

Date: 6 October 2017

Mr John Fullerton  
Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director  
ARTC  
11 Sir Donald Bradman Drive  
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Dear John

It was exciting to learn the long awaited announcement by Minister Chester recently that a final route had been confirmed for the Border to Gowrie section of the Inland Rail. Our council is a long-term supporter of this project and is keen to see the project proceed sooner rather than later. We acknowledge that there is a long journey ahead in refinement and minor adjustments and look forward to seeing it all come to fruition.

The Goondiwindi Regional Council has held back somewhat due mainly to the extra Queensland options that were thrown into the mix at a very late stage and advice from local ARTC engineers at the time that no further exploration would be investigated until a final route had been established made sense.

Now that the decision has been made to cross the Condamine Flood Plain, our council has a strong opinion, which relates to the alignment through the underutilised State forest area to the North West of Inglewood. One of the four suggested routes (attached) is our Councils preference rather than the base case, which segregates 41 landholders in the Goondiwindi Regional Council area and possibly as many again in the fertile area of Bringalilly, which is in the adjoining Toowoomba Regional council area.

I stress these minor adjustments have not been decided by any form of engineering expertise but more a case of doing all possible to avoid prime agricultural land. Neither has any consideration been given to the effect of landholders or obstacles in the adjoining Toowoomba Regional Council in suggesting these routes.

From the map, you will see the Base case is the **black line**.

We have suggested two alternative routes using forestry country (**red and light blue**) both of which have two alternative entry points in the Toowoomba Regional Council (**dark blue**).

The **red line** option would appear on the surface to be most beneficial to both council area landholders by avoiding the majority of Inglewood and Bringalilly landholders. As explained earlier, we have little information on the Toowoomba Regional Council end as to whether it is best to head close to Millmerran (but still avoiding the town) or taking a ridge through Bringalilly to the nearby Power Station.

The **light blue** option would achieve the desired result for Goondiwindi Regional Council landholders but not the Bringalilly area.

As previously mentioned, we see this as a minor change – not a redirection and request that ARTC explore all possibilities and avoid the senseless segregation of prime agricultural land.

Another point we request be given urgent consideration is the floodplain designs that are going to affect people on those floodplains. Obviously, there is severe resentment because little design information is available to the public. I need to stress this is not confined to the Condamine Flood Plain but in our case, the Goondiwindi Floodplain (both sides of the border, the junction of three major rivers) is of major concern. In this case, it is also highlighted by the fact that the border sees two different divisions of ARTC completing the design construction. The indication to date given to those in affected areas has been that earth mounds will be the primary use of elevation in these floodplains. This is very unacceptable and only world best practise will suffice when it comes to crossing floodplains.

The construction of the 1938 NSW rail line from records indicates problems were incurred with obstructions and diversion of water and once again with the upgrade of the same line in the 1970's. The only acceptable solution to railway crossing floodplains is a bridge style elevated design, which while expensive, is the only solution. The use of the word Viaducts has been bandied around and this also causes some concern as when Viaduct is Googled, it shows some sort of historical archway allowing a stream to flow through – not a flood.

To gain public acceptance, it is essential that these floodplain designs are addressed and explained immediately – not 18 months' time or I fear there will be massive backlash to proposals.

Finally, I am not of the opinion that the economic benefits of such infrastructure like this to a town of Goondiwindi has been fully assessed. It has always been the opinion Goondiwindi Regional Council and I am sure Moree Plains Shire Council that the better entry point into Queensland would have been closer to Boggabilla, which was mooted in all the early discussions. I do not believe that enough consideration has been given to segregating extremely valuable irrigation country as well as the economic benefits to the district. Already we understand the essential feeder line from Inland Rail to Goondiwindi has slipped off the radar. This oversight is being investigated by ARTC and we understand a business case is being prepared for this issue. The town of Warwick will now encounter a similar problem.

Another suggestion we have for the success of the Inland Rail would be to forfeit the concept of a dual gauge line from Toowoomba to the border and replace it with a standard gauge upgraded line all the way to Thallon where there are enormous quantities of grain mainly heading to the Port of Brisbane grown.

Which raises our last point. The whole concept seems totally wasted unless direct access to the Port of Brisbane is available to users. Double handling is a thing of the past and we strongly suggest that ARTC and the Queensland Government enter immediate discussions to secure that access.

We remain supportive of the concept but do believe we need to get it right. It is our opinion that these suggestions may add to the success of the great Inland Rail.

I will forward copies of this letter to The Premier of Qld, Minister Chester, Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce, Local State and Federal Members and Mayors of Toowoomba Regional Council, Southern Downs Council, Balonne Shire and Moree Plains Shire Council just to inform them all of our suggestions.

We would be keen to meet with you at some stage to discuss our suggestions. Many thanks for taking the time to explore our suggestions.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Scheu'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'G' being particularly large and stylized.

**Cr Graeme Scheu**  
Mayor  
Goondiwindi Regional Council