



TOOWOOMBA
**CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE**

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

To the Secretary

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the Management of the Inland Rail Project.

As President of the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce my first point would be that this Project must simply proceed without delay. My local community would benefit greatly from a project of this size in the jobs that will bring.

The completion of the second range crossing means that many small business operators now have the skills, the manpower and the equipment to service a project like this but the delay in commencement means they may have to leave the area to find work for their staff and equipment.

The delay in commencement is also causing great angst and personal hardship for those along the proposed alignment with the lack of progress – they are living in limbo. I am a member of the Advisory Group and am always concerned at the toll it is taking on farmers in our region who are constantly '*waiting for the other shoe to drop*' with the delay in sign off by the Queensland Government. It is a terrible way for them to live – they cannot plant crops or make future plans because they are at the mercy of the Queensland government who have so far failed to sign off on the agreement.

The other point I would like to make is that every effort must be made to ensure that local suppliers are considered for all tenders along the alignment – big and small. These types of tenders can make all the difference to small business and the flow on effect is enormous. Please remember that 97% of business in Toowoomba is small business – so the impact of a project like this is immeasurable.

Could I suggest that ARTC seriously consider a similar model to that used by NEXUS in the construction of the Second Range crossing. Their advisory group was genuinely listened to and very committed to the project; often being able to help disseminate the message – even when it was bad news through our own local networks. NEXUS also set the bar very high for local procurement – often exceeding the quotas set by government and in the end provided not just jobs but training and skills for our local workforce that will set them up well into the future.

I am happy to elaborate further on any of the points raised.

Kind regards

Joy McGay

President - Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce