

31 January 2014

Dr Bill Pender
Inquiry Secretary
Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Pender

Re: Fitzroy Agricultural Corridor

The Fitzroy Agricultural Corridor was developed as part of the Fitzroy Industry and Infrastructure Study. Initially this project involved the following partners:

- Department of State Development
- Fitzroy Shire Council
- Rockhampton City Council
- Stanwell Corporation Limited
- Rockhampton Regional Development Limited

Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries and Department of Infrastructure later became partners and Livingstone Shire Council joined in 2005/06.

In general, the study recommended the further development of the Gracemere-Stanwell Industrial Corridor and the creation of the Fitzroy Agricultural Corridor (FAC), in an area about 10km beside the Fitzroy River between the junction of the Dawson and McKenzie Rivers and the Fitzroy River barrage.

I'm attaching a copy of the project CD which contains copies of the recommendations, reports, accompanying maps and fact sheets. I'm also attaching a project synopsis.

The FAC has nine precincts with precincts 4-8 located within the Rockhampton Region.

The agricultural corridor was expected to focus on intensive livestock industries, particularly beef cattle feedlots. Some horticultural developments were also expected.

The industrial plants to process the produce produced in the agricultural corridor were to be based in the Gracemere-Stanwell Industrial Corridor.

Council wishes to bring the existence of the Fitzroy Agricultural Corridor to the attention of the Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia which has started an inquiry to identify future economic growth in Northern Australia and urge development of the Corridor.

The FAC lies north of the Tropic of Capricorn and is part of the area for which the Joint Select Committee is responsible.


From Council's perspective the FAC is one project which needs to come to fruition if Australia is to achieve its goal of developing a Northern Australian food bowl capable of making a major contribution to the doubling of the nation's agricultural output by 2030.

Member for Capricornia, Ms Michelle Landry MP, has urged Council and other Rockhampton civic leaders to put forward developments such as FAC for consideration by the Joint Select Committee.

The Queensland Government has announced a similar objective to one being considered by the Joint Select Committee as it wishes to double the State's agricultural production by 2040.

I'm part of a Council delegation which is to meet with the Queensland Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry, the Hon Dr John McVeigh MP, on 13 February 2014 to draw his attention to the Fitzroy Industry and Infrastructure Study and to discuss actions to forward it with the Queensland Government.

Yours sincerely



Margaret Strelow
Mayor
Rockhampton Region

Fitzroy Agricultural Corridor

The Fitzroy Agricultural Corridor was developed as part of the Fitzroy Industry and Infrastructure Study which started in 2002 and was concluded in 2007.

Fitzroy Industry and Infrastructure Study (FIIS)

Initially this project involved the following partners:

- Department of State Development
- Fitzroy Shire Council
- Rockhampton City Council
- Stanwell Corporation Limited
- Rockhampton Regional Development Limited

The Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries and Department of Infrastructure later became partners and Livingstone Shire Council joined in 2005/06.

The project was undertaken to develop an agreed position on the industrial development opportunities of the Lower Fitzroy Basin and its infrastructure requirements. This was to result in an action/ sequencing plan for industrial development, infrastructure provision and investment attraction.

In general, the study recommended the further development of the Gracemere-Stanwell Industrial Corridor and the creation of the Fitzroy Agricultural Corridor (FAC), in an area about 10km beside the Fitzroy River between the junction of the Dawson and McKenzie Rivers to form the Fitzroy River and the Fitzroy River barrage.

The FAC has nine precincts which are identified on the attached CD. Precincts 1-3 are in the Livingstone Shire, precincts 4-8 in the Rockhampton Region and precinct 9 in the Central Highlands Region.

The agricultural corridor was expected to focus on intensive livestock industries, particularly beef cattle feedlots. Some horticultural developments were also expected.

The industrial plants to process the produce produced in the agricultural corridor were to be based in the Gracemere-Stanwell Industrial Corridor.

Reports

The project produced substantial technical work and resulted in the development of the following reports:

- a) Economic Evaluation, volume 1, Assessment of Direct Economic Inputs by Economic Associates
- b) Economic Evaluation, volume 2, Cost Benefit Analysis by Economic Associates
- c) Industrial Development Study by KPMG
- d) Human Health Risk Analysis by GHD
- e) Animal Heat Stress Risk Analysis by Keystone Environmental
- f) Land Suitability Study by GHD
- g) Nutrient Export Risk Analysis by GHD

Copies of these reports, accompanying maps and fact sheets are included on the CD.

Information Sheets

Nine information sheets were prepared which were used as part of the study's community consultation. These involved:

- a) Study overview
- b) Development of the proposed plan
- c) Summary results of the technical studies
- d) Beef cattle feedlots
- e) Feedlot approval process
- f) Feedlot assessment and environmental impact
- g) Gracemere-Stanwell Industrial Corridor
- h) Infrastructure development
- i) Landholder options for the agricultural corridor

Community Consultation

The Queensland DPI consulted with the precinct landholders and with primary producers generally once the study was completed in 2007.

While there was good general interest, these consultations did not immediately result in the development of any beef feedlots or any new horticultural ventures.

Fitzroy AgInvest Summit

QDPI and Council held the Fitzroy AgInvest Summit, which was based on the study's material, at the DEEDI Conference Centre at Yeppoon Road, Rockhampton on 30 June 2010 to stimulate further interest.

Speakers included:

- a) Peter Donaghy from DEEEDI spoke on the Fitzroy agribusiness precincts (formerly the nine Fitzroy Agricultural Corridor precincts)
- b) Australian Agricultural Company provided a feedlotter's perspective about the precincts
- c) Teys Bros provided a meat processor's perspective
- d) Department of Environment & Resource Management spoke about Fitzroy Basin water management
- e) Harvest Capital Partners spoke on equity investment in Australian agriculture

This summit was attended by almost 50 people and resulted in significant additional interest.

Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia

This Joint Select Committee has started an inquiry to identify future economic growth in Northern Australia for sectors including agriculture, defence and tourism.

The committee is considering new initiatives to develop parts of Australia which lie north of the Tropic of Capricorn. FAC is located within this area.

One of the goals suggested for the Joint Select Committee is the development of a food bowl, including premium produce, in Northern Australia which could make a major contribution to Australia doubling its agricultural output by 2030.

The case for the FAC, which can make a significant contribution towards the attainment of the agricultural produce goal, should be included in such an inquiry to ensure the concept is on the table and can be included if government funding is available in the future.