

*c) review the processes for selecting the Inland Rail route to confirm it is fit for purpose and has considered both impacts and potential broader economic benefits to regional economies and communities;*

I wish to submit a query as to why, it would appear, local reports have been summarily dismissed. These locally produced reports have been developed by professional local people such as Soil Conservation specialists from the local Toowoomba Dept of Primary Industries together with hydrologists who have been on ground assessing the impacts of construction of this rail line. My understanding is that these specialists have lived and worked in this area for many years and have seen the impact of flooding across the area over many decades.

Local knowledge needs to be seriously considered to ensure that when project managers looking at topographical mapping from somewhere in Canberra, Melbourne or the like that they are getting a full picture of what has happened on ground in the past. Can you please ensure that local knowledge has been appropriately considered in making a final decision for the crossing of the floodplains but in particular the Condamine Floodplain.

My other concern is that the cost of this massive project has grown and I wonder if it will be done to cost or it will be done to the standard necessary for it to be successful. I raised my concern about the cost of going in to Brisbane. As no doubt you are aware the deficit is growing to enormous proportions and there is an option that could still make the Inland Rail a viable project.

The original proposal of the line to terminate at Gladstone should be seriously considered now rather than as an add on at some later point. This would be a much more economical proposition than going in to Brisbane at this stage. It would eliminate the considerable cost of tunnelling through the Range at Toowoomba, together with the Liverpool ranges and other thoughts that are being considered to get to the port. Gladstone is a very good port and costs associated to get there would be much less than trying to go in to Brisbane.

I believe that ARTC have been led to a decision and aren't prepared to listen to any alternative suggestions as to how this project could be more economical as well as more effective in its delivery of better freight opportunities in Australia. I ask the question also has the idea of having a 24 hour window in which freight will be delivered from one state to another been a driving force by which this route has been taken and the original proposed route sidelined. I cannot see where the 24 hours trip can be achieved considering that there are sites at which they will be picking up or dropping off freight. It takes these trains considerable time to slow down and then regain their cruising speed, together with unforeseen delays along the route caused by factors outside of any train control clerks ability. Has the route also been chosen to satisfy the lobbying by significant personalities like the Wagner Family here in Toowoomba.

Original cost when proposed was, from memory, \$4billion. Now it is according to

your figures \$15billion. What will be the final cost, because there will blow outs that have not been factored in.

I am not sure if you are aware of the issues that the Toowoomba Bypass incorporating the recently completed Second Range crossing that was built by Nexus as the major contractor. This road was built to take the semi trailer traffic out of Toowoomba city and enabling those trucks to avoid the 18 sets of traffic lights that they encountered on the way. They are having significant issues with some of the cuttings on the range that are likely to result in rock falls and so causing the east bound road to be unusable for the last two weeks to the 11th November and likely to continue beyond the next week. Is this instability of the geology of the area where a very long tunnel will be constructed going to be an ongoing concern for heavy rail freight going through the mountain and possibly causing damage to the built tunnelling?

Might this not be another reason to have the line to Gladstone be more favourably considered and still use Toowoomba as an intermodal centre. Or as I had suggested in my original letter to Minister King have the line go from Goondiwindi through Miles and on to Gladstone and develop Miles as the intermodal centre. This then also satisfies the opportunity to develop regional communities and especially one that has in the past relied on the agricultural industry and more recently the Gas developments in the Surat Basin.