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To: Committee Secretary for Senate Inquiry into Inland Rail

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Inland Rail “Wellcamp to Gowrie”

There are four farmers in a row starting at my property and heading west, north of dry creek, that will not allow ARTC access, which may weaken the EIS in this area. **The strategic cropping land zoning in this area seems to be meaningless when the current corridor traverses river flats (self mulching black soil) north of Dry creek and cuts at least 4 neighbouring farms off (in my immediate area) from their irrigation wells/bores on Dry Creek.** The irrigation bores/wells on ‘Dry creek’ are known for their rapid recharge capacity from the dry creek aquifer. This is because 10mm of rain in Toowoomba can translate into 30 megalitres down dry creek, (westerly water flow).

It appears, that an ‘established asset’ like this for farmers and Australians does not hold any value, compared to the route selection for inland rail. As Eastern Australia is currently experiencing its worst drought on record and reliable potable water for food production should have consideration above all else. I am sure the residents and farmers of ‘Stanthorpe’ south of Toowoomba ‘who have run out of water’, would agree. If new bores are to be sunk many hundreds of meters away from Dry Creek they are unlikely to be as good. **‘Water infrastructure’, better roads and bridges is what our nation needs first and foremost! And then, upgraded existing rail tracks.**

Naturally I am preoccupied with my little area, which is small in the grand scheme, however the issues raised remain potent, as it is a microcosm of the problems in planning and implementation of inland rail. This has been a typical theme of ARTC and Michael McCormack, its as if big business and big projects are the sole contributors to Australia’s prosperity and farming properties and their ‘economic contribution’ and ‘benefit to social cohesion’ are just something that’s in the way of an illogical rail line, or in the case of very many small to medium sized businesses in regional towns through Queensland and NSW, something to bypass. We need to be better than this.

Why are the economics illogical? It is not economic to pick up goods by truck and transport them to an inland rail depot (where they exist?), then load them onto an inland train, then off load them again and transport these same goods to there final destination. Trucks are efficient from ‘door to door’, so to speak.

This is evidenced by the many old un-used rail lines in NSW and the very many trucking companies that exist today. This is also why its propaganda to say that farmers will benefit from inland rail. Bulk goods that need to be containerised for international freight through logistic hubs like Toowoomba’s Interlink can be done, door to door, for example from the farmers harvester to a logistic hub via truck. Up-graded existing brownfield rail lines would also play a roll here.

In summary, there is an injustice in motion being committed against farmers, interlink sponsors, Toowoomba residents, Kingsthorpe residents and most importantly the Australian Taxpayer. This injustice has been cloaked behind a veil of ARTC marketing, very questionable ARTC design limitations, coalition government motherhood statements, national party political posturing, illogical economics and big business strategic positioning. I am also suspicious that the cost of the project will more than likely double or triple to what has been stated. Do the Australian taxpayers have to suffer another NBN? *It is also sad that many people adversely impacted by inland rail will not put in a submission as they are worried about ‘blowback’ when it comes to compensation.*

Yours Sincerely
Rob Rich