

# CEO - Inland Rail 'Opening Remarks'

## Senate Inland Rail Hearing, 13 August 2020

### Introduction

- Good afternoon Chairman, Senators
- I would like to provide a brief update on progress and developments since the last hearing in Brisbane on 30 January

### COVID-19

- COVID has obviously dominated the environment in which we work, and while it has been devastating to so many it has also reinforced that infrastructure projects, investing in regional Australia and decentralisation from cities are very important considerations as we go forward.
  - This was recognised as recently as this past weekend when the NSW Government announced its focus on developing five regional cities. In this announcement Inland Rail is cited as one of the catalysts for the 'bush-tropolis' initiative and three of the nominated centers have 'special activation industrial districts' specifically targeted to capitalize on the presence of Inland Rail – Wagga Wagga, Parkes, Moree

### Long Term Benefits

- There has also been additional work on benefits, including the EY Regional Intelligence reports released by the Government that Ms. Vine-Camp reinforced earlier. These reports continue to give insights into some of the future regional benefits that Inland Rail will generate. The benefits include.
  - up to an additional \$13.3 billion in today's terms to the value of goods and services produced in its first 50 years of operation
  - 14,000 –16,000 job years for regional Australia over its first decade, on top of the 7000 job years forecast over the same period in the Business Case

### Short Term Benefits

- Benefits are already being realised by way of the work we are doing today and specifically the construction of the Parkes to Narromine section that is nearing completion. It has provided sustainable jobs for 833 people and has provided employment for 298 indigenous people and has spent over \$100m with local and regional businesses

### PUBLIC SAFETY

- Rail – road interface is a key safety issue and we are making good progress on this front.
  - On 12 June, ONRSR sent ARTC their final report covering their audit of the Inland Rail-Road Rail Crossing Strategy. The ONRSR report concluded that the ARTC methodology is robust and that a consistent, systematic and comprehensive process for the assessment of level crossings is applied to determine adequate treatments.
- Flood modelling is another key safety issue.
  - As we discussed in January, we have excellent modelling teams from some of the largest and most reputable engineering firms in the world working right across the alignment. They have met or exceeded industry standards. That is why we are strong supporters of the International Panel of Flood experts that has been set up by the Queensland and Australian Governments and referenced by Ms. Vine-Camp earlier. To date we have been working to provide the Panel with all the information and data they require (over 8 terabytes of data) and we remain confident that our modelling will receive a clean bill of health from the panel.

### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Since January we have continued our public engagement and have enjoyed some very helpful conversations with community members up and down the alignment through over 700

one-on-one or group interactions with members of the community. While COVID-19 has certainly impacted our ability to have as many in-person meetings as we would like, we have been able to use social media, our interactive maps and emailed newsletters to keep our communities regularly informed, and we made substantial use of video-conference technology during the height of the lockdown in late March, April and May. And in spite of ongoing directives from NSW Farmers Association for their members not to meet with us, we have met with 108 out of the 117 impacted landowners on the Narromine to Narrabri section of Inland Rail. These meetings have focused on understanding the impacts that Inland Rail may have on these landowners' businesses, and day-to-day activities. We are committed to continuing working with these landowners to develop plans to help mitigate these impacts to the extent possible.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight that as we progress Inland Rail, there are four things that we think are very important that the committee is aware of:

- First, we remain focussed on and committed to transparency in decision-making and strong, ongoing community and landowner engagement
- Second, we are committed to helping build community confidence in our engineering solutions to ensure public safety is protected
- Third, Inland Rail will continue to create local jobs all along the route, with benefits for regions right through Victoria, NSW and SE Queensland
- And last but not least we have excellent people working on this program and on any given day, that includes over 1,000 people. Every one of them that I talk to are proud to be working on this program and dedicated to doing their very best to create a future we can all be proud of.