, due for completion in 2025.

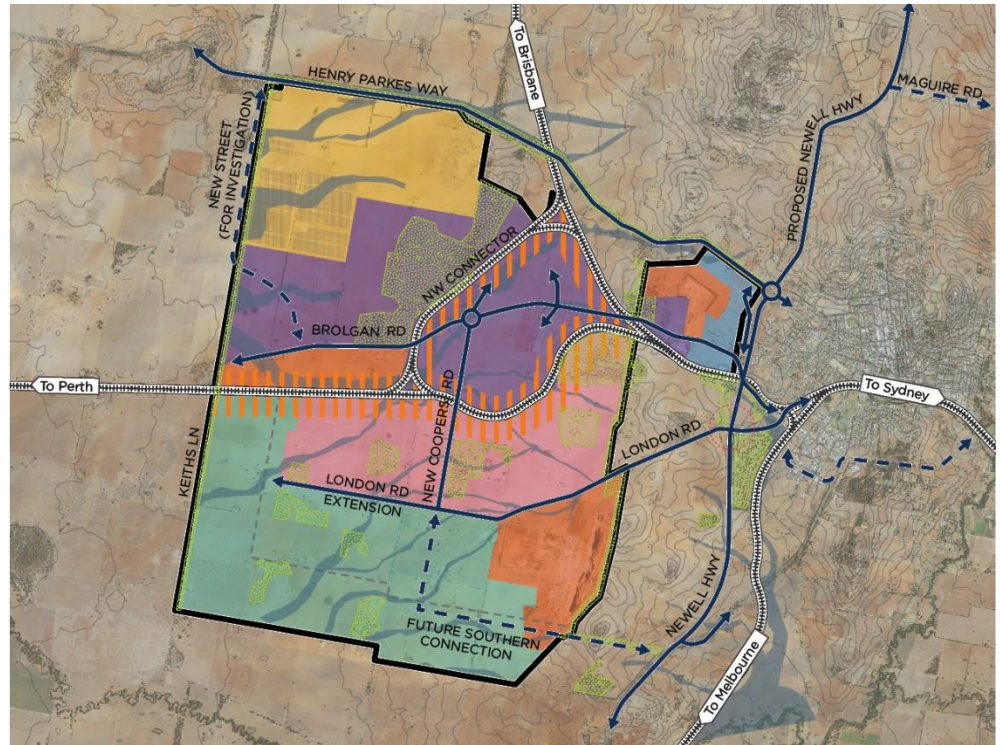
With unique logistical advantages at the heart of Australia’s transport network, Council envisaged the Hub as the epicentre for the Central West’s economic growth. Studies revealed a huge opportunity for industries that add value to our regions superb agricultural output. Australia’s produce is seen as clean, green and safe, but without value adding, two-thirds of our produce is sold at set market prices. This forces our outstanding producers to be price-takers. Value adding will make them price-makers in high value global markets.

Large manufacturing and processing industries however need large areas of land and significant buffer zones.

So Council was elated when in July 2018, the NSW Government announced Parkes was to be the State's first Special Activation Precinct as part of its 20-year Vision for Regional NSW and allocation of the \$4.2 billion Snowy Hydro Scheme funds. During the announcement, the Deputy Premier credited Parkes Shire Council for its vision and strategic thinking leading up to this point. It made the State Government's decision much easier to invest in Parkes for the Special Activation Precinct.



-  Special activation precinct boundary
-  Solar sub-precinct (664 ha)
-  Regional enterprise sub-precinct (1115 ha)
-  Resource recovery and recycling sub-precinct (552 ha)
-  Intensive livestock agriculture sub-precinct (1226 ha)
-  Mixed enterprise sub-precinct (660 ha)
-  Commercial gateway sub-precinct (99 ha)
-  Rail terminals overlay
-  Green infrastructure overlay
-  Stormwater flow paths (existing)
-  New connection
-  Proposed new connection
-  Railway
-  1km buffer zone
-  Future upgrade (for investigation by TfNSW)



With the Parkes Special Activation Precinct master plan now complete, the NSW Regional Growth Development Corporation (RGDC) will take on delivery of the precinct which \$185 million already committed to the project in July 2020 for vital enabling infrastructure.

The development will allow for agriculture value adding, open up opportunities for recycling and renewables, encourage a resurgence in manufacturing and provide a competitive network in terms of transport and logistics by leveraging Inland Rail and Parkes' strategic location at the crossroads of the Nation.

The Parkes precinct covers 4,800 hectares of land which is ear-marked for a range of uses including freight and logistics, processing of food such as plant-based proteins, warehousing, plastic and e-waste recycling and cold chain storage.

The precinct will focus on sustainability and will be Australia's first United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) Eco Industrial Zone.

Forecasts indicate that government investment in this Special Activation Precinct could generate an additional 3,000 new jobs and attract a further \$1 billion in private investment over the next 20 years.

However, improvements in road and rail linkages to Sydney from regional areas are and will remain paramount to ensure that NSW can leverage from the investment in Inland Rail.



c) engagement with regional communities to identify opportunities

As stated previously Inland Rail has been part of Parkes Shire Council's long-term vision and our communities long term vision. But this investment did not happen by chance, Parkes Shire Council has been lobbying and working towards Inland Rail for over 20 years, to ensure that Parkes was investment ready for Inland Rail (see appendix A Inland Rail timeline). Over this time, Council has been involved in many meetings with Ministers, both State and Federal, and key stakeholders including the community, industry and farming organisations regarding the design and the alignment of the project.

Parkes has hosted two Inland Rail Symposiums (2006 & 2012), with Moree hosting a third in 2013. These symposiums facilitated stakeholders, including regional landowners, local Councils, Industry and Government to come together and discuss the benefits and impacts of Inland Rail. In addition, Council has had the opportunity to make two Businesses Case submissions, as well as meet and discuss the project through former Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson's Inland Rail High Level Implementation Group. The Australian Logistic Council and Australian Rail Association have jointly hosted two Inland Rail conferences; the inaugural conference was held in Parkes in 2018, and Toowoomba in 2019. The aforementioned events have provided people and organisations with the opportunity to voice their concerns regarding Inland Rail.

Additionally, since construction on the Inland Rail commenced on the Parkes to Narromine section, Parkes Shire Council has set up a very clear communication process between our organisation and ARTC, as well as the contractors building the project. This involves monthly meetings where all sides can work together to problem solve, as well as proactively raise potential issues. ARTC have also been holding regular community briefings and was in regular attendance at the Peak Hill Community Consultative Committee (CCC) meetings.

ARTC also funded a range of community legacy projects in Peak Hill including

- Children's bike path
- BMX track upgrade
- Picnic bench at skate park
- Upgrade picnic bench and seat at Peak Hill Nature Reserve
- upgrades to paths and pedestrian bridge at Peak Hill Nature Reserve



The projects aim to encourage active lifestyles, enhance children's recreational facilities, promote rail safety through the bike path design and leave a lasting legacy from the Inland Rail project.



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

Council believes that with the Inland Rail project, the investments being made in the Parkes Special Activation Precinct, the objectives of the NSW Freight and Port Plan and State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2038 as well as the NSW recently refreshed NSW Government 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW

Inland Rail will connect our region to a global market via the major ports of Australia, placing the Central West region into an economically advantageous position once the project comes into fruition. Regional areas, like Parkes, are set to become inland ports which will likely be a catalyst for export orientated businesses to add value to the region's produce. Regional areas have some of the best produce in the world, and we believe that projects like Inland Rail that enable efficient transport networks, will result in the uplifted value staying in the region rather than be exported out in bulk.

Companies like Pacific National are now having the confidence to invest in regional areas because of the State and Federal Government investment in enabling infrastructure as well as investment in emerging sustainable industries such recycling, renewables, and energy from waste.

Pacific National's CEO, Mr Dean Dalla Vale, have what they refer to as a [4P's vision](#) and was quoted in the [Rail Journal](#) as saying, "that once the Inland Rail project is complete, companies can use Parkes as a launch pad to haul goods and commodities by rail more efficiently to the ports of Melbourne, Brisbane, Botany and Fremantle".

"PN's next proposed investment is to better connect Parkes to Port Botany (Sydney) through the establishment of a freight hub in St Marys in the heart of Western Sydney," he says. "The hub will allow long regional freight trains from Parkes to be broken down into smaller shuttles to more efficiently access the stevedoring terminals at Port Botany."

