Dear Dr Schott,

I have had a great interest in this project for a number of years, from an engineering, cost, and benefits aspects.
In recent years I have also acquired computer records of a civil engineer who did a lot of the work on the northern N.S.W. sections of the route.

I have a background in design and development, supply, costing, project planning and management. I was a Fellow of both the Institute of Purchasing and Supply Management, and the Australian Institute of Materials Management. Since retiring I have also been a member of the Community Discussion group - Technical and Engineering for the North East Link project in Melbourne working to assist VicRoads provide the best project within the confines of the Reference Design (of which I personally contributed many items that considerably solved problems and reduced costs.

I would also like to point out that a holiday house I built in Euroa, and lived in permanently for 4 years, as well as the past 3 years I have spent over 40 days and nights in Euroa finalising a deceased estate.
I must declare that I am a member of the Liberal Party, and in this instance I am speaking as a private individual.

So to the Inland Rail, a project that I believe is extremely necessary for the movement of goods between Melbourne and Queensland, and the movement of goods from intermediary areas to the Capital markets and Ports, and to reduce Road Freight and hence maintenance costs,

I believe that when the project was proposed that the expected transit time between Melbourne and Brisbane was anticipated would need to be in the region of 16 to hours maximum to be competitive with road freight. The last I have heard the expected transit times are expected to be in the vicinity of 24 to 26 hours,which would be non-competitive with road freight and defeat the economic benefits.

From what I can see there are a number of factors causing this with the existing plan.

1.The Ports access at both Melbourne and Brisbane is severely limited by the capacity for additional tracks to provide for the additional Inland Rail traffic, which will cause extreme bottlenecks.

2. The location and types of Intermodal Transfer Centres were not determined, and are still subject to discussion.

3. Track speeds were sacrificed to cut costs.

4. The noise, vibration, and visual impacts on towns shall be compromised, again to cut costs.

5. Initial proposed traffic volumes and train sizes are not reflected in the existing plans.

6. It appears the plan is mainly for the movement of Containers between Melbourne and Brisbane on double stacked trains, whereas most of the intermodal traffic outside the Capitals will be bulk commodities.

7. Nowhere among any information can I find any study on the stability risk assessments due to the

higher centre of gravity.

8.The plans are for the tracks to only have a capability of a maximum speed of 160kmh.

9. The use of the existing Melbourne - Sydney Standard Gauge line is extremely short-sighted, and will create many problems.

There are many things that come to mind as things that need to be done to make this a much better, reliable, cost effective project, and this may require spending more money up front to achieve long-term benefits.

My motivation is nothing more than making this the best possible project for the benefits of all Australians, and do not expect any personal gain myself, other than that of all members of our country.

What are the things that I believe need to be reviewed and changed using the original project criteria of fast and cheaper than road.

1. Terminate at different Port locations , e.g. Maryborough in Queensland, and possibly Port Wilson in Victoria (close access to an international airport) to remove Brisbane and Melbourne Port access bottleneck problems.

2. Intermodal Centres should be located at End of line Terminals, Regional Road Junction towns, and Rail Junctions.

3. Intermodal Centres should not be on the main through lines but on through sidings away from the main line.

4. That Intermodal Centres be located at least 2 kilometres away from residential areas and that planning restrictions prevent any residential development within that area.

5. That all tracks are duplicated (separate up and down tracks, not passing loops)

6. The tracks should be constructed using double bracing which will allow for higher speeds (up to 200kph +), and better stability. using double bracing should cost in the vicinity of 15 to 20% more than the normal tracks but allow higher speeds and greater efficiency, which would recover the extra cost over a number of years.

7. That across areas where floods have occurred, that bridges and culverts are used, not embankments (that cause worse flooding and erosion).

8. That all main tracks bypass the existing residential areas with only passenger trains using existing tracks into towns unless not stopping at that town. In most cases, and particularly in Victoria the lines should bypass the towns to the west. The main track should be at least 2 kilometres from the existing town limits and no future residential properties should be allowed within 2 kilometres of the track.

9. Point 8 shall reduce the noise and vibration impacts.

10. These changes would save on the necessity to raise bridges, or lower tracks, and noise abatement measures through residential areas.

Lionel Cunningham
[redacted]