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10 November 2022

Dr Kerry Schott AO
Independent Review of Inland Rail
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601



Mayor Darren Power
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Dear Dr Schott

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF INLAND RAIL

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Independent Review of Inland Rail regarding community consultation processes in relation to this project.

Logan City Council first began to express formally our concerns regarding the potential adverse impacts of the Kagaru to Acacia Ridge and Bromelton (K2ARB) section of the Inland Rail project in August 2017. At this time, Council passed a resolution that the Mayor write to Federal and State government ministers regarding our concerns in relation to the potential increase in noise, dust, and emissions from the proposed Inland Rail project. Since that time, Council has written several times to State and Federal ministers and members of Parliament regarding our concerns, and also participated in the Senate inquiry into the project, including providing a written submission and appearing before the Committee.

After diligently participating in Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) consultation processes, as well as listening to the views of stakeholders, Council's concerns regarding K2ARB have not abated and, in fact, have only increased. Moreover, we believe that our concerns are justified by the conclusions of the Senate report, *Inland Rail: derailed from the start*.

Potential Impact on Inland Rail on the City of Logan

The rail line section of concern to Council, K2ARB, comprises 49 kms of track to be constructed within an existing rail corridor, predominantly in the Logan City Council local government area. To enable Inland Rail to meet its freight transport goals, this corridor needs to be modified to provide sufficient height and width to support the safe operation of double-stacked freight trains, incorporating dual gauge operations along the existing interstate route.

As you are aware, the planned freight capacity increase of Inland Rail is to be achieved by quadrupling the current number of train runs, double stacking carriages and operating longer (up to 1.8km in length) freight trains. These trains will be moving at speeds of over 80 kms/hr to achieve the transit time target of 24 hours.

Fundamental to the concerns of Council and our residents is that K2ARB passes through a densely populated section of the city including the State-approved Greater Flagstone Priority Development Area (PDA), which will house 120,000 people when complete. With almost 38,000 people expected to be living within 1 kilometre of the rail corridor by 2041, both Council and residents have significant concerns regarding the potential impacts of K2ARB, including increased noise, vibration and emissions caused by the proposed increase in the frequency of freight services and the use of longer and double-stacked trains.

Council is also concerned by the potential adverse impact of K2ARB on the proposed future Salisbury to Beaudesert Passenger Rail Project (S2B), which shares the same corridor as K2ARB. A summary of our advocacy priorities regarding managing the impacts of K2ARB is provided in Attachment A.



The need for consultation on the South-East Queensland terminus

The Senate report highlighted, among other things, the rapidly escalating costs of the project and the need for a review of the original business case. Part of the justification for this review included questions surrounding the suitability of Acacia Ridge as an end terminal for the rail line and the yet to be completed study into options for South-East Queensland end terminals.

The Senate report noted confusion as to how a business case can be relied upon if the end point of the Inland Rail, and therefore the costs involved, are still to be decided. The report further noted that the Department of Infrastructure clarified that Bromelton, Acacia Ridge, Ebenezer and two sites in Toowoomba are all under consideration as termination points in South-East Queensland.

Council cannot agree more strongly with the need for reconsideration of Acacia Ridge as a termination point for Inland Rail and, in December 2021, passed the following resolution:

- 1. That Council considers that Acacia Ridge cannot be regarded as a viable terminus of the Inland Rail Project and opposes the construction of the Kagaru to Acacia Ridge component of K2ARB as it is currently planned.*
- 2. That Council advocates that the Federal Government engages with stakeholders in an open, transparent, and rigorous investigation of alternatives to the Kagaru to Acacia Ridge component of the Inland Rail route.*

Although we welcome your review of the Inland Rail project, we do not believe that it will meet the requirement for engaging with stakeholders in an 'open, transparent and rigorous investigation' of alternatives to the Kagaru to Acacia Ridge section of Inland Rail, as neither Council nor the Logan community have been consulted on the ramifications of the different termination points for our city. This not only includes the potential impacts of an expansion of the Acacia Ridge terminal, but also the potential impacts of an expansion of the Bromelton terminal to the south of Logan which would heavily impact key Logan transport links, including the Mt Lindesay Highway.

Finally, Council notes that there has not been a clear process for the private sector to put forward alternative terminal and route options to the ones being developed by the State and Federal governments. One example is the PortConnex proposal for an underground tunnel from Ebenezer to the Port of Brisbane.

Federal and State governments need to understand and accept that until people can have confidence that there has been a proper assessment of alternatives to the Acacia Ridge termination point, no amount of 'consultation' will allay community and stakeholder concerns and frustration regarding the currently proposed Inland Rail route. From the point of the Logan community – and many other communities in South-East Queensland – the currently proposed route was ill-conceived from the beginning and needs to be completely rethought.

Approval pathway for K2ARB

With the decision by the Queensland Coordinator-General not to declare K2ARB a coordinated project, the approval pathway for K2ARB is now to be determined by the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR). Thus far, TMR has not engaged with Council or our community on the approval pathway for the project and, in particular, if its assessment of the impacts of the project will be conducted with the same transparency, independence and rigour as the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process being used for all other sections of the Inland Rail project in Queensland.

It is Council's view that an EIS is the best way to ensure that potential impacts are investigated, and appropriate mitigation measures are put in place, to manage the anticipated increase in noise, vibration, and dust levels. A proper EIS will also give Logan residents more confidence that the project will be delivered to the highest environmental standards and that due care has been taken to ensure that disruptions to their quality of life are minimised.

Community consultation by the ARTC

Council acknowledges that the ARTC has endeavoured to consult with our community on K2ARB, including establishing a Community Consultative Committee. To date, we do not believe that these consultation processes have been successful.

Council representatives have regularly attended Consultative Committee meetings and have found that these meetings are often repetitive in content. Where the ARTC has provided information at these meetings, it has often been too technical to be easily understood by community members or seemed to be irrelevant to participants. Moreover, the ARTC has either not been prepared to, and/or able to, answer questions that have been put to them by community members.

Council is concerned that our community is increasingly feeling 'consultation fatigue', as they believe they are not being listened to or understood by the ARTC when they raise their concerns. In some cases, community members have given up participating in consultation processes due to the lack of empathy for their concerns and tangible solutions.

Finally, we acknowledge that the ARTC has made efforts to consult with Council officers on technical matters. However, ARTC offers to meet with either me and/or divisional councillors have sometimes not been taken up, as the ARTC could seemingly not answer the questions that we believe need to be answered.

Once again, Council thanks you for the opportunity to provide a submission to your inquiry. Please understand that we remain deeply concerned by the potential impact of the Inland Rail project on our community and are profoundly sceptical that the Inland Rail route, as currently proposed, is the right one. As it stands, Inland Rail will simply pass through the City of Logan, leaving our community with no benefits, only never-ending costs.

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Yours sincerely



Mayor Darren Power
Logan City Council

