

**Submission
No 27**

INLAND RAIL PROJECT AND REGIONAL NSW

Organisation: Bathurst Regional Council

Date Received: 5 February 2021

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Mr Justin Clancy
Chair
Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development
Parliament of New South Wales

Dear Mr Clancy

Inland Rail project and regional NSW Inquiry

Bathurst Regional Council appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Inland Rail Project inquiry.

The Inland Rail project is a welcome investment by the Federal Government in regional Australia. Council encourages the New South Wales Government to provide opportunities for all New South Wales regional areas to be able to connect to and therefore derive the benefits of the Inland Rail Project. Complementary investment by the New South Wales Government to link to the Inland Rail will provide significant benefits to the residents of Central West New South Wales and Bathurst in particular.

Continued Economic Growth in regional New South Wales is critical to ensure that the food, produce and raw materials that feed and power the state are able to move to market efficiently. Council believes the strategic location of Bathurst between Sydney and the Inland Rail Project will provide significant economic development opportunities for Bathurst in our key employment areas of primary resource manufacturing, construction, raw materials and education.

The Inland Rail investment provides regional cities in New South Wales the opportunity to gain access efficiently and quickly to all State Capitals as well as overseas markets. Additional investment is required, however, in order for those areas not physically located on the Inland Rail to be able to take advantage of these opportunities.

Continued investment under the Fixing Country Rail Program specifically on the Main Western Line rail corridor from Sydney, through Bathurst to Parkes will allow for more efficient rail transport from Lithgow, Bathurst, and Orange, placing less reliance on the Great Western Highway, particularly through the Blue Mountains.

Improved transport connections for rail freight then provides opportunities for Sydney based business to relocate to regional centres such as Bathurst, with the confidence that their goods are able to be easily and efficiently transported to other regional areas, the capital cities and/or overseas. This provides excellent opportunities to grow skilled employment in regional areas whilst reducing the infrastructure pressure on Sydney.

The Inland Rail investment will build on the themes contained in the New South Wales State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2038. This strategy identified Bathurst holding a key competitive advantage in manufacturing, education and research. Investment by the New South Wales Government in the rail network between Sydney and Parkes through Bathurst will provide easy access to the Inland Rail network and provide Bathurst the opportunity to grow and contribute to the Regional New South Wales economy.

An improved rail network also meets the State Infrastructure Strategy strategic objective of ensuring the transport system creates opportunities for people and business to access the services and support they need, in this case efficient and fast freight services to Australia and international markets from the Central West region and of course Bathurst.

If you require further information please do not hesitate to contact Bathurst Regional Councils Manager Economic Development, Jessica Wilkinson, on [REDACTED] email [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully

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ENVIRONMENTAL, PLANNING & BUILDING SERVICES