

Submission to Inland Rail Inquiry

Background: The inland rail is proposed from Melbourne to Brisbane. This submission relates to the section from Yerlarbon to Gowrie.

Issues identified by with the Governments preferred Route:

Route Selection

The route from Melbourne to Brisbane selection is flawed.

I suspect the inland route was on the back burner for many years from when it was first thought of and at the time may have been ideal to travel to the Port Of Brisbane, but 50 years later the Port of Brisbane and the area surrounding it has built up to a point where the no more infrastructure can be added without removing something already there. In fact area around Brisbane and the port resembles more of a car park than a traffic route during the rush hour.

The table below shows that predicted truck movements without the added complication of trucks carrying containers from Inland Rail.

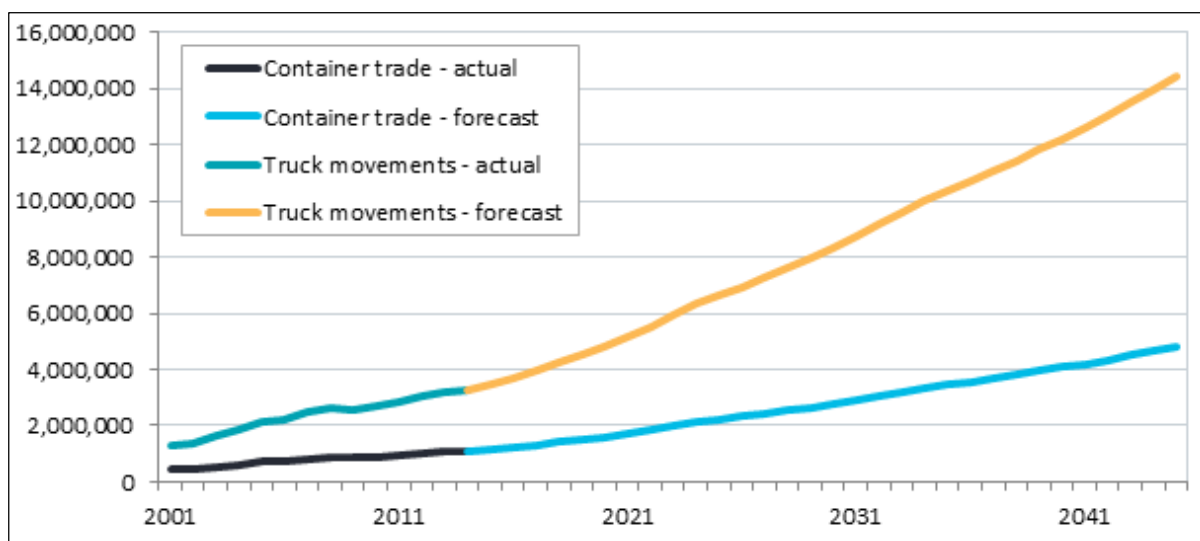


Figure Projected Container Trade and Truck Movements at the Port of Brisbane

(Source: Port of Brisbane Response to the Inquiry National Supply Chain Priorities)

The very last thing Brisbane needs right now is more traffic movement and a train line that will only increase the number of units in the area.

The Port of Brisbane has said:

“An Import/Export Logistics Chain Study, commissioned by Port of Brisbane in conjunction with Queensland Transport and the Queensland Transport and Logistics Council and released in June this year, reveals that rail moved just 5.6 per cent of all containers to and from the port.

The study indicated that more than 90 per cent of port-related containers were unpacked in Brisbane or within 100km of the port. Virtually all of these containers travelled by road to and from the port, highlighting one of the challenges for rail to obtain greater market share. Rail's challenge is that it rarely is able to compete with road over shorter distances for non-bulk business.”

