



SUBMISSION BY InvestWEST

to

Inquiry into Public Passenger Transport Infrastructure and Services
Senate Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

1. The InvestWEST Alliance of Councils is a Local Government Partnership embracing Ipswich City Council, Lockyer Valley Regional Council, Scenic Rim Regional Council, Somerset Regional Council and Toowoomba Regional Council.
2. InvestWEST covers an area of 25,970 square kilometres representing 73% of the SEQ and Toowoomba Region area.
3. The population of InvestWEST, currently 390,000, is projected to grow to 824,000 by 2031.
4. InvestWEST is grateful for the opportunity to provide the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee with our Councils issues and priorities in respect of Public Transport.
5. The Submission of the Council of Mayors addresses the SEQ-wide requirements in respect of Public Transport and InvestWEST supports the broad thrust of the COM Submission.
6. However, there is a need to highlight two key equally important challenges facing the InvestWEST Councils.
7. Our **first challenge** is the development of Public Transport Network for the SEQ Western Growth Corridor – the area covered by the InvestWEST Councils.
8. The population of South East Queensland is forecast to grow to 4.3 million people by 2031. The Queensland Government has explicitly acknowledged that the Western Growth Corridor will play a significant role in accommodating that growth:
“An increased proportion of the region’s future population will be accommodated in the western and south-western corridors, making use of significant areas of available land and reducing pressure on the coast.” Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan, 2009-2031, p.10
9. The SEQ Infrastructure Plan and Program, 2008-2009 also recognises the Western Corridor as a priority area:

“Greenfield development sites (or large areas of undeveloped land) will be contained within the urban footprint by supplying infrastructure to support priority areas such as the Western Corridor.” South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program 2008-2009, Queensland Government, p.10

10. The managed growth of the Western Corridor is critical to the decentralisation of population and employment away from Coastal SEQ. An effective and efficient Public Transport Network for the Corridor is one of the keys enabling our Councils to manage growth.
11. New population and employment growth areas will be coming on line in the near future. A significant reduction in the use of cars can be achieved if planning and investment in public transport systems is undertaken **now** for such areas as Beaudesert, Canungra and Bromelton in the Scenic Rim Regional Council Area, Ripley Valley, Ebenezer and Purga in Ipswich City, Gatton North and Plainland in the Lockyer Valley Regional Council Area; Lowood and Fernvale in Somerset Regional Council; and Charlton-Wellcamp in Toowoomba Regional Council Area.
12. Public Transport Connectivity within Ipswich and between Ipswich and Scenic Rim, Lockyer and Somerset, is a critical issue for growth management.
13. Ipswich is already facing rapid urban growth. In 2006-07, Ipswich (and the Gold Coast) were the fastest growing LGAs in SEQ, both growing by 3.5% annually. The Ipswich East Statistical Local Area (SLA), which includes Springfield, added 3,700 people to its population during 2006-07 and was the largest growing SLA in Queensland. As a result, the Ipswich Region is already experiencing a huge Public Transport task.
14. However that task is continuing to grow. Ipswich has the two largest master-planned communities in Australia: Springfield and Ripley. Springfield is planned to grow to at least 105,000. Ripley Valley (110,000 people) is being planned to accommodate 10% of the SEQ population growth over the next 20 years.
15. While currently adding 5,000 additional residents a year, Ipswich will grow, on average, by 11,700 people each year until 2031. By that year, Ipswich's population will be three times what it is now.

“The predicted growth sees the Ipswich City Council area growing to something in the order of half a million people over the next two decades. While this growth is future growth, this produces a compelling need for the current Council to make significant and strategic decisions that will prepare the area for that growth. It is extremely important that Council makes the right decisions at the right time to be able to set up the Council infrastructure and service delivery platforms that will be able to accommodate that growth. It is, therefore, Council's contention that the key aspects of growth that face the Council are the aspects of decision-making that need to be done today, not in the future.... Council has estimated that over the next twenty years it will need in the order of six billion dollars worth of infrastructure to accommodate growth.” ICC Submission to Local Government Administrative Tribunal, 2008
16. By 2031, the InvestWEST Region will have experienced a 123% increase in employment, from 126,000 in 2006 to 281,000. An effective Public Transport Network will be essential for reducing car dependence for the journey-to-work.

The InvestWEST Region is providing very large employment centres for SEQ's industrial growth. For example, the Bromelton Industrial Estate is expected to accommodate 12,800 jobs by 2026. The Charlton-Wellcamp Industry Zone at Toowoomba is expected to generate 18,000 jobs. Ipswich has 43% of all available industrial land in SEQ, which is expected to provide jobs for 137,000 people. This includes Purga Industry Zone and the Amberley Aerospace Park which will be the biggest in the Southern Hemisphere.

