

Appendix 4



GETTING IT RIGHT!

'Corridor to Coast – The Galilee Network' (C2C) respectfully submits updated views to the Deputy Premier and the Department of State Development Infrastructure and Planning on the development of a single transport infrastructure corridor from the Galilee Basin to Abbott Point:

C2C members remain concerned and frustrated by the waste in time and resources by many over the past 3 years. The ultimate goal of one multi-user corridor in the best possible alignment will mean even greater losses and disruption for those landholders eventually impacted by the determination of the corridor. Time taken now to establish the best possible outcomes will represent savings in the future.

C2C assumes that Minister Seeney has thoroughly studied the submission prepared for the meeting with the Coordinator General, Mr Keith Davies last year. The group also makes the assumption that the Minister has been informed of the issues raised at the C2C meeting with the Coordinator General and departmental staff on 30 June 2011 in Clermont.

Most important are the serious flooding problems which relate to all proposals that attempt to cross the Belyando/ Suttor River flood plains. These flooding issues were clearly evident to all participating in the visit, and the predictions and concerns of C2C members have proved to be conservative in light of the 2012 rainfall events.

The Minister must also be aware of the presence of and involvement in these meetings of representatives of all proponents at that time. Choosing to ignore the advice of C2C members, proponents have continued to pour their resources into fundamentally flawed projects. C2C has little sympathy for their wasted expenditure, but accept that the previous government in Queensland should not have allowed IFS status to be issued for these projects. (The government also chose to ignore C2C's advice against this.)

It is not only rail corridor proponents who have wasted 'significant resources'. For the past three years the approximately 100 landholders who happen to be on one or more of the proposed corridors have also wasted considerable resources on a project that has nothing to do with their core business and they are equally disappointed in the continuing delays in resolving these disruptive and costly impacts on their families and businesses. Compensation discussions entertained by this government must allow landholders equal rights to fair treatment for lost time and expenses! C2C request and expect to be included in any ongoing discussions.

C2C highlight further developments since June last year:

- **Hydrology** - Hancock/GVK has produced hydrology work that provides little comfort for affected landholders. Much of the work lacks reliable historical floodplain records and is based on limited data from individual streams with little appreciation for the combined effects of flooding across the catchments. There have been serious anomalies in the proponent's understanding of the effect small increases in flood levels will have on the extent of degradation to both pastures and infrastructure for agriculture. Because of the extreme flatness of these flood plains and the slow movement of water, even small water level rises can drastically impact vast areas of pasture lands for longer periods of time.

Without continuous bridging, no amount of pipes through the levee banks required for rail construction will be able to solve this problem.

- **Recent flooding** - In the rainfall events of the **2012 wet season**, some properties along the Waratah proposal recorded flood heights more than **1 metre higher than any previous levels**. This again exposes the recklessness of using short term records for development design.

On 15th and 16th March 2012, C2C hosted a visit from Mr Ted Parish, Rural Advisor for the Premier's Department to again inspect the proposed rail routes and provide an updated, independent assessment for the incoming government. He was able to view some of our areas of concern and has written a comprehensive report of his tour. If this has not already occurred, C2C would request the Minister and departmental officers hold urgent discussions with Mr Parish, to gain further insight into the problems that all proposed corridors will confront.

- **Engineering design** - On inspection of engineering plans for the Hancock proposal, one landholder has found **inaccuracies of about 600 mm (2 feet) over a distance of 1.8 km**. As anyone with a basic understanding of hydrology would be aware, on the expansive flood plains of these river systems, such inaccuracies could prove to be disastrous!! There has also been no recognition of road user concerns over the use of level crossings. Surely our society must recognise the continued rail crossing fatality record and affirm that over-pass or under-pass facilities must become standard practice.
- **New Players** - Since the time of C2C's previous submission, new proponents for both mining and infrastructure corridors have emerged. There is now a high likelihood of a continuous network of mining operations from south of Alpha to north of Carmichael, with both the Vale and Macmines operations likely to progress, all on the western side of the Belyando River.

It is not feasible for all coal to be railed south to Alpha then North to Abbott Point. Recognised as environmental suicide to allow multiple crossings of the Belyando/Suttor river systems, the only logical conclusion is to rail coal North through the Galilee Basin and cross the river systems **ONCE**, where all the waters have come together.

This would indicate that of all proposals at this point in time, only the original northern route from Adani, or the new "Iron Boomerang" proposal (with it's western route most favourable), are capable of satisfying alternate land use or environmental requirements.

- **Visionary Planning** - In the recent State elections, one of the platforms espoused by the LNP to win government was **"to double agricultural production by 2040"** - a noble endeavour that becomes more difficult as more agricultural land is taken for mining. One of the visionary discussions raised previously by C2C was the enormous intensive agricultural potential of the Belyando River floodplains. In a departmental study conducted in the early 1990s, an area of approximately 500,000 hectares was deemed suitable.

Minister Seeney would also be aware that Sunwater is investigating a 1.5m diameter pipeline to take water from the Burdekin Dam and new Connors River Dam to supply the

Galilee coal mines. This is expected to supply 25,000 ML of water per year, with Hancock listed as requiring 20,000 ML and 500 ML for the town of Alpha. This leaves just 4,500 ML to satisfy the rest of this massive mining expansion - all for **an initial cost estimate of \$650M**. C2C continues to urge investigation of constructing a dam in the ranges South from Alpha, for both mining and potential irrigation of the Belyando flood plain. It seems an extremely energy inefficient process to allow this water to flow down to the Burdekin Dam only to then pump the water back to the headwaters to be used.

Federal Opposition's Water & Infrastructure Taskforce have recently been studying the Gulf regions for agricultural **potential**. It would be in the interests of the Queensland economy to also investigate this region's irrigation capacity, with potential for federal support, once a change in government occurs at the national level. This potential would clearly be jeopardised if the present corridors across the flood plains are allowed to proceed, as can clearly be demonstrated from the highly successful irrigation scheme funded and developed by the Hall family at "Willesley" and "Laurel Hills" north of Clermont.

Costly Mistakes - Advice from C2C has consistently been to place any transport corridors outside the Belyando/Suttor flood plains and this has been consistently ignored. Much investigative work remains to be completed, including accurate on-ground engineering work, complete and accurate hydrology studies, compensation discussions for presently unknown impacts on alternate land use and environmental degradation and the continuing expenditure that will be required as new mining operations come on line.

Better governance by the previous administration would have reduced the considerable expenditure by proponents and landholders to date, by directing the resources to a common worthy goal.

The fiasco of the Traveston Dam shows the cost the State may inherit from poor initial planning. Population centres like Emerald, Theodore, Roma, St George, Withcott, as well as rail and road infrastructure in areas like Rolleston and Comet here in Central Queensland, would have benefitted greatly in both minimising ongoing costs and improving reliability if more time had been spent in the initial development phase to **"get it right first time."**

C2C again offers our commitment to Government to assist in achieving this outcome. The precious commodity of our time would be available to host another visit to this region by the Premier, Deputy Premier, Coordinator General or anyone in this government, to engender a better understanding of potential environmental and agricultural infrastructure damage and to facilitate correct decisions for the long term future of this region and the State of Queensland.

We request the opportunity for C2C to remain an integral part of the decision making process.
C2C – The Galilee Network will continue efforts to ensure there is

'ONE CORRIDOR CONSTRUCTED IN THE BEST POSSIBLE PLACE'

John Burnett
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On behalf of the C2C Steering Committee