The reports goes on to say:

“The pressures of urban growth have a significant impact on the Port of Brisbane. This was clearly demonstrated in the 2013 supply chain investigation by PBPL/(QTLC). Of the full and empty containers (975,000 TEUs in 2012 – now >1.2M TEU) tracked along the Port's logistics chains, 95% (97% in 2016/17) of all import/export containers were transported on road (with the balance transported by rail to and from the BMT – primarily from the Darling Downs (this service has since ceased), central Queensland and Townsville). Of the containers transported by road:

Import Containers

- About 25% are unpacked in or near the Port
- Over 60% unpacked in Brisbane, the majority being within 40km of the Port,
- Over 90% are unpacked in Brisbane or adjacent regions, the majority being within 100km of the Port

Export Containers

- About 30% are packed in or near the Port
- Over 40% are packed in Brisbane, most being within 40km of the Port
- About 75% are packed in Brisbane or adjacent regions, the majority being within 100km of the Port
- About 25% are packed in other Queensland regions (e.g. Darling Downs, and a small percentage are packed in Northern NSW).”

Congestion is a great hindrance which will only be exasperated but the long haul needed to make Inland Rail viable does not apply, with most containers delivered within 100km of port to site specific destinations.

In addition, Toowoomba is also very busy at peak times and have had the Bypass recently built which joins the A2 and ensures that freight can be trucked to the port in

2 hours and there is no logic utilizing an intermodal hub in Toowoomba taking into account the costs and time taken to reload the cargo from rail to road and vice versa.

So taking into account the speed with which items can be ferried by road it has been suggested that a port in a quiet area such as Miles which is half a day's drive to the Brisbane port and it is on route to the under utilized deep water port of Gladstone that has the capability to increase its freight load and this route would then ensure that the train whilst fully loaded did not have to navigate up one of the highest mountain ranges in the country before travelling through one of the steepest and expensive tunnel system "Estimated to be in excess of \$6 billion" to its final destination.

Over recent years it has been suggested by the trucking industry the inland route is the more suitable from all directions and a hub closer to the west and would save on time and fuel for the whole industry and be a pick up for the finances with increasing business in an area that can at times be very quiet. Should the line want to be extended north to take in some other Ports in the future it is ideally located for such an expansion.

The Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economies Research Report 139, "Why short haul intermodal services succeed", provides the distance over which rail container freight becomes viable – this distance is any distance greater 350 km's. The analysis is below:

Sweet Spot distance estimates

There are various citations for the "Sweet Spot" line haul distance, ranging from 320 kilometres through to 1 500 kilometres. For example, the Inter-State Commission (Australia) cited a 350 kilometre minimum distance for shifting containers (Inter-State Commission 1987, p. 61). Similarly, in 1988 Virginia Port Authority was a pioneer of inland ports in the USA, with an inland port at Front Royal (Virginia), operating shuttle trains between that terminal and the Port of Virginia; the rail distance is "just long enough to hit the 200-mile [320 kilometres] sweet spot needed to give rail an advantage over trucking".³ (Payne 2013, p. n/a) Other suggestions have been that intermodal is viable once the line haul length approaches 800 miles (1 280 kilometres) or longer. (Prince 2012, p. n/a)"

Connections with other freight infrastructure.

This report supports a transport hub further west with connections into existing under utilized Queensland Rail lines. This would allow access to the Port of Brisbane directly, as the narrow gauge lines goes there now, and with further development of the already approved rail corridor from Surat, access to Gladstone.

Employment.

The employment in towns in the west Queensland is dropping off in recent years and a rail building project followed by hub facility can only increase the financial wellbeing of a town if selected.

Environment and costs.

Taking into account the added expense of driving a 1.8 km's increasing to 3.6km's in time double stacked train up and down one of the highest ranges in Queensland up to 40 times a day will inevitably raise the costs or lower the profits of the provider and increase the environmental impact exponentially.

The presented route Yerlarbon to Gowrie at a recent CCC meeting on the 17 sept it was stated by an expert in the field "That the route chosen was the most undulating route out of the four that were put forward." This in itself means the maximum earthworks and expense. The route chosen is meeting some serious opposition due to numerous small farmers and homesteads affected this and may lead to some delays and add some expenses when in the planning and building phases of the project as each situation is having to be dealt with individually.

References:

<https://www.zurich.com.au/content/insurance-insights/marine-logistics/infrastructure/freight-solution-on-track.html>

https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/transport/freight/freight-supply-chain-submissions/Port_of_Brisbane_Pty_Ltd.pdf

https://www.bitre.gov.au/publications/2016/files/rr_139.pdf