17. Other existing and emerging employment centres include Australia's largest Air Force Base at Amberley (3,500 employees and growing) and the Gatton Correctional Centre (1750).
18. The effectiveness of the Western Growth Corridor Public Transport Network can be significantly enhanced through Federal and State Government investment in:
 - Ipswich to Ripley Rail Extension;
 - Springfield to Redbank Plains Rail Extension; and
 - Grandchester to Gowrie Rail Line.
19. The Ipswich to Ripley Rail Extension Project would provide a new Passenger Line from Ipswich CBD to Ripley Town Centre and include stations at University of Queensland (Ipswich Campus), Churchill, Yamanto, Deebing Heights and Ripley. The Ripley Valley Master Plan provides for establishment of 50,000 dwellings. In order to achieve Public Transport objectives, regionally based line haul public transport services will be required to be constructed prior to commencement of development of Ripley.
20. The Springfield to Redbank Plains Rail Extension Project would involve extension of the Springfield Passenger Rail Line to include stations to be constructed at Keides Road and School Road. Early provision of public transport will:
 - (a) provide for early establishment of mixed use development incorporating medium density housing;
 - (b) facilitate development at higher densities; and
 - (c) establish public transport based travel behaviours early in household formation.
21. The Grandchester to Gowrie Rail Link Project would provide a 200km/hr passenger/freight line, electrified with duplicate track. The Project is currently identified in the 2008-09 SEQ Infrastructure Plan and Program for delivery between 2019 and 2026.
22. **These are projects which, if undertaken now, will make a discernible difference in reducing the number of cars on SEQ roads.**
23. Investment in improvement in the standards and safety of our major highways is also critical to the viability of our bus services.
24. In this respect, key projects are:
 - The Toowoomba Bypass;
 - The Warrego Highway Upgrade (including Warrego-Brisbane Interchange); and
 - The Warrego – Cunningham Highway Connection.

25. Federal Government funding is needed to bring forward the commencement, or the completion, of these Projects
26. Our **second challenge** is the development of an effective Rural Public Transport Network.
27. As well as key population and employment growth centres, InvestWEST also embraces the bulk of the rural area of South East Queensland – more than 70% of the Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area.
28. The InvestWEST Councils oversee the management of non-urban lands which are critical to the short-term and long-term sustainability of SEQ as a whole, providing:
 - the bulk of SEQ’s fresh, clean water;
 - fresh food bowls for SEQ;
 - SEQ’s “Green Heart”;
 - SEQ’s Scenic Landscapes; and
 - Brisbane’s Rural Playground.
29. So this non-urban area provides regionally strategic functions for Coastal SEQ. It is not an empty area but supports small towns, villages and rural communities. Public Transport is as much a priority for the residents of this non-urban area as for those of the large metropolitan areas. School children, employees, elderly residents who cannot drive cars, residents who cannot afford cars - all need access to a reliable network of Public Transport to access education, training, employment, health and community services. Similarly, many unemployed people living outside the towns cannot access training services because of inadequate bus services.
30. This also applies west of the Range. In an area such as Toowoomba there would be significant social benefits in providing Public Transport to the surrounding districts enabling access to health and other services. Whilst it is recognised that it can be difficult to provide such systems, in the case of Toowoomba there is an existing rail network (mostly under-utilised) that traverses most of the region’s centres, although no services are provided. The major impediment is the up-front cost of the rolling stock, particularly in the case of a private operator. In such a case, the Commonwealth Government could play a key role by funding the cost of the rolling stock (Council becoming the owner and then potentially leasing the equipment to an operator) with the operating costs to be offset by local/State subsidies.
31. Through their accommodation of population and employment growth, the InvestWEST Councils have a major role in contributing to traffic de-congestion in Coastal SEQ. However, the ability of the Councils to accommodate that growth will demand a much stronger investment in the Public Transport Networks for the Western Growth Corridor and Rural SEQ. A critical issue for the Senate to understand is that Local Government does not have the ability to fund Public Transport and there is a compelling need for a Federal-State Government funding partnership.
32. Recommendations:
 - (1) Senate Committee support for expediting Federal Government funding of:
 - Ipswich to Ripley Rail Extension;

- Springfield to Redbank Plains Rail Extension; and
 - Grandchester to Gowrie Rail Line.
- (2) Senate Committee support for expediting Federal Government funding of:
- The Toowoomba Bypass;
 - Warrego Highway Upgrade (including Warrego-Brisbane Interchange); and
 - Warrego – Cunningham Highway Connection.
- (3) Senate Committee support for a Rural Public Transport Assistance Program.

