

# Appendix 5







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## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Your Ref No.: 2012/6489

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14 August 2012

Manager of Commonwealth Referrals (EPBC Act)  
Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities  
GPO Box 787  
Canberra ACT 2601 Australia

Dear Sir/Madam

### RE EAST WEST LINE PARKS LIMITED/TRANSPORT - LAND/ABBOT POINT TO ALPHA/ QLD/GALILEE INFRASTRUCTURE CORRIDOR PROJECT

I refer to the application by East West Line Parks Limited to build a rail corridor to service the Galilee Basin.

Substantial portions of this rail corridor are planned for the Isaac Regional Council area, and particularly the most sensitive areas.

I believe this application must be viewed in the context of the other rail proposals for the region and not in isolation.

I have had many representations from concerned landholders in our region about the alternatives to this proposal, namely the GVK Hancock proposal and the QR National Adani proposal. These two corridors are now the preferred corridors for the Queensland State Government.

Based on the information I have seen, I believe that this East West Line Parks Limited proposal represents the best possible outcome for the environment, landholders, communities, the mining industry and all three levels of government.

1. **Better for the government:** because delivering lower below and above rail costs, means the price per tonne for transport to port is cheaper for miners. That means better financial viability for smaller mine proposals and a more likely royalty stream from those mines;
2. **Better for the environment:** because it uses covered wagons, that do not drop 1-2% of their coal dust load on land and waterways along the corridor (some of which is defined as strategic cropping land in alternative proposals);



3. **Better for land holders:** because it protects prime agricultural land by avoiding strategic cropping areas, avoids massive flood zones; spur lines appear shorter; meaning less impacts for land holders;
4. **Better for communities:** because the train trips per week are substantially less than GVK Hancock and QR National combined, meaning less community and landholder disruption.
5. **Better for the mining industry:** A single user corridor that avoids the heavy development costs of large flood plains will likely be cheaper, and a recent study by the proponent suggests that their proposal is up 55% cheaper than the two main alternatives, delivering a lower price per tonne to port. This point is important given the downward pressure on thermal coal prices because efficiencies give our region the best possible chance of making more mine proposals more viable which increases the likelihood of a royalty revenue stream from those mines.

**I would like to qualify my remarks by saying that the best possible way to determine if this proposal is more appropriate, would be in the form of a public inquiry into its implications.**

**This would provide a significant opportunity for all parties to understand the comparative strengths and weaknesses of all proposals, so that our communities can have faith that the best outcomes can be achieved in light of all the facts.**

In my view, it is not appropriate for all levels of government to be imposing a rail corridor on the region that best suits the needs of single proponents as opposed to the best interests of the environment, the broader community, industry and landholders.

When better solutions are available, particularly those that appear to meet the needs of all stakeholders, those proposals deserve to be investigated thoroughly, and compared comprehensively, in the public interest.

In my view, the decisions made in relation to the Galilee Basin will shape our region for a generation, and if the wrong decisions are made the implications could have a profound effect on the region's capacity to grow sustainably.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please contact the undersigned on 0749 414 524.

Yours faithfully



ANNE BAKER  
**Mayor**