As the Inland Rail project progresses all levels of Government and the private sector need to work together to ensure that opportunities are identified and network blockages are over come to ensure the efficient movement of freight and the opening up on new opportunities for NSW and in particular regional NSW.

e) any other related matters.

Parkes Shire Council would again like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to make a submission. Council would be more than happy to provide further evidence and invites the Committee members to visit Parkes to see firsthand some of the investment that has flowed from Inland Rail.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Business and Economic Development Manager Anna Wyllie [REDACTED]



Appendix A

Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail Timeline Significant Milestones and meetings

1889	Sir Henry Parkes "...they had now, from South Australia to Queensland, a stretch of about 2,000 miles of railway, and if the four colonies could only combine to adopt a uniform gauge, it would be an immense advantage in the movement of troops, as well as in the operations of commerce and the various pursuits of society...".
1930	Gauge standardisation into Brisbane
1940-50s	End WWII road transport, grow rapidly and the road network was upgraded – little was done to upgrade the east coast rail network, it continued along 19 th century alignment between east coast Capitals.
1962	Gauge standardization into Melbourne
1980s	Concept of Inland Rail as a more or less direct line between Brisbane and Melbourne grow.
1997	Australian Trunk Rail Corporation Pty Ltd ("ATRC") formed it subsequently name changed to the GATR System Great Australian Trunk Rail System Pty Ltd
2006	North-South Rail Corridor Study Executive Report by Ernst and Young Parkes Inland Rail Symposium (Attachment 1)
2010 -	MBIR Alignment Study, ARTC,
2012	Parkes Inland Rail Symposium (Attachment 2)
2013	
August	Council Travel to Sydney to meet with Industry and Government regarding MBIR PM Kevin Rudd announces Federal Election - Council has the Inland Rail as its top election priority as does the Australian Logistics Council.
August	Letters Sent to all Council's along the MBIR route asking for their support for Inland Rail - 75% positive response
Late August	Hon Warren Truss MP - visits Parkes to discuss Inland Rail



- September Moree Inland Rail Round Table
- December Deputy Prime Minister The Hon. Warren Truss MP charged ARTC with developing a 10 year delivery plan for Inland Rail. \$300 million over 4 years for business case finalise planning, engineering design and environmental assessments for Inland Rail
- 2014** High Level Implementation Group (headed by former Deputy PM John Anderson) created to fast track the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland as well as consult with stakeholders
- April Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail Alliance formed - MBIRA is an alliance of Council's along the Inland Rail route;
- Mission**
- "For over a century the direct inland rail link from Melbourne to Brisbane has been proposed and it has been supported by the public, academics, practitioners and numerous political factions. The concept is simple, yet visionary and poses to be profoundly Australian as it addresses one of the Nation's greatest competitive disadvantages; the tyranny of distance.
- It is now time to build a modern, high standard railway from Melbourne to Brisbane that will be able to transport freight in a highly efficient way. A railway built to "future-standards" will serve the nation for centuries."
- Vision**
- Currently we are in an exciting position where both public and private investors are willing to work together ensure that the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail is a Corridor of Opportunity for centuries to come
- 2015** Inland Rail Business Case prepared with 10 year delivery plan, and submitted to Infrastructure Australia - there were opportunities to make submissions which Parkes Shire Council did.
- 2016** NSW State Election and Australian Government commits a further \$594 million for development and land acquisition
- 2017** \$8.4 billion was committed in the Federal Budget for Inland Rail
- EIS released for Parkes to Narromine



2018

- Jan Steal delivered for Inland Rail in Peak Hill
- May Bilateral agreement have signed in Parkes between the State and the Commonwealth
- July Deputy Premier announces Parkes as the State's first Special activation precinct.
- July ARA and ALC Inland Rail conference in Parkes over 300 delegates
- October Pacific National announces \$35 million investment in Parkes Intermodal Terminal
- December Turning of the sod on Inland Rail in Parkes

2019

- Jan - Jun 02 Inland Rail construction - large workforce in town
- August First section of Inland Rail opened
- October Pacific National's Terminal opened

2020

- July Deputy Premier announces \$185m for enabling infrastructure for the SAP
- September P2N section of Inland rail project opened.