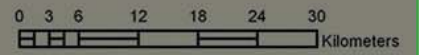
27th February 2009



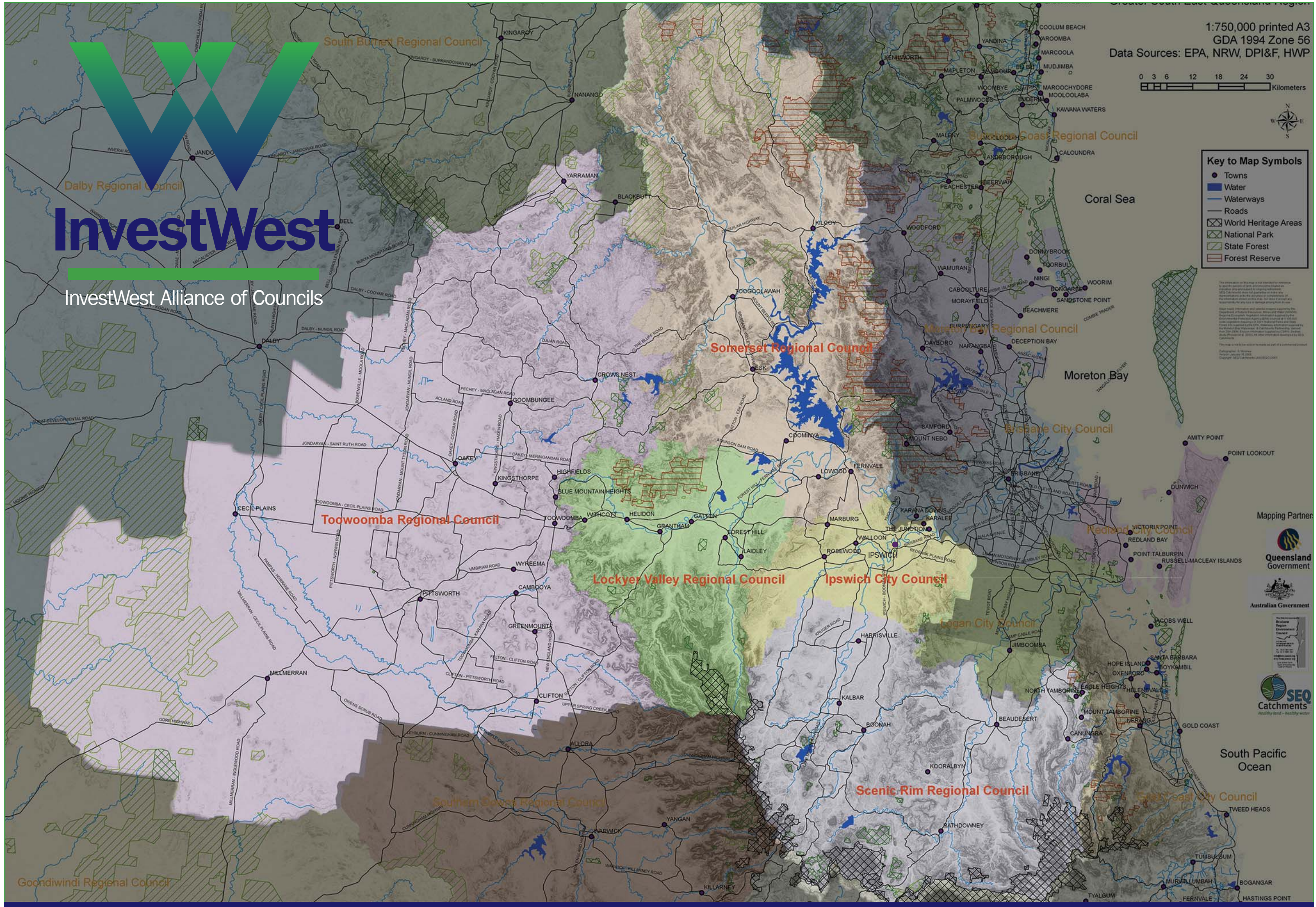
InvestWest

InvestWest Alliance of Councils

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GDA 1994 Zone 56
Data Sources: EPA, NRW, DPI&F, HWP



Key to Map Symbols	
●	Towns
■	Water
—	Waterways
—	Roads
⊠	World Heritage Areas
⊠	National Park
⊠	State Forest
⊠	Forest Reserve



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Mapping Partner



South Pacific Ocean

Goondiwindi Regional Council

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HASTINGS POINT