

INLAND RAIL PROJECT AND REGIONAL NSW

Organisation: Canberra Region Joint Organisation

Date Received: 5 February 2021



4 February 2021

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

Dear Mr Clancy,

Inquiry into the Inland Rail Project and Regional NSW

We welcome the opportunity to submit our feedback on behalf of the member Councils represented by the Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO).

The Canberra Region is a unique and diverse geographic region which stretches from the South-West slopes, through the Sydney-Canberra corridor across the Eurobodalla down to the Sapphire Coast and then to the Snowy Mountains. The CRJO¹ consists of ten (10) member councils, three (3) associate members and one (1) affiliate member. The total population of the CRJO region, including the ACT, is 750,000 (2017) with a total area of 48,000km² and a gross regional product (GRP) of \$9.82 billion.

The CRJO provides a forum for councils, state agencies and other stakeholders to work together at a regional level to identify shared priorities. This regional collaboration helps deliver important regional projects, delivering better outcomes for communities.

Noting the Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Developments Terms of Reference for the Inquiry, our submission makes particular reference to:

- b) infrastructure required to ensure regional communities benefit from the project
- d) alignment of the project with the NSW Freight and Ports Plan 2018-2023 and State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2038

¹ Member Councils: Bega Valley Shire, Eurobodalla, Snowy Monaro, Snowy Valleys, Quenbeyan-Palerang, Goulburn-Mulwaree, Hilltops, Yass Valley, Wingecarribee, Upper Lachlan. Associate Members: Wagga Wagga City Council, East Gippsland, ACT Government. Affiliate Member: Canberra Airport.



Infrastructure required to ensure regional communities benefit from the project

The Inland Rail project provides a significant infrastructure connection to the South Eastern NSW region and is identified in the CRJO's "[*Transport and Freight Infrastructure Prospectus*](#)". The prospectus sets out a long-term vision for our region to provide efficient freight and transport connectivity from the Riverina to the South Coast and linking to the major capital cities of Canberra and Sydney.

Critically, the Inland Rail project provides a rapid North-South freight linkage connecting Melbourne with Brisbane. In order for regions to capitalise on the opportunities presented by this once in a generation project we must consider the requirements for East-West connectivity to supply critical goods and services, connecting multi-modes of freight and providing alternate means of moving freight, tourism and commuter traffic.

We understand that currently around half of NSW bulk-freighted non-mineral product is moved through the south of NSW, with much transferred to Victorian ports. We seek to identify key drivers for freight directed into metro hubs and to replicate or divert into regional hubs and grow new business and employment opportunities.

We recommend Government conducts a feasibility study into moving freight with options to reduce handling and optimise load at intermodals at Wagga (container/bulk - inland rail), Canberra/Queanbeyan (specialised/fresh - air) or Eden (bulk - sea) to strengthen the freight chain logistics in NSW. The study should identify best value public and private investments that support connectivity to Inland rail and optimise freight movements through southern NSW. It is understood a similar feasibility was undertaken to support the rail and road movements from the central west through Newcastle port.

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

CRJO's review of the Future Transport 2056 Strategy and the Freight and Ports Plans has identified significant opportunities if both the NSW and Federal Governments focus on the development of transport and freight infrastructure across the South East of the State.

In developing our infrastructure prospectus, we have used the classification system from the 2056 Strategy to introduce further strategic projects to improve social connectivity and economic efficiency in the region. All infrastructure projects in the CRJO were reviewed and those that most met the goals of the NSW Regional Service and Infrastructure Plan priorities for inclusion in this prospectus.

Projects fall into three categories:

1. **Committed initiatives (0-10yrs)** Initiatives that either have committed funding, are committed/contractually committed, are for immediate detailed planning, or are part of key maintenance, renewal or safety programs. Some initiatives are subject to final business case and funding.
2. **Initiatives for investigation (0-10, 10-20yrs)** Initiatives intended to be investigated for potential commitment or implementation within the next 20 years. Those listed in 0-10 horizon will be prioritised for more detailed investigation to determine if they are required in the next 20 years.
3. **Visionary initiatives (20+ years)** Longer term initiatives that may be investigated within the next 10 years, but are unlikely to require implementation within 20 years.

The NSW Future Transport 2056 Strategy and related Freight and Port Plans outline the key infrastructure required to support freight and supply chain logistics. The Canberra Region comprises all of these components in some measure (see Figure 1: Freight Supply Chain Components).

