




Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

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ADJOURNMENT

Inland Rail Corridor

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (6.55 pm): Tonight I rise to speak to an issue that is causing a lot of uncertainty and concern to affected landholders in the seat of Condamine; that is, the inland rail corridor currently being proposed by the Australian Rail Track Corporation and the impact that that corridor will have on landholders and the farming landscape on the Central Downs. The Melbourne to Brisbane inland rail project is a long-awaited and much anticipated vital piece of infrastructure that has overwhelming support in the electorate of Condamine. The cost of the project will be in excess of \$10 billion over a period of 10 years and it will be one of the most significant freight transport routes in the country. With this in mind, taxpayers and affected landholders have every right to expect total transparency and open scrutiny of all proposed corridors.

Therefore, it is very disappointing to discover that in 2015 a report was compiled by the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation to investigate alternate routes from Inglewood to Gowrie Junction, but it has not been officially released to the public. As the member for Southern Downs advised this House on Tuesday night, the report was commissioned by the state departments of Transport and Main Roads and State Development, Queensland Rail and the proponents of the ARTC project. The \$10 billion question is: why has this report not seen the light of day? The report lists an alternate route through Karara, Felton and Umbiram to Gowrie Junction, which is less expensive, will take less time to construct and will provide more efficient freight delivery outcomes than the currently favoured route across the floodplain from Brookstead to Gowrie Junction. The route in this report has never been mentioned at any time as an option for the inland rail project.

The proposed route from Brookstead to Gowrie Junction is based on information from 2010. Since then, there have been two significant and devastating flood events on the floodplain, one in 2011 and another in 2013. The SMEC report states that the Karara route did not encounter as many floodplain problems. The 2015 report compiled by the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation takes into account the last two flood events. It is a comprehensive report and addresses many of the floodplain problems raised. It was also prepared with the full knowledge of the current Queensland government and ARTC.

In today's *Warwick Daily News*, an ARTC spokesman states—

ARTC engaged consultants to undertake a further analysis of the route identified in the SMEC report and the outcome of that analysis was that there wasn't a compelling case for the alternative route.

That would indicate that there has been yet another undisclosed study done. If there is to be any public confidence in this project, it is imperative that all options are investigated in an open and transparent manner.