



**Australian Government**

**Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities**

**Secretary  
Dr Steven Kennedy PSM**

*PDR ID: EC19-000184*

Senator Barry O'Sullivan  
Chair  
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator O'Sullivan

**Update, Senate Estimates Evidence - Inland Rail Alignment Map**

At the Additional Budget Estimates hearing conducted by the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee on Monday 18 February 2019, I undertook to the Committee to conduct an investigation into a map referenced by Senator Glenn Sterle during his questioning.

The relevant dialogue is on page 47 of the proof Hansard:

**Dr Kennedy:** So, in the brief itself, there is an inconsistency between the map at Attachment A and the maps elsewhere. We're going to have to investigate this fully, of course. The department, not the ARTC, picked up the map at Attachment A... I will go and investigate the error subsequently, but I can give you assurance that, to the best of our knowledge at this point, the maps that the Minister signed off on—all the maps referred to in the correspondence between the chair and all the Ministers and the Minister's own correspondence to the New South Wales Minister, and then subsequently the map that was distributed by the ARTC to the National Farmers' Federation—are all correct and consistent with each other.

I would like to update the Committee on the preliminary investigation. I have determined that, as indicated in the Hansard proof, the wrong map was inserted by my department at Attachment A of the brief to which Senator Sterle referred, being the brief numbered MS17-002171, dated 26 October 2017.

The preliminary investigation has not revealed any other reference in brief MS17-002171 to the incorrect map, nor any reference in the brief to any other incorrect map. Notwithstanding this, I can confirm to the Committee that the relevant division of my department is undertaking a review of mapping processes and standards in order to prevent this issue from occurring again.

I would also like to confirm that the remainder of the brief both in particular the recommendation, in text and in supporting documentation correctly identified the Inland Rail segment that was the subject of the brief, namely the Australian Rail Track Corporation's (ARTC's) preferred Narromine to Narrabri Corridor.

I also draw the Committees attention to ARTC's Preferred Corridor Report, Attachment E of brief MS 17-002171 that clearly explains throughout the report the correct preferred corridor and contains the correct maps (refer pages 7, 29, 36, 37 and 69).

Subsequent to the brief, the then Minister for Infrastructure and Transport wrote to his counterpart in the NSW Government clearly identifying the correct preferred corridor. ARTC also subsequently updated its publicly available information with the correct corridor.

Given the extensive reference to the correct maps, the descriptions about the preferred corridor, and the subsequent actions, it is my assessment that the Australian Government was suitably informed about the Narromine to Narrabri preferred corridor.

In relation to transparency and consultation with the community, ARTC has published considerable information regarding the refinement and selection of the preferred corridor including technical analysis contained in the various Multi-Criteria Analysis Reports undertaken for this section.

Further, the Government has asked ARTC to continue to place community engagement at the centre of their route alignment considerations. In addition to the consultation that ARTC has already undertaken, I am advised that ARTC is conducting community information sessions along the alignment as the corridor is refined to a much narrower 40-65m track placement and continues to have one-on-one landowner meetings to both gather and provide information.

Consistent with the State's Significant Infrastructure requirements, ARTC has also recently established three community consultative committees for the Narromine to Narrabri region to ensure ongoing community engagement through the route refinement process. ARTC is also required to comply with the states statutory planning requirements and will undertake an Environmental Impact Statement for this section of the line.

I am at your disposal if further follow-up on this matter is required by the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Dr Steven Kennedy

 March 2019