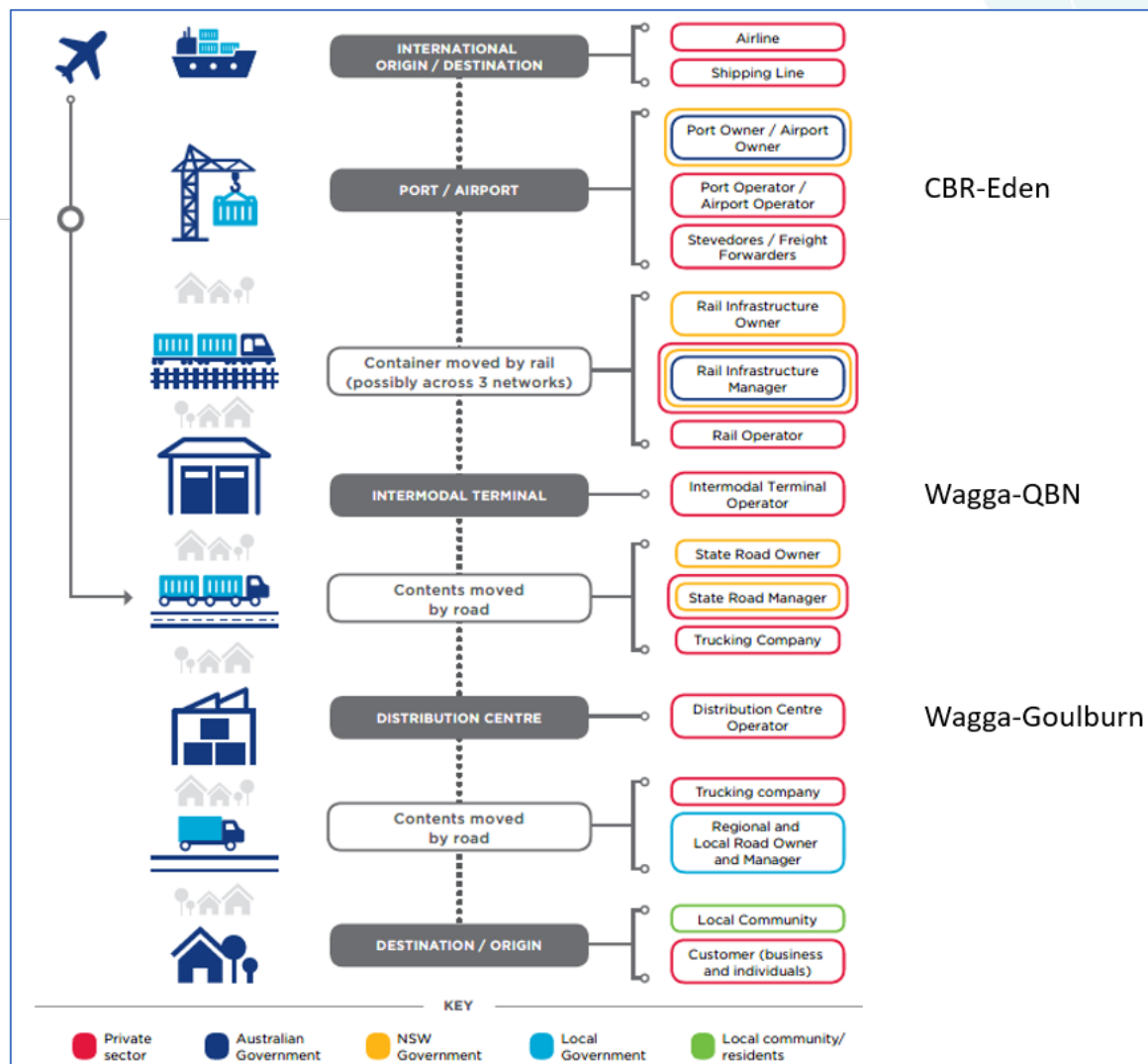


Figure 1: Freight Supply Chain Components

Summary

The construction and activation of the Inland Rail is expected to bring public and private investment within and connected to that rail corridor. The infrastructure and development construction sectors are significant generators of employment and economic multipliers in regional NSW.



In line with the stated ambition of Government to build a lasting legacy expressed in its 20-year Vision for Regional NSW, the CRJO recommends infrastructure investments that optimise efficient connections to the inland rail from within our unique region. Building on the opportunities presented by access to road, sea and air transport the Inland Rail project will enhanced by strong East-West linkages that maximise freight and employment resources.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss this submission and its key themes with you and look forward to a productive outcome from the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely



Cr Rowena Abbey

Chair | Canberra Region Joint Organisation