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Our ref: [REDACTED]
Your ref: [REDACTED]
Contact name: [REDACTED]
Telephone: [REDACTED]
Fax: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

The Research Director
Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Sir

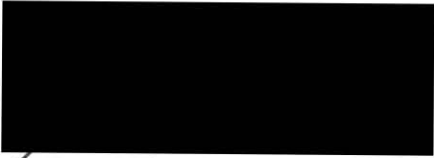
Attached is the Central Highlands Regional Council response to the correspondence received from Howard Hobbs MP, Member for Warrego inviting input into the inquiry into rail freight use by agriculture and livestock industries in Queensland.

The Central Highlands region has been significantly impacted by the rapid growth of the resources sector and is continuing to experience growth and diversity in all industry sectors influencing opportunities and council's ability to respond to investment and business development and the number of people now choosing to call the Central Highlands home.

The Central Highlands is rich in agriculture, with major freight routes contained in the region, including the north-south link between Charters Towers and northern New South Wales, which has been identified as an inland alternative between Cairns and Melbourne. The agriculture and livestock industries in this region are familiar with these routes and benefit significantly from improved infrastructure, development and services of an improved rail system.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to make a submission and we look forward to further input and information as this project progresses.

Yours faithfully


Scott Mason
Chief Executive Officer

30/1/14

Attach

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS FEEDBACK FOR CONSIDERATION

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Identify opportunities to enhance coordination and collaboration across government, transport industry and primary producers about rail freight
- Provide future direction for enhancing the utilisation of the rail system for primary producers and their freight needs including the demand for freight including future volume, nature, timing and frequency;
- Identify the characteristics of the future transport system for primary producer freight needs;
- Identify a broad range of options, including appropriate risk sharing amongst supply chain participants, for delivery freight solutions for primary producers
- Optimise the capacity and performance of the rail system for freight
- Plan a rail system that is positioned to exploit future freight, particularly export, opportunities; and
- Develop sustainable long term solutions for freight movement by rail for the agriculture and livestock industry

TERMS OF REFERENCE	CONSIDERATIONS
Enhancing Coordination and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pre-existing documentation should be considered to ensure consistency and integration of documentation, policies, plans and strategies. <p>Reference documents for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qld State Government Economic Framework Statement - Central Highlands Regional Council Strategic Framework - Q Plan - Galilee Basin Development Strategy - Regional Destination Strategy - Central Queensland Supply Chain Planning and Infrastructure Framework - Central Highlands Economic Development Strategy - Central Highlands Economic Profile - Central Highlands Industry Capability Audit - Central Highlands Commercial and Industrial Land Audit - Central Queensland Regional Plan - Prefeasibility study of the commercial viability of a CQ Multi-Crop Oilseed processing facility <p>Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with local governments and industry groups to identify preferred locations that align with regions planning schemes for growth and development areas
Aligning Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing Supply chain Opportunities Program (ASCO) – DSDIP • CQ Rail Link Project • TMR Study on Supply Chain Optimisation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rail infrastructure - Logistics and modelling
	<p>Four economic pillars of Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources, agriculture, tourism and construction – consideration and opportunity across all sectors
Enhancing utilisation of the rail system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides the opportunity to reduce the traffic and maintenance impacts on Qld roads • Need for alternative transport options has been identified as a priority action in the Central Highlands Economic Development Strategy. • Cost effective freight and livestock options should be an essential consideration to increase the economic benefit to businesses producing and planning for future business growth and production to meet the demands for Qld's food bowl • Affordable transport options for livestock and freight contributes to rural economic and business viability and sustainability
	<p>Access and diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access & usage equity – managing the usage demand between the resources and food production sectors. • Equity of access will need to be established to ensure all sectors (i.e. agriculture) have an opportunity to benefit.
<p>Characteristics of a future transport system</p> <p>Optimise Capacity & Performance</p>	<p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pre-existing rail infrastructure has been neglected – significant resources would be required to be committed to bringing existing assets to an acceptable standard. • Standards and staffing levels in rural and regional areas would need to be addressed prior to developing strategies for 'enhancing the utilisation of the rail system'.
	<p>Gauge sizes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gauge sizes should be consistent and compliant with the current standards unlike the rail system west of Emerald that should be a maximum axle loading of 19 tonnes as outlined in the Galilee Impact Assessment.
	<p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance, construction and development in regional areas would create job growth and economic opportunities. • Restore staffing numbers to appropriate levels to enable maintenance , growth and development
	<p>De-staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opportunity to relocate staff working on rail sites that are or planning to be decommissioned to other existing sites to retain knowledge, minimise negative impacts on the employee, and minimise costs (i.e. training)
	<p>Innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides opportunity to explore innovative opportunities and

	practices with partnerships and development across industry sectors
	<p>Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional growth and economic opportunity through the construction of an inland rail hub in regional areas such as Emerald in the Central Highlands. • Emerald, as outlined in the Central Highlands Economic Development Strategy, has been identified as the hub for future supply needs for the Bowen and Galilee Basins - significantly contributing to the Queensland's economy. • Resources growth in these areas significantly reduces rail capacity to be able to provide for the transport needs of the agricultural and livestock industries, thus reducing options and increasing cost impacts.
Risk sharing	<p>Access and diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access & usage equity – managing the usage demand from the resources and food production sectors.
	<p>Social impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential of reduction of truck numbers on roads • Less traffic in rural and regional areas • Reduction of road damage • Reduction of deaths and injury through road accidents • Cost reduction and efficiencies to the industry reducing economic pressures on families
	<p>Affordability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Highlands Economic Development Strategy identifies affordable transport strategies are important for sustainability and enables regional and economic growth.
	<p>Impact to existing businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A risk assessment into the economic impact on truck or other business and transport operators should be conducted to ensure limited/no disadvantage to existing business
	<p>Business Opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport has been identified as an opportunity for local businesses in the Central Highlands Industry Capability Audit. Improved rail transport that would offer an opportunity to grow and diversify business such as those in the agricultural sector that would in turn contribute to Queensland